

28TH NOVEMBER, 2022

REPORT NO. DEM2201

PROTOCOL FOR THE SELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee has requested that the criteria for the selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor be reviewed to ensure that it continues to be effective in supporting the mayoral selection process. In the past few years, it has proved difficult to secure nominations for the role without breaking the criteria.
- 1.2 A Members' Survey on the topic of the Mayoralty was carried out in July-August 2022 to understand more about councillors' interest and considerations in taking the role.
- 1.3 In October, a group of Members appointed by this Committee met to consider the survey outcomes and discussed proposals for loosening the selection criteria to reflect the higher turnover of councillors and to ensure that those councillors who are interested to take the role have reasonable opportunity to be nominated without breaking the criteria. The Member Group was attended by Councillors P.J. Cullum, Christine Guinness, M.S. Choudhary and A. Gani.

2. SURVEY RESULTS

- 2.1 A summary of the Mayoral Survey results is attached at **Appendix 1**. The purpose of the survey was to find out more about individual councillors' personal interest in the mayoralty role, and barriers to accepting the position. The response rate was 25 Members, and overall, the outcomes suggest that approximately 50% of councillors may be interested in taking the role of Mayor at some point in the near future. From those responding to the survey who would be interested in the role (13 Members), only one councillor would be eligible to be Deputy Mayor in 2023 under the current criteria. This is due to forthcoming elections, recent past service as Mayor, or not yet having served a full term. The case for loosening the criteria was strong.

2.2 By a clear margin, the most likely reason that councillors would not wish to accept the role is the perceived time commitment to fulfil the mayoralty role in addition to employment, family, or other existing responsibilities.

3. **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SELECTION CRITERIA**

3.1 A copy of the proposed amendments to the current criteria for the selection of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor is attached at **Appendix 2**. Revisions are shown as track changes.

3.2 The current arrangements use order of seniority determined by length of service to decide the selection, within eligibility, and the principle of this approach is proposed to be retained.

3.3 Under revised arrangements, it is proposed that each year the process will begin with the Chief Executive inviting all Members to advise if they are interested to take the role of Deputy Mayor progressing through to the position of Mayor. The seniority and eligibility criteria (as attached at Appendix 2) would then be applied to all Members who notified their interest. The Councillor who is highest up the seniority list from amongst the interested Members would then be considered for the appointment, subject to the eligibility requirements, and the Chief Executive shall follow up by contacting all Members in writing to ensure a broad base of support for the appointment.

3.4 The Member Group recommended the following amendments to the selection criteria to help increase access to the role, and the number of councillors who would be eligible (as shown in track changes):

- A Member may be selected as Deputy Mayor when they are seeking re-election at that year's Borough Election – contingent on a successful re-election (However, a Member will not normally be selected when they are seeking re-election which would fall between their year as Deputy Mayor and Mayor).
- Past Mayors will be reconsidered for the position of Mayor or Deputy Mayor eight years after the completion of the end of their Mayoral Year (rather than waiting 15 years as at present).
- A Member who has not been Mayor before shall be given priority in the selection process over a returning past Mayor.

3.5 The Group also recommended to preserve the criteria that Members should serve a full 4 year term before being eligible for selection.

4. **CONCLUSION**

4.1 The changes proposed by the Member Group help to increase the number of councillors who are eligible to take the role of Mayor, while retaining the current principle of applying seniority linked to length of service.

4.2 The Committee is invited to consider the amendments in advance of making a recommendation to the Council.

5. **RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL**

5.1 Subject to any changes proposed by the Committee, it is recommended to the Council that the amendments to the criteria for the selection of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as set out in Appendix 2 to the Report are approved for adoption in the Council's Constitution.

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