

**COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday 6 July 2022.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Hobson, I Blades, D Branson, C Cooke, B Cooper, D Coupe, D Davison, S Dean, C Dodds, N Gascoigne, TA Grainge, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, A High, S Hill, C Hobson, B Hubbard, N Hussain, L Lewis, L Mason, T Mawston, D McCabe, C McIntyre, J McTigue, M Nugent, E Polano, G Purvis, J Rathmell, D Rooney, J Rostron, R Sands, M Saunders, M Smiles, M Storey, P Storey, J Thompson and S Walker

**OFFICERS:** C Benjamin, S Bonner, C Breheny, B Carr, G Field, A. Glover, D Johnson, S Lightwing, A Pain, T Parkinson, S Reynolds, A Wilson and I Wright

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors R Arundale, A Bell (Vice-Chair), T Furness, D Jones, J Platt, A Preston (The Mayor), Z Uddin, J Walker, G Wilson and C Wright

22/16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

22/17 **MINUTES - COUNCIL - 25 MAY 2022**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 May 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

22/18 **ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Ian Blades to his first meeting of the Council. Councillor Blades was elected as Councillor for Berwick Hills and Pallister Ward on 30 June 2022.

22/19 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY).**

There were no valid questions submitted within the required timescale, from members of the public for this meeting.

22/20 **MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT**

The Chair advised that as the Mayor had submitted apologies, there was no report from the Mayor for this meeting.

22/21 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORTS**

The Chair invited Members to raise items for general discussion arising from the Information Booklet of Executive Member reports which detailed activities carried out within the respective Executive Member portfolios (Section 1), Executive decisions taken (Section 2) or to be taken where known, prior to and following the meeting (Sections 3 and 4).

Question on Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health, Public Protection and Digital Inclusion report

Councillor Higgins in relation to Covid-19 Update

Councillor Higgins advised that she was surprised that there were not any up-to-date figures in relation to the number of Covid-19 cases in the town. Councillor Higgins also commented on the lack of availability of vaccines.

Councillor Coupe advised that he was not aware of any shortage of vaccines in the town. He advised that he had recently received up to date figures in respect of the number of Covid-19 cases and the number of people that were in hospital because of Covid-19, and he would share the figures with all members of the Council.

Question on Executive Member for Culture and Communities report

Councillor Dean in relation to Homes for Ukraine

Councillor Dean queried regarding the figures for the number of people from Ukraine that were being hosted in Middlesbrough and whether any comparison had been carried out in relation to other towns that were the same size as Middlesbrough.

Councillor Dean also queried regarding whether the families had been well received, were happy and settled, and whether English lessons were being provided.

Councillor Hill advised that at the current time, 30 people were still waiting to travel to Middlesbrough. He advised that he respond to Councillor Dean's other queries in due course, following the meeting.

Questions on Executive Member for Environment report

Councillor P Storey in relation to Waste & Green Collections

Councillor P Storey advised that a year ago, the Council had promised to provide an alley cat refuse vehicle for the Linthorpe Ward, however, to date, they had still not received the vehicle.

Councillor Cooper advised that there had been issues regarding vehicles breaking down and problems with accessing spare parts for the vehicles, but he was not aware of the Council's intention to purchase a new vehicle.

Councillor Storey stated that she had been advised that the Council intended to purchase a new alley cat vehicle for use in Linthorpe Ward.

Councillor Cooper advised that an order had been submitted, but he was unable to advise on a specific date regarding when the new vehicle would arrive. He stated that Councillor Storey would be notified once the vehicle had arrived.

Councillor Cooke in relation to Waste & Green Collections

Councillor Cooke advised that the Council currently collected unwanted fridges and mattresses that had been reported on separate days, but they had committed to providing a complete clean-up so that all the items could be taken away at the same time, but this had not happened.

Councillor Cooper advised that two different vehicles were required to pick up fridges and mattresses. There would also be issues with staffing levels if a complete clean-up was carried out because of the requirement to use two different vehicles. Councillor Cooper advised that he could not provide an exact date for when a complete clean-up would be carried out.

