

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor A Carter in the Chair

Councillors S Bentley, A Blackburn,
J Blake, R Brett, R Finnigan, E Nash (for
Councillor Gruen), J Procter, N Taggart and
K Wakefield

Apologies Councillor P Gruen

9 Appeals against refusal of inspection of documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

10 Exempt Information - possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

11 Late items

There were no late items added to the agenda.

12 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made either under this item or at any stage during the meeting.

(Councillor Blackburn arrived at 10.35am during the consideration of this item.)

13 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillor Gruen.

14 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 13th July 2009

RESOLVED – Members resolved that the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 13th July 2009 be approved as a correct record.

15 Executive Arrangements: Proposals

The Principal Corporate Governance Officer presented a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) advising the Committee of the results of the consultation on changes to the Council's executive arrangements, setting out the next steps which the Council must take, and

asking the Committee to make recommendations to full Council about drawing up its proposals for changing its executive arrangements.

Members discussed the low level of response received in relation to the consultation, which they considered disappointing. They also noted that all political groups agree that the “new style” Leader and Cabinet form should be adopted.

The Chief Officer (Legal Licensing and Registration) confirmed to the committee that the term of office of the “new style” Leader must be four years, (subject to removal, or resignation) and advised on the impact of this on the current Leadership arrangements.

RESOLVED - Members resolved to:

(a) Recommend to full Council:

- (i) To draw up proposals to change to the “new-style” leader and cabinet form;
- (ii) That the proposals for change should not be subject to a referendum;
- (iii) That no amendment should be proposed to the current allocation of “local choice” functions between the Council and the executive (as set out in Appendix 6 to the report);
- (iv) That the current arrangements for the Leader to be removed by resolution of the Council by simple majority be retained;
- (v) That the proposals should set out the proposed timetable set out at Appendix 5 to the report, but amended to reflect the proposals to adopt the “new-style” leader and cabinet form, and that the proposals should not be subject to a referendum; and
- (vi) That the proposals should provide for the Leader in office at the time of the elections to remain in place until the annual meeting in 2010;

(b) Instruct the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance), in consultation with Group Leaders, to draft proposals reflecting their recommendations, to be considered by full Council at its meeting on 16 September 2009; and

(c) Recommend to full Council to authorise the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) to take the necessary steps requisite to carrying out the Council’s legal requirements in relation to amending the Council’s executive form.

(Councillor Taggart arrived at 10.40am during the consideration of this item.)

16 Vision for Scrutiny

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented a report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer presenting a draft Vision for Scrutiny for consideration.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to recommend that full Council adopt the Vision for Scrutiny for inclusion in Article 6 of the Constitution.

17 Review of Call In Procedures

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presented a report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer reviewing the requirement to have original signatures on the Call In request forms in light of six months operational experience and the comments of Members.

Members agreed that the requirement to have original signatures had not hindered the Call In process in any way, however concerns were raised as this requirement could mean that only those Councillors who attend Civic Hall on a regular basis would be able to call in a decision.

It was therefore agreed that this process would be kept under review and that a further report would be submitted to the Committee in six month's time, including an analysis of the number of individual Members involved with Call Ins.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to:

- (a) Continue with the requirement to have original signatures on Call In request forms; and
- (b) Request that this process be kept under review and that a further report be submitted to the General Purposes Committee in six month's time, including an analysis of the number of individual Members involved with Call Ins.

18 Management of White Paper Motions

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) submitted a report presenting proposed amendments to the Council Procedure Rules to introduce an additional 24 hour period to the process for the management of White Paper motions, to allow for the withdrawal of motions should the proposer wish to do so following advice from their Group Whip.

Members requested that the wording of the amendment be revised to clarify that motions can be corrected, as well as withdrawn up to 10.00am on the day for the issue of the Summons.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to:

- (a) Request that the proposed amendment be revised to clarify that motions can be corrected, as well as withdrawn up to 10.00am on the day for the issue of the Summons; and
- (b) Recommend that Council approve the proposed amendments to the Council Procedure Rules, subject to the revision requested, as noted above.

19 Article 15

The Corporate Governance Officer presented a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance), requesting that General Purposes

Committee recommend that full Council approve the proposed amendments to Article 15 of the Constitution.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to recommend that full Council approve the proposed amendments to Article 15 of the Constitution, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.