

<b>Item No.</b> 8.4	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> November 4 2009	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Council Assembly
<b>Report title:</b>		New arrangements for Civic Awards	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Standards Committee	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 That council assembly agree the constitutional changes set out in paragraph 10 of this report to provide clarity on the role of standards committee in relation to granting awards and the relationship with the Civic Association's recommendations.
- 2 That council assembly agree the creation of a new discretionary award decided on merit by the Mayor.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3 Standards committee met on March 25 to consider the recommendations from the Civic Association for this year's awards. There were a number of concerns raised about the process and these were referred to the constitutional steering panel on March 31.
- 4 The panel agreed to set up a working group consisting of councillors, independent members, members of the Civic Association and officers. The working group reported back to standards committee on July 1 with a number of recommendations.
- 5 Proposals to improve civic awards were agreed with the constitutional steering panel on October 6 and final proposals were presented to standards committee on October 14. All proposals were supported by both the panel and the committee subject to a further report to council assembly.
- 6 Standards committee sought to ensure safeguards (number of awards, approval process and guidance) in relation to the mayor's award which are now contained in this report.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### **Role of Standards Committee and the relationship with the Civic Association**

- 7 One of the roles and functions of standards committee is to grant civic awards (3M [12]) and it has long been established that this is based on recommendations made by the Civic Association. Checks are made on those individuals and organisations recommended for an award to ascertain whether they are currently engaged in any form of legal action with the council or are in debt to the council. These checks are undertaken by officers and are not subject to member decision as this leads to automatic disqualification.
- 8 The basis for member decisions is that they have the constitutional responsibility to grant awards and must therefore have the authority not to grant an award. For the past two years members of standards committee have exercised this authority and have further sought to revise the level of award to be granted. The Civic Association has challenged this authority to refuse or vary the awards recommended.
- 9 The constitution of the association, in protocol 1, states '.... Court shall make nominations

for Civic Awards to the Council...' and '...Court for further consideration by the Council without prejudice to the acknowledged right of the Council of the Borough to accept or reject any nomination...'

10 Neither party's constitution refers to varying the level of award to be granted. The absence of an ability to vary the award would result in potentially more rejections if the only grounds for doing so were that the level was felt to be inappropriate. This should be less of an issue with greater clarity on categories and eligibility criteria and the Civic Association and standards committee have agreed a way forward to provide this clarity.

11 The constitution should be amended to make more explicit the role of standards committee:

Paragraph 12 of Part 3M: Standards committee currently reads 'To grant civic awards'.

The proposed amendment is:

'To consider recommendations for civic awards from the Civic Association or other nominating body and decide whether to grant an award and the appropriate level of any award.'

### **The Mayor's award**

12 It is widely recognised that the Mayor is in a unique position in being exposed throughout the year to many individuals and organisations that work closely with our communities or have made outstanding contributions. In many cases these people may not be nominated for an award or the categories of awards may not be appropriate.

13 It is suggested that a new provision is made to allow the Mayor to recommend a single discretionary award. The award would be based on merit and could provide for a borough-wide recognition and be given at the same time as the other civic awards. The Mayor would be a nominating body for the purposes of referral to standards committee.

14 There will need to be a distinction between this award which may be given for something during the year and the Honorary Freedom of the Borough which would normally be given for a longer period or more significant contribution to the borough.

15 As the Civic Association and the concept of civic awards was agreed by council assembly it would be appropriate for any decision to introduce a new award to also be agreed by council assembly. The Civic Association supports the introduction of this special award.

16 Guidance to the Mayor on the identification and selection of individuals or organisations can be included in the Civic and Mayoral office protocol. The Mayor's nomination will form part of the report to standards committee for consideration of civic awards and will therefore be subject to member approval.

### **Resource implications**

17 There are no resource implications associated with this report.

### **Community Impact Statement**

18 The council is committed to promoting opportunities and good relations in our communities. To further this aim, civic award processes should be accountable and transparent and the basis for awards should be widely understood. Application forms are

distributed widely throughout the borough and any person is able to submit a nomination to the Civic Association.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark constitution	On line	
Civic Association constitution	Tooley Street PO Box 64529, London, SE1P 5LX	Gill Allwright (x57235)
Civic Awards Working Group papers	Tooley Street PO Box 64529, London, SE1P 5LX	Graham Love (x50617)

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Graham Love for Standards Committee	
<b>Report Author</b>	Graham Love, Head of Democratic Services	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	October 21 2009	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>Consultation with other officers / directorates / executive member</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	No
Chief Finance Officer	No	No
Executive member	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		October 21 2009