
STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 April 2011

Present:

Members of the Council

Councillors Barnes-Andrews (except Items 19, 20 and 22), Burke, Cunio (Mayor), Osmond, Parnell and Slade

Independent Members

Mr B Hooper (Chair), Mr D Blake and Mr G Wilkinson

Apologies

Councillor Sollitt

17. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards and Governance Committee held on 14th December 2010 be approved and signed as a correct record. (Copy of Minutes circulated with agenda and appended to the signed Minutes).

18. **CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The Committee considered the report of the Solicitor to the Council seeking the Committee's comments and views in its governance role, upon the content of the draft report prior to formal submission to the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2011. (Copy of the report circulated with the agenda and appended to the signed minutes).

The Committee particularly noted the following points:-

- that the precise wording in terms of changes to the Constitution will be worked up prior to presentation to the Council meeting;
- that there were a number of potential constitutional amendments dependent on the Localism Bill receiving royal assent and that the Committee would receive a further report in due course;
- that the membership of the Licensing (General) Sub-Committee be five members not three as stated in the report;
- that the quorum for the Licensing (Licensing and Gambling) Sub-Committee should be three not two as stated in the report;
- that there would be a change to the allowances for the Mayor and Sheriff which would exclude clothing expenses specifically following guidance from HM Revenue and Customs;
- that there were reductions to the programme of scrutiny enquiries to be undertaken within the monthly meeting of the parent (Overview and Scrutiny Management) Committee and that the number of standing scrutiny panels would reduce to one which would undertake the required statutory functions for health matters; and

- that the terms of reference of the Committee would be amended to enable the Committee to consider any appeals from employees in 'sensitive posts' who appeal the Politically Restricted designation of their posts.

RESOLVED

- (i) that a sub-heading "the Mayor's Charity" be inserted at paragraph 4.4 under the general heading of "Support to Charities" within Civic and Ceremonial Protocol;
- (ii) that the key responsibilities of Mayor with regard to Court Leet be amended to include "beating the bounds";
- (iii) that the wording regarding allowances for the Mayor and Sheriff be amended to reflect that this is a responsibility allowance to cover expenses incurred;
- (iv) that the wording regarding use of the official car be amended to read "It is normal for the Mayor or their escort to be collected from the Mayor's residence; where this is not practical arrangements should be agreed with the Mayor's office";
- (v) that a further report be brought to the Committee for consideration when the implications of the Localism Bill become clearer; and
- (vi) that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee in June regarding the impact of the changes made to the delegated financial thresholds in the Officer Scheme of Delegation.

19. **REPORT FROM CHAIR ON MEETINGS WITH CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND LEADER**

The Committee considered the report of the Chair of the Committee regarding discussions held, as had been suggested in the Ethical Governance Review of the Council by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. (Copy of the report circulated with the agenda and appended to the signed minutes).

It was reported that these discussions had identified possible needs for the Committee to consider the impact of increased partnership working, changes in government policy affecting the work of the Committee, and the behaviour and attendance of Councillors at meetings and training events.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Solicitor to the Council be asked to arrange a briefing on the partnership arrangements already in place and those known to be developing, so that members of the Committee can better understand the governance issues;
- (ii) that the Solicitor to the Council be asked to prepare a briefing paper on possible changes in regulations affecting matters such as audit, ethics and probity; and
- (iii) that the Committee give consideration to possible action to improve Councillors' behaviour in particular at Council meetings following / in light of the above briefing.

20. **ANNUAL STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE BUSINESS REVIEW**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Chair of the Committee providing an overview of the work of the Standards and Governance Committee and outlining discussions held and decisions made at its meetings from May 2010 to April 2011. (Copy of the report circulated with the agenda and appended to the signed minutes).

The Committee noted that the volume but in particular the increasing complexity of requests received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated legislation had been resource intensive with considerable associated cost implications.

21. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

The Committee considered the report of the Solicitor to the Council providing an overview of Member learning and development during the last year and providing information on the Member Development Plan for 2011-2012. (Copy of the report circulated with the agenda and appended to the signed minutes).

Members suggested that the strategic theme included in the Council's Workforce Strategy agreed by Cabinet in January 2009 for Performance and Reward required amendment to reflect resources available in the light of current cuts.

RESOLVED that the Member Development priorities detailed in the report be endorsed with the inclusion of an offer of development / briefing opportunities once the changes and demands on Members that result from the Localism Bill become clear.

22. **STANDARD AND GOVERNANCE MEETING DATES FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011-2012**

The Committee approved the following dates for meetings in the municipal year 2011-2012:

Thursday 23rd June 2011
Thursday 22nd September 2011
Tuesday 13th December 2011
Monday 16th April 2012

NOTE: Following the approval of the above dates at the meeting, the date for the September meeting was changed to 8th September in order that a number of reports can be given consideration by the Committee prior to their presentation / submission to the Council meeting on 14th September.