



# Greater London Authority Act 1999

## 1999 CHAPTER 29

### PART II

#### GENERAL FUNCTIONS AND PROCEDURE

##### *Meetings and procedure of the Assembly*

#### **52 Meetings of the whole Assembly**

- (1) The Assembly may hold, in addition to any meetings required to be held by or under this section or any other enactment, such other meetings as it may determine.
- (2) Before the expiration of the period of ten days following the day of the poll at an ordinary election, there shall be a meeting of the Assembly to elect—
  - (a) the Chair of the Assembly; and
  - (b) the Deputy Chair of the Assembly.
- (3) On such ten occasions in each calendar year as the Assembly may determine, there shall be a meeting of the Assembly—
  - (a) to consider the written report submitted for the meeting by the Mayor under section 45 above,
  - (b) to enable Assembly members to put—
    - (i) oral or written questions to the Mayor, and
    - (ii) oral questions to any employees of the Authority who are required to attend such meetings and answer questions put to them by Assembly members; and
  - (c) to transact any other business on the agenda for the meeting.
- (4) The first meeting under subsection (3) above after an ordinary election shall be held not later than 25 days after the day of the poll at the election.
- (5) Notice of the time and place of any meeting of the Assembly—
  - (a) shall be given to the Mayor and the Assembly members, and

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- (b) shall be published,  
in accordance with the standing orders of the Authority.
- (6) In the case of a meeting of the Assembly under subsection (3) above, the notice required by subsection (5) above must be given and published—
  - (a) if the meeting is the first such meeting after an ordinary election, as soon as reasonably practicable after the day of the poll at that election; or
  - (b) in any other case, at least 28 clear days before the meeting.
- (7) If notice of a meeting to be held under subsection (3) above has been given pursuant to subsection (6) above, then, until that meeting has been held or the notice has been withdrawn, notice must not be given of another such meeting.
- (8) An extraordinary meeting of the Assembly may be called at any time by the Chair of the Assembly.
- (9) If—
  - (a) the Chair of the Assembly refuses to call an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly after a requisition for that purpose, signed by five Assembly members, has been presented to him, or
  - (b) if, without so refusing, the Chair of the Assembly does not call an extraordinary meeting within seven days after such a requisition has been presented to him,
 any five Assembly members may forthwith call an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly.
- (10) Section 54 below shall not apply in relation to any function of the Assembly under this section.

### **53 Assembly procedure**

- (1) All questions coming before, or to be decided by, the Assembly shall be decided by a majority of the members of the Assembly present and voting at a meeting of the Assembly.
- (2) In the case of an equality of votes, the person chairing the meeting of the Assembly shall have a second or casting vote.
- (3) Subsections (1) and (2) above are subject to any provision to the contrary contained in this or any other enactment.
- (4) The Assembly may determine its own procedure and that of its committees and sub-committees (including quorum).
- (5) Subsection (4) above is subject to—
  - (a) subsections (1) and (2) above;
  - (b) sections 50 to 52 above;
  - (c) section 56 below;
  - (d) Schedules 6 and 7 to this Act; and
  - (e) any other provision made by or under this Act or any other Act (whenever passed) which regulates, or provides for the regulation of, the procedure of the Assembly or committees of the Assembly.

## **54 Discharge of functions by committees or single members**

- (1) The Assembly may arrange for any of the functions exercisable by it to be discharged on its behalf—
  - (a) by a committee or sub-committee of the Assembly; or
  - (b) by a single member of the Assembly.
- (2) The Assembly may arrange for a member of staff of the Authority appointed under section 67(2) below to exercise on the Assembly's behalf any function exercisable by the Assembly under section 67(2) or 70(2) below.
- (3) Where by virtue of this section any functions exercisable by the Assembly may be discharged by a committee of the Assembly, then, unless the Assembly otherwise directs, the committee may arrange for the discharge of any of those functions by a sub-committee or by a single member of the Assembly.
- (4) Where by virtue of this section any functions exercisable by the Assembly may be discharged by a sub-committee of the Assembly, then, unless the Assembly or the committee concerned otherwise directs, the sub-committee may arrange for the discharge of any of those functions by a single member of the Assembly.
- (5) Any arrangements made under this section by the Assembly, or by a committee or sub-committee of the Assembly, for the discharge of any functions by—
  - (a) a committee or sub-committee of the Assembly,
  - (b) a member of the Assembly, or
  - (c) a member of staff of the Authority,shall not prevent the Assembly, or the committee or sub-committee by whom the arrangements are made, from exercising those functions.
- (6) Subsection (1)(b) above does not apply in relation to functions under or by virtue of section 20A of the Police Act 1996 (questions by Assembly members to representatives of the Metropolitan Police Authority).
- (7) Subsections (1) to (3) of section 53 above shall apply in relation to a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of the Assembly as they apply in relation to a meeting of the Assembly.
- (8) Subsections (1) to (5) above are subject to any express provision contained in this Act or any Act passed after this Act.

## **55 Assembly committees and sub-committees**

- (1) For the purpose of discharging, in pursuance of arrangements under section 54(1)(a) above, any functions exercisable by the Assembly—
  - (a) the Assembly may appoint a committee of the Assembly (an “ordinary committee”); and
  - (b) an ordinary committee may appoint one or more sub-committees (“ordinary sub-committees”).
- (2) Subject to the provisions of this section—
  - (a) the number of members, and
  - (b) their term of office,shall be fixed in the case of an ordinary committee by the Assembly or, in the case of an ordinary sub-committee, by the appointing committee.