Councillor Cooke advised that the clean-up scheme was supposed to fix the issue of things being collected at different times. The scheme was submitted at the same time as other schemes which had been implemented. Councillor Cooper advised that he investigate the matter and report back to Councillor Cooke.

Councillor Branson in relation to Tree Policy/Planting

Councillor Branson stated that he was pleased that the Tree Policy had been reviewed. He queried regarding what changes had been made to the policy and when the revised policy would be implemented.

The Executive Member advised that the section that had indicated that the Executive Member for Environment would be the arbiter in case of any disputes in relation to the future of any tree had been amended to say that any disputes would be considered by the Head of Service in conjunction with the Executive Member for Environment.

In terms of the implementation of the revised Tree Policy, Councillor Cooper advised that it was intended that the amended Tree Policy would be published as soon as possible.

Question on Executive Member for Finance and Governance report

Councillor M Storey in relation to Quality of Service (We will ensure that we place communities at the heart of what we do, continue to deliver value for money and enhance the reputation of Middlesbrough)

Councillor M Storey stated that the Executive Member report did not make any reference to inflation and inflation pressures, when inflation was currently at 9% and the level was expected to increase in the near future to 11%. He queried regarding what action the Executive Member planned to take to mitigate the negative impact of inflation.

The Executive Member advised that he had discussed the issue in depth with the Director of Finance and had been advised that the biggest impact was the pay rise for staff. This was outside the Council's control as national negotiations were ongoing with Trade Unions and the relevant body that dealt with pay for staff. It was an ongoing developing issue, but it was a high priority.

The Executive Member referred to the earmarked reserves for Adult Social Care and Children's Services and advised that £7m had been transferred partly to support the improvement journey for Children's Services but to acknowledge that the costs would likely increase.

The Executive Member advised that although there was no specific reference to inflation contained within the report, discussions had been held with the Director of Finance regarding this issue.

The Executive Member advised that each service needed to look at contingencies for instance in case of potential strike action by staff.

Question on Executive Member for Neighbourhood Safety report

Councillor Higgins in relation to Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (Increase CCTV across the whole town)

Councillor Higgins stated that it was good to hear about the installation of further cameras and she queried regarding how many staff monitored the cameras and within which time periods.

Councillor Grainge advised that the cameras were monitored on a 24/7 basis and sometimes, they were monitored by two people but at less busy times, they would be monitored by two people or at times, one person.

Councillor Higgins expressed concern regarding the fact that if the number of cameras increased to 700, there would be only one person monitoring them. Councillor Higgins also commented that the Council had spent thousands of pounds on the purchase of Belfast cameras but there was still lots of dumping of rubbish occurring and there was no evidence that the police were taking any action against the perpetrators. Councillor Higgins requested the figures for the number of CCTV cameras installed in each Ward.

The Executive Member advised that he get back to Councillor Higgins in due course, regarding the number of CCTV cameras installed in each Ward. He advised that the cameras acted as a deterrent, but they also recorded twenty-four hours a day and evidence from the recordings had been used as evidence to prosecute fly tippers and had been used in the past as evidence in a murder case and various robberies.

Councillor Grainge advised that people needed to get better at reporting crimes or instances of anti-social behaviour. The cameras that had been installed had to be placed on a legal basis so evidence of reported instances of crime or anti-social behaviour could be used as a basis for determining the location of cameras.

Recently in the Ladgate Ward, evidence of a person damaging a house with a sledgehammer was captured and as a result, a camera was installed as a matter of urgency.

Question on Executive Member for Regeneration report

Councillor Branson in relation to new housing at St Hilda's

Councillor Branson queried regarding the effect of 'nutrient neutrality' on future planning applications in the town and how wide an area would be affected and when the issue was likely to be resolved.

The Executive Member advised that the question was difficult at this time. All the Tees Valley authorities were affected. Stockton was the lead council in respect of this issue as they held all the finances.

