

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 5TH JANUARY, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor K Wakefield in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, R Finnigan,
P Gruen, G Latty, J Lewis, R Lewis,
A Lowe, J Matthews, E Nash, J Procter and
M Rafique

Apologies Councillors J Blake, S Golton and
M Lobley

73 Appeals against refusal of inspection of documents

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

74 Exempt Information - possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

75 Late items

There were no late items submitted to the agenda for consideration.

76 Declaration of Interests

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

77 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Golton, J Blake and M Lobley.

78 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 17th May 2011 be approved as a correct record.

79 Matters Arising

Members sought clarification from officers on the progress of the requested proposals which would preserve the role of Area Committees in appointing the chair whilst also ensuring Area Committees meet in advance of the Annual Council Meeting to appoint chairs and that any deadlock in this respect be capable of being resolved at the Annual Council meeting.

80 Interim Review of Polling Arrangements for Garforth and Swillington Ward and Calverley and Farsley Ward - Initial Proposals Report

The Head of Licensing and Registration presented his report, the report considered the representations received to conduct an interim review of the polling arrangements for Garforth & Swillington and Calverley & Farsley and the process for such a review.

Members discussed the report in detail. Concerns were raised that the review should not be proceeded at Committee but instead should be conducted by the Electoral Working Group (EWG) owing to their knowledge and it being considered a fair process. However, Members also acknowledged that the representations have triggered a process and that this should be followed in an open and transparent manner at the earliest opportunity.

Also raised in discussion was that by reviewing small areas, such as those under discussion, this could lead to other areas requesting such reviews. The time scale of the process was also discussed by Members comments were made that the process was happening too quickly, this in light of establishing new polling stations being a major issue.

It was noted by the Committee that the current polling station arrangements for Garforth and Swillington put elderly and disabled people at a disadvantage due to the busy roads and hills approaching the polling station in question.

RESOLVED – Members of the General Purposes Committee resolved to:

- (a) agree the process for the Interim Review for Garforth & Swillington and Calverley & Farsley as set out in the report;
- (b) agree the timetable for the Interim Review as set out at Appendix A to the report;
- (c) agree that the proposals received at section 5 and 6 of the report be confirmed as the authority's initial proposals for the interim review of Garforth & Swillington and Calverley & Farsley;
- (d) agree that EWG will be used as a working group to discuss the results of any representations received in response to any consultation, and provide recommendations for General Purposes Committee's consideration as set out at section 3.2 of the report; and
- (e) agree that officers review the Council's Constitution regarding the current process for considering alterations to polling districts, places and stations to identify any possible improvements.

81 Work Programme

The Director of Resources submitted a report notifying Members of the work programme.

The Committee reviewed its forthcoming work programme noting that the Constitution should be thoroughly reviewed and that an item detailing this should be placed on the work programme.

It was noted that Members of the Committee should contact the City Solicitor with any specific areas they feel need to be targeted in a review of the Constitution.

RESOLVED - Members of the General Purposes Committee resolved to request an item be placed on the work programme detailing a review of the Constitution.