

CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Constitution and Members' Development Committee was held on 24 June 2014.

PRESENT: Councillors Kerr, (Chair for the meeting), Biswas (as substitute for N J Walker), Hubbard (as substitute for Cox), Lowes and Mawston

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Arundale

OFFICERS: S Harker, A Pain, B Roberts and N Sayer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Brady, Cox and N J Walker.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest at this point of the meeting.

14/1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for Chair of the Constitution and Members' Development Committee pro tem.

AGREED that Councillor Kerr was appointed Chair of the Constitution and Members' Development Committee for the meeting.

14/2 MINUTES - CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE - 9 AUGUST 2013

The minutes of the meeting of the Constitution Committee held on 9 August 2013 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

14/3 FILMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS - CODE OF PRACTICE

A report of the Director of Commercial and Corporate Services was presented for the Committee to consider the adoption of a Council Code of Practice in relation to filming, photographing and making audio recordings of Council meetings to which the public had right of access. The report and the Code, together with the Committee's recommendations, would be considered by Council on 2 July 2014.

Due to an anticipated change in legislation, expected to be effective from mid-July 2014, the law would allow for members of the public to film public meetings of the Council. The new regulations would enable any person attending a public meeting to report on that meeting. Consequently, filming of Council and Executive meetings (including Committees and Sub Committees) would be permitted.

It was therefore important to ensure that appropriate guidance was made available to assist members of the public who might wish to film meetings and also to help with the conduct of the meeting itself.

A draft Code of Conduct had been produced and was attached at Appendix A to the submitted report. The three key elements of the Code of Conduct included: those circumstances where it would not be possible to film, possible limitations on who might be filmed and the role of the Chair.

The circumstances where it would not be possible to film would include whenever exempt confidential reports were to be considered and which would require, under legislation, the exclusion of the press and public. Limitations on who might be filmed would include members of the public and particularly children.

In circumstances where a member of the public interrupted or disturbed proceedings, which might or might not be in connection with the filming of meetings, the Chair would warn the

person concerned. If the disruption continued, the Chair could order that person's removal from the meeting room in accordance with the provisions within the Council's Constitution.

An amendment to the wording of the Code of Conduct was suggested to clarify that members of the public should remain seated during meetings, unless they did not wish to be filmed.

It was highlighted that the change in legislation and the adoption of the Code would require some consequential changes to the Council's Constitution and it was suggested that the Committee authorised the Assistant Director of Organisation and Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Council, to make any necessary changes.

Interim arrangements were in place for the Council to record the next Council meeting on 2 July 2014, with the recording being made available on the Council's website. A long term integrated solution was currently being developed but the costs were not yet known. Further details would be reported to the Committee in due course.

Whilst it was not a requirement, it was suggested in the Code of Conduct that anyone intending to film should contact the Members' Office in advance of a meeting to seek advice, guidance and help. Notices would be placed outside meeting rooms stating that there was an assumption that people could be filmed during the meeting. Anyone who did not wish to be filmed would be advised to sit or stand at the rear of the meeting room.

It was suggested that the new procedures in relation to filming should be reviewed and any issues or problems arising would be reported back to the Committee in six months' time for review.

RECOMMENDED that:

- a) Page one, point 1 of the draft Code of Conduct be amended to read as follows: "that, subject to the provisions in paragraph 2 below, all members of the public remain seated during the proceedings of the meeting;"
- b) the Council adopt the proposed Code of Conduct detailed at Appendix A, subject to the amendment made at the meeting;
- c) the Assistant Director of Organisation and Governance be authorised to make the necessary consequential changes to the Constitution, in consultation with the Chair of Council;
- d) the Code of Conduct and procedures in relation to filming, photographing and making audio recordings of Council meetings to which the public had a right of access, would be reviewed by the Constitution and Members' Development Committee in six months' time.