Although the Council was unable to grant any planning permissions for housing developments at the moment due to this issue work was ongoing to bring potential schemes forward.

BCGEI were continuing to work with developers on plans for the 500 plus units needed at St Hilda's.

Councillor Branson advised that funding was tight for local authorities and this issue could affect the Council's revenue. He queried whether the Council would receive any compensation from the Government in terms of extra funding or whether services would need to be cut to make up for the shortfall.

The Executive Member advised that this issue was caused by agriculture. He advised that some funding had been allocated but Stockton were leading on any funding received.

Councillor Hubbard in relation to Southlands Centre

Councillor Hubbard queried whether the Executive Member agreed with engaging with all those people affected by the proposal in relation to the design and location of the Southlands Centre.

The Executive Member advised that funding for the building was in place and the Council was working with the local Councillors and residents to ensure that the plans were acceptable for them to be submitted to the Planning and Development Committee. It was hoped that work would start on the development in November, although this could not be guaranteed due to the volatility of the construction sector. Councillor Polano advised that he was in favour of working with the community regarding this proposal.

Councillor Thompson in relation to commencing work on the new Southlands Centre

Councillor Thompson commented that all East Middlesbrough councillors had not been contacted regarding the proposals for the Southlands Centre, only the independent councillors had been invited to the meetings to discuss the proposal. Councillor Thompson also queried about the timescale for commencing the building of the centre as the proposal had been agreed three years earlier.

The Executive Member advised that there had been ongoing negotiations with Sport England, Football England, the Council, and the local community which had taken time to come to an agreement.

Councillor Saunders stated that Councillor Thompson had received invitations to take part in the consultation process. Councillor Thompson advised that she had not been involved in the process. The Executive Member apologised if Councillor Thompson had not been invited to take part in the consultation process.

Questions on Executive Member for Young Adults and Democratic Engagement report

Councillor M Storey in relation to help increase Political Participation and engagement across the town

Councillor Storey commented on the impact of the Elections Bill. He stated that 158 million votes had been cast in the last three elections and there had only been two convictions for voter impersonation. Over 3.5m people did not have photo id. and many of those were from

disadvantaged groups. The type of photo id. currently used was typically a passport or a driving licence. It was currently £75 for a passport and £43 for a driving licence, so it was likely that many people would not be able to afford photo id.

Councillor Storey queried regarding what the Executive Member was going to do to ensure that people would be able to vote and had access to photo id.

Councillor Storey stated that the authority should be promoting the use of postal votes by holding roadshows, going door-to-door, and sending a postal vote application form out to every address with a stamped addressed envelope. Councillor Storey asked if the Executive Member would involve him in future discussions regarding the impact of the Elections Bill.

The Executive Member advised that the Elections Bill did have some benefits.

From the next elections, people would be required to provide a photo id. People could use their driving licence or passport as id. or in December 2022, people could apply for a free voter id. The Council would be promoting and marketing the availability of the id. In addition to this, in terms of accessibility, disabled people over the age of 18 would be allowed to be accompanied by an adult at the polling station.

In terms of absent voting, people would have to renew their application for a postal vote every three years instead of five years. Political entities would no longer be allowed to handle any postal votes that did not belong to them. Members of the public would only be allowed to hand in up to six postal votes at a polling station. With regards to proxy voting, people would only be allowed to act as a proxy for up to four people.

With regards to EU citizens, they would no longer be allowed to register to vote or stand in UK elections. There were however some exceptions to this provision. Countries that the UK had reciprocal agreements with such as Spain would still be allowed to vote and those who had leave to remain in the UK would still be allowed to vote.

There was currently a fifteen-year limit on allowing people that had left the UK to vote in UK elections, but this limit would be scrapped in the future.

The Mayoral, TVCA Mayoral and the PCC elections would in future be conducted using the first past the post system rather than the alternative vote method.

The Executive Member stated that the Elections Bill brought forward several good new provisions which would require a huge effort from the Council to facilitate. If the voter id system could be rolled out effectively, by promoting the system via the Council and Council members it could improve engagement in democracy.

