

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 9TH MAY, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor K Wakefield in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, J Blake,
Campbell, S Golton, P Gruen, T Leadley,
J Lewis, A Lowe, E Nash, J Procter,
M Rafique and P Wadsworth

Apologies Councillor R Finnigan

99 Appeals against refusal of inspection of documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

100 Exempt Information - possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

101 Late items

The Chair admitted one late item to the agenda – Item 12 – Review of Council Meetings (Minute No.110 refers).

Also admitted by the Chair was supplementary information to Item 10 – Constitution Amendments in the form of Appendix 8 (Minute 108 refers).

102 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Wakefield declared a personal interest in Agenda item 7 – Election and Term of Office of the Leader – as the current Leader of the Council.

103 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Finnigan.

The clerk to the Committee notified Members that Councillors Wadsworth and Campbell had been appointed to the Committee to replace former Councillors Lobley and Mathews respectively.

104 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 19th March 2012 were approved as a correct record.

105 Election and term of office of the Leader

The City Solicitor presented her report which asked Members to consider provisions within the Council's executive arrangements following amendments to the Local Government Act 2000.

RESOLVED – Members of the General Purposes Committee resolved to recommend to full Council to:

- (a) confirm existing executive arrangements relating to the current term of office for the Leader during their term;
- (b) approve amendments to Council Procedure Rule 1 to reflect updated legislation and provide for the election of a Leader in the event of a vacancy; and
- (c) note that the City Solicitor proposes to exercise her delegated authority to update article 7 and Section 2A of Part 3 of the constitution, to reflect legislative changes.

(Councillor A Blackburn entered the meeting during the discussion of this item at 10:08 am)

106 New standards arrangements under the Localism Act 2011

Members considered the report by the City Solicitor which presented proposals in relation to new conduct arrangements for Members under the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Nash provided an introduction to the report and thanked members of the Member working group responsible for the drafting of proposals before the committee.

The Head of Governance Services confirmed that that shortlisting (and any subsequent interviews) for an Independent Person will be conducted by Members.

RESOLVED – Members of the General Purposes Committee resolved to full Council to:

- (a) adopt the code of conduct set out in appendix 1 to the report;
- (b) delegate authority to the City Solicitor in consultation with Group Whips, to finalise the code of conduct in light of Regulations which will define disclosable Pecuniary Interests; and
- (c) approve:

- the terms of reference for a Standards and Conduct Committee set out in appendix 2 to the report, to be appointed to replace the existing Standards Committee.
- amendments to Council Procedure Rule 26 to provide for substitute members for new Standards and Conduct Committee.
- Procedure Rules for the handling of complaints that a Member may have failed to comply with the code of conduct, as set out in appendix 3 to the report.

107 Review of the Decision Making Framework

The City Solicitor presented her report and the report of the Director of Resources. The report presented proposed amendments to the council's Executive decision making framework.

The City solicitor also informed the Committee that The Director of Resources and the City Solicitor have reviewed the Executive Decision Making arrangements and identified scope to:

- enhance opportunities to ensure Ward Councillors are engaged at an early stage in the decisions which affect their constituencies;
- speed up the implementation of decisions of Area Committees; and
- make arrangements more transparent, with a focus on clear accountability.

RESOLVED – Members of the General Purposes Committee resolved to recommend to full council to:

- (a) approve revised Article 13 as set out in Appendix 1 to this report;
- (b) approve Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report; and
- (c) withdraw concurrent delegations to Chief Officers under the Council's officer delegation scheme (Council functions).

108 Constitutional amendments - Scrutiny arrangements

The Committee received a report which proposed amendments to the authority's scrutiny arrangements following an annual review by the Scrutiny Officer.

RESOLVED – Members of the General Purposes Committee resolved to recommend to full Council to:

- (a) approve revised terms of reference for Scrutiny Boards, as set out in appendices 1– 6 of the report;
- (b) approve revised Article 6 as set out in Appendix 7 to the report;
- (c) approve revised Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules as set out in appendix 8 to this report; and
- (d) endorse the proposal of the Scrutiny Officer to remove guidance notes from the constitution, which relate to inquiry selection criteria, minority reports and equality and diversity/cohesion and integration issues.

109 Constitutional amendments - miscellaneous

The Committee received the report which recommended amendments to the constitution to full Council, following the annual review of the constitution.

Members proposed and agreed that there should be a further amendment to the Area Committee Procedure Rules featured in the appendix to the report. This being that all nominations must be notified to the Head of Governance Services by no later than 5pm, the day before the meeting convened to consider the appointment of the Chair, as opposed to no later than 5pm 1 clear working day prior to the issue of the Summons for the Annual Council Meeting.

RESOLVED – Members of the General Purposes Committee resolved to recommend to full Council to:

- (a) approve amendments to Area Committee Procedure Rule 5, as set out in the appendix to the report, subject to the amendment proposed and agreed during discussion of the item being included in these amendments; and
- (b) remove the summary of delegated council functions, and appendix from Section 2A of Part 3 of the constitution.

110 Late Item - Review of Council Meetings

The Committee received a report which contained proposals arising from discussions with Group Leaders and Whips and asked the Committee to recommend to full Council the adoption of the new arrangements for Council Meetings outlined within the report, with the necessary consequential arrangements to Council Procedure Rules being delegated to the City Solicitor in consultation with Group Whips.

Members discussed the report in detail giving opinions on the proposals.

RESOLVED – Members of the General Purposes Committee resolved to recommend that full Council:

- (a) agree a reformatted Council day by:

- Introducing a new item to Council meetings, “Members’ community issues”.
 - Varying the order of Council business to allow for the receipt of recommendations from the Executive board and committees immediately after the item receiving reports from Statutory Officers.
 - Providing for full Council to receive minutes from joint authorities/committees, and the Leeds Initiative Strategic Partnerships, as well as committees.
 - Reducing the number of deputations to four.
 - Time limiting White Paper Motions, and reserving submission of the first to the opposition.
- (b) agree that two State of the City meetings be held each municipal year;
- (c) delegate to the City Solicitor the agreement, in consultation with Group Whips, of the necessary consequential changes to the council procedure rules to facilitate the new arrangements.

Members of the General Purposes Committee also resolved to:

- (d) review the revised arrangements during the course of the municipal year; and
- (e) note the options available to the Council to Live Stream Council meetings and request that a further report be prepared for consideration by no later than July 2012.

(Councillor J Procter left the meeting at 10:44am during the discussion of this item)