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- (3) An ordinary committee or sub-committee must not include any person who is not an Assembly member.
- (4) The Assembly may appoint one or more committees (“advisory committees”) to advise it on any matter relating to the discharge of its functions.
- (5) An advisory committee—
  - (a) may consist of such persons (whether Assembly members or not) appointed for such term as may be determined by the Assembly; and
  - (b) may appoint one or more sub-committees (“advisory sub-committees”) to advise the committee with respect to any matter on which the committee has been appointed to advise.

## **56 Minutes**

- (1) Minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the Assembly, or of any committee or sub-committee of the Assembly, shall be kept in such form as the Assembly may determine.
- (2) Any such minutes shall be signed at the same or next suitable meeting of the Assembly, committee or sub-committee by the person presiding at that meeting.
- (3) Any minute purporting to be signed as mentioned in subsection (2) above shall be received in evidence without further proof.
- (4) For the purposes of subsection (2) above, the next suitable meeting of the Assembly, or of a committee or sub-committee of the Assembly, is their next following meeting or, where standing orders of the Authority provide for another meeting to be regarded as suitable, either the next following meeting or that other meeting.
- (5) In the application of this section in the case of a meeting of the Assembly under section 52(3) above, “minutes” includes—
  - (a) the text of any question put pursuant to section 52(3) above at the meeting, and
  - (b) the text of the answer given to any such question,
 whether the question was put, or the answer given, orally or in writing.

## **57 Political composition of Assembly committees**

- (1) Sections 15 to 17 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (political balance on committees etc) shall have effect in relation to the Assembly, so far as relating to the appointment of members of its committees, as if the Assembly were a relevant authority and its ordinary committees and advisory committees were ordinary or, as the case may be, advisory committees within the meaning of those provisions (and accordingly bodies to which section 15 of that Act applies).
- (2) In the case of any committee of the Assembly, the first appointment of members of the committee shall be an occasion on which the duty imposed by subsection (1) of section 15 of that Act arises in relation to the committee.

## **58 Openness**

- (1) Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 (access to meetings and documents of certain authorities, committees and sub-committees) shall have effect as if—
  - (a) the Assembly were a principal council, and

- (b) any committee or sub-committee of the Assembly were a committee or sub-committee of a principal council, within the meaning of that Part, but with the following modifications.
- (2) In the application of Part VA of that Act by subsection (1) above—
  - (a) any information furnished to the Authority and available to the Assembly shall be treated as information furnished to the Assembly;
  - (b) any offices of, or belonging to, the Authority shall be treated as also being offices of or belonging to the Assembly; and
  - (c) the proper officer of the Authority shall be taken to be the proper officer in relation to the Assembly.
- (3) In the following provisions of that Act, namely—
  - (a) section 100A(2) (which requires the exclusion of the public from meetings and makes other provision to prevent disclosure of confidential information in breach of the obligation of confidence), and
  - (b) section 100D(4) (which prevents the inclusion in a list of documents of any document which would so disclose such information),any reference to the disclosure (or likelihood of disclosure) of confidential information in breach of the obligation of confidence includes a reference to the disclosure of information of any of the descriptions specified in subsection (4) below without the consent of the relevant body concerned.
- (4) The descriptions are—
  - (a) any information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person which was acquired in consequence of a relationship between that person and a relevant body;
  - (b) the amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by a relevant body under any particular contract, if and so long as disclosure would be likely to give an advantage to a person entering into, or seeking to enter into, a contract with the relevant body, whether the advantage would arise against the relevant body or another such person;
  - (c) any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to a relevant body in the course of negotiations for any particular contract, if and so long as disclosure would prejudice the relevant body in those or any other negotiations concerning the subject matter of the contract;
  - (d) the identity of any person as the person offering any particular tender for a contract for the supply of goods or services to a relevant body;and in this subsection “relevant body” means Transport for London or the London Development Agency.
- (5) In section 100C of that Act (inspection of minutes and other documents after meetings) any reference to the minutes of a meeting shall, in the case of a meeting of the Assembly under section 52(3) above, be taken to include a reference to—
  - (a) the text of any question put pursuant to section 52(3) above at the meeting, and
  - (b) the text of the answer given to any such question,whether the question was put, or the answer given, orally or in writing.
- (6) Nothing in section 100D of that Act (inspection of background papers) requires or authorises the inclusion in any such list as is referred to in subsection (1) of that section of any document which discloses anything which, by virtue of subsection (6)

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of section 45 above, is not required to be disclosed under subsection (3) or (4) of that section.

- (7) In section 100E of that Act (application to committees and sub-committees) subsection (3)(a) shall have effect as if section 55 above were included among the enactments specified in section 101(9) of that Act.
- (8) For the purposes of section 100F of that Act (additional rights of access to documents for members of principal councils) any document which is in the possession or under the control of the Authority and which is available to the Assembly shall be treated as a document which is in the possession or under the control of the Assembly.
- (9) In the case of the Assembly, the register of members required to be maintained under section 100G(1) of that Act shall, instead of stating the ward or division which a member represents, state—
  - (a) whether the member is a London member or a constituency member; and
  - (b) if he is a constituency member, the Assembly constituency for which he is the member.
- (10) For the purposes of section 100H(3) of that Act (acts which infringe copyright) the Authority shall be treated as a principal council.
- (11) In the application in relation to the Assembly of Schedule 12A to that Act (access to information: exempt information) any reference to “the authority” includes a reference to the Authority.