

CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Constitution and Members' Development Committee was held on 15 July 2019.

PRESENT: Councillors J Hobson (Chair), L Garvey (Vice Chair), D P Coupe, A Hellaoui, B A Hubbard, J Rathmell, D Rooney, M Storey and C Wright

OFFICERS: Caroline Breheny - Democratic Services Officer
Sylvia Reynolds - Head of Democratic Services

1 **MINUTES - CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS' DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 30 NOVEMBER 2018**

The minutes of the Constitution and Members' Development Committee meeting held on 30 November 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 **REVIEW OF COMMITTEES**

The Head of Democratic Services advised the Committee that Members had requested an item be added to the agenda in respect of undertaking a review in relation to Council Committees. During discussion the following points were raised:-

- That a review be undertaken in respect of the number of Committees, the allocation of seats and whether there was a legal requirement to have as many Members as there were currently on each Committee.
- Democratic Services was required to find £75,000 of savings and streamlining the current arrangements could assist in realising those savings.
- The Terms of Reference for the various committees should be looked at, as well as legal clarity provided on the statutory / non-statutory / regulatory nature of each Committee.
- Consideration should be given to the current structure of the Overview and Scrutiny panels and whether it would be feasible / beneficial to merge / combine any of the panels.
- Caution needed to be exercised to ensure that the size of Committees continued to provide sufficient cross party representation, as well as avoid any increase in inquorate meetings.
- The importance of scrutiny to the local authority was fully recognised.
- Ensuring the right skills mix amongst Members would be of increased importance if the number of Members on individual Committees were to be reduced.
- There was no request for numbers to be changed for political purposes.
- In 2011 the number of Councillors in Middlesbrough reduced from 48 to 46, however, this was not reflected in the total allocation of places (Political Balance remained at 180).
- The Committee should meet more often with dates agreed and approved in advance.
- Clear aims and objectives needed to be established in respect of any proposals to reduce the number of Committees and/or number of Members appointed to individual Committees.
- Certain sections of the Constitution did not currently exist and it would be negligent for the Committee not to undertake any action.
- There were currently a number of inconsistencies in respect of the way in which similar Committees operated, for example, the Staff Appeals Committee currently operated with 3 Members when considering an individual's case whereas the Licensing Committee could have up to 14 Members in attendance, which could be very intimidating for an individual driver fighting for his livelihood. The view was expressed that a greater consistency in approach was needed.

AGREED as follows:-

- a) That a report be produced by the Monitoring Officer in respect of the legal framework / legal requirements for Committee appointments / allocation of places.

b) That a report be produced by the Head of Democratic Services detailing possible options in terms of streamlining the Council's current committee structure.

3 **REVISION OF FILMING OF PUBLIC MEETINGS – CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Head of Democratic Services advised that in response to proposals to increase the use of filming at public meetings a number of suggestions had been put forward by the Council's Marketing and Communications Team and these were presented to Members.

During the discussion that followed the following points were raised:-

- Members welcomed the recommendations and it was agreed that the suggestions put forward be implemented as an interim measure until stronger recommendations had been drafted.
- It was recommended that Works Council be approached in order for the Unions to be consulted in respect of the above proposals, with any additional considerations forwarded to the Head of Democratic Services for inclusion in an updated Code of Conduct for Filming of Public Meetings.
- A report was requested from the Head of Democratic Services detailing an updated / revised code of conduct for the filming of public meetings.

AGREED that the Head of Democratic Services would produce a report detailing an updated / revised code of conduct for the filming of public meetings and an update provided to the next meeting.

4 **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK & MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR 2019/20**

The Committee was advised that the annual Member Development Programme for 2019/20 had been drafted but remained a live document. All Members would also be given the opportunity to undertake a personal development plan.

In response to the plan Members expressed the view that there would be benefit in Officers from the Democratic Services Team speaking directly to the newly elected Members to find out about the areas they were finding difficult and what support they needed. The view was expressed that many of the new Members and particularly the Independent Members did require some additional support.

AGREED that the Head of Democratic Services would identify any additional areas of training required for the newly elected Members.