



Special Advisory Group

Minutes - 18 March 2015

Attendance

Members of the Special Advisory Group

Cllr Andrew Johnson (Chair)
Cllr Val Evans
Cllr Roger Lawrence
Cllr Elias Mattu
Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Paul Singh
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Wendy Thompson

Employees

Dereck Francis	Democratic Support Officer
Adam Hadley	Group Manager - Democracy
Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Mark Taylor	Director of Finance
Martyn Sargeant	Group Manager – Corporate Administration

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Cllr Richard Whitehouse.
- 2 Declarations of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting (5 November 2014)**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 November 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 Matters arising**
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 **Changes to the Constitution**

The Advisory Group considered a report on proposed changes to the Constitution.

Martyn Sargeant, Group Manager Corporate Administration reported on a proposed additional amendment to the relevant section of the Constitution to make clear that senior employees (Heads of Service, Service Directors and Strategic Directors) could bring forward Individual Executive Decision Notice (Green Decision) reports to a Cabinet member for sign off. Cllr Peter O'Neill supported the amendment as it was in line with Service Director accountability.

Cllr Wendy Thompson requested that the proposed delegation to the Leader of the Council, to approve permanent changes to the membership of Scrutiny Panels and other committees part way through a municipal year be amended to provide for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group to be consulted on any such changes.

Cllr Wendy Thompson also sought clarity on the proposal to include within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Governance and Performance, responsibility for oversight of the Electoral Services functions, working with the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer. Cllr Andrew Johnson reported that the proposal was merely moving the responsibility from the Resources portfolio to the Governance and Performance portfolio to where it should be.

Resolved:

That the Special Advisory Group supports the revisions to the Constitution for consideration by the Standards Committee and agreement by Council, specifically:

- (1) To make amendments to job titles and responsibilities to reflect the Council's recent senior management restructuring, particularly:
 - (a) To remove references to the role of Chief Executive, replacing it with 'Head of Paid Service'.
 - (b) To remove references to the role of Strategic Director - Education and Enterprise, replacing it with 'Strategic Director for Place'.
 - (c) To remove references to the role of Strategic Director - Community, replacing it with 'Strategic Director for People'.
 - (d) To remove references to the role of Assistant Director (Finance), replacing it with 'Director of Finance'.
 - (e) To remove references to the role of Chief Legal Officer, replacing it with 'Director of Governance'.
 - (f) To amend the section on management structure to reflect revised arrangements.
- (2) To amend the budget and policy framework documents listed in the glossary.
- (3) To remove the requirement for Standards Committee to consider proposed changes to the Constitution.
- (4) To remove the requirement for the Monitoring Officer to make paper copies of the Constitution available, other than at the Civic Centre or in response to specific requests.

- (5) To include a delegation to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Leader of the Main Opposition Group on the Council, to approve permanent changes to the membership of Scrutiny Panels and other committees part way through a municipal year.
- (6) To include within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Governance and Performance, responsibility for oversight of the Electoral Services functions, working with the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer.
- (7) To delete from the Cabinet (Resources) Panel's delegations responsibility to agree bids for external funding.
- (8) To include a delegation to the Head of Paid Service to appoint a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.
- (9) To include a delegation to the Strategic Director for People to accept guardianship applications under the Mental Health Act 1983.
- (10) To amplify the delegation to the Strategic Director for Place in respect of planning enforcement, including additional wording 'including in relation to listed building and conservation areas, advertisement control including discontinuance notices, and serving section 215 notices'.
- (11) To include within the delegations to the Strategic Director for Place the power to enter into agreements under s111 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- (12) To include a summary of the indemnity provided to employees in the event of a claim being made against them arising from their work on behalf of the Council.
- (13) To include a delegation to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution to reflect changes in the Council's senior management structure.

6 **Schedule of Councillor meetings for 2015/16**

A revised schedule of councillor meetings for 2015/16 was tabled. The schedule had been revised following consultations with the three political groups.

In response to a query over whether six Planning Committees would be sufficient in order to meet the target turnaround for planning applications, Martyn Sargeant, Group Manager Corporate Administration reported that, in consultation with the Head of Planning over the years the number of Planning Committees had gradually been reduced. The pattern of Planning Committees for 2015/16 was in line with that for the current municipal year. He undertook to check with the Head of Planning.

The Group Manager Corporate Administration also reported that a decision was awaited from Cllr Roger Lawrence on the date and time of an Executive Team meeting in Autumn owing to a potential meetings clash. Cllr Roger Lawrence undertook to clarify the matter.

Resolved:

That the tabled schedule of Councillor meetings for 2015/16 be approved and any proposed changes be circulated to political groups and the Advisory Group as the final version to be submitted to Annual Council in May 2015.