Councillor Storey stated that the Elections Bill was created to address a problem that did not exist. It would make it harder for people to vote at elections. The last By-election turnout was 11% and this needed to be improved. People needed to be encouraged to sign up for postal votes to avoid the need for photo id.

The Executive Member advised that he would be happy to discuss the issue with Councillor Storey.

22/22

## **REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the current position regarding progress made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and each of the individual Scrutiny Panels.

**ORDERED** that the report be noted.

22/23

## **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

**MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

The Chair announced that three questions had been received from members of the Council. The detail of the specific questions was included at Agenda Item 10.

Question 1/2022 - Councillor Saunders to the Executive Member for Environment regarding the cost to Middlesbrough Council on taxis for children who require a taxi to take them to school.

The Executive Member for Environment advised that there was a statutory requirement for the Council to provide transport for vulnerable children. The Council looked to provide best value in the provision of transport to vulnerable children.

The Executive Member provided members with detailed information regarding the number of children using the transport, the types of transport used such as buses, taxis, or minibuses. The costs of each type of transport and details of the tendering process. The Executive Member advised that he email the information after the meeting.

Question 2/2022 – Councillor Wilson to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children's Services regarding how the youth service will tackle anti-social behaviour.

The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children's Services advised that the Council had a range of different Youth Services in Middlesbrough, some of which were directly commissioned by the Council. This included The Linx Youth Project who offered open access Youth Clubs and provision across Middlesbrough for all young people to access, Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation who worked with young people in schools to support them with transitions, and The Junction who worked directly with young people who were vulnerable and required one to one support.

The Junction also delivered detached youth work whereby the Youth Workers went directly onto the streets and estates and engaged with young people. This type of youth work was focused in areas where there was anti-social behaviour.

The Council worked closely with the Police and Community Safety Teams to make sure that these Youth Workers were in the right areas of Middlesbrough. In addition to the Youth Services that the Council funded, there was a range of other Voluntary and Community sector youth services who were working with young people across Middlesbrough through church groups and other organisations.

For those young people who were identified as being involved in anti-social behaviour, the Council had a range of other services including the Neighbourhood Safety Officers and Youth Offending Services who aimed to divert young people away from anti-social behaviour.

Question 3/2022 – Councillor McIntyre to the Executive Member for Culture and Communities regarding the Executive Member's personal experience of visits to some of our cultural venues and what can be done to improve them?

The Executive Member for Culture and Communities advised that he had visited all the Council lead cultural community spaces such as the Dorman Museum, Captain Cook Birthplace Museum, Middlesbrough Theatre, Teesside Archives. Newham Grange Farm, My Place, all the major parks and community hubs and libraries, in addition to several non-Council venues such as MIMA, Ubuntu and Ormesby Hall, all of which formed part of the cultural partnership.

The Council's venues were already improving, with new management at the museums and Newham Grange Farm, looking at ways to bring in revenue to plough back into the venues to improve facilities.

One of the biggest pieces of work that had been undertaken was the Cultural Investment Prospectus. It was crucial to improving the Council's improvement offering and the document was used to attract funding to the town. It was how the Council managed to attract the £5m funding for the renovations to Central Library and the Railway Station. The prospectus had already been praised by several national organisations, including the Arts Council.

The Executive Member advised that if the scrutiny panel or any other members had any ideas for new events or proposals to improve any of the venues, he would be happy to receive them.

22/25

## **NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

Consideration was given to Motion No. 153, moved by Councillor Branson, and seconded by Councillor Hellaoui of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules No. 53-60 as follows:

### Toxic chemicals in the River Tees

In recent weeks, there has been a growing concern over the effects of toxic chemicals in the Tees Estuary, which have had to a significant impact on crab and lobster numbers.

There has been some dispute between DEFRA and independent experts in respect of this.

In view of the uncertainty over the cause and the potential impact on the marine environment, we ask the council to agree to:

1. Write a letter to the TVCA within 28 days to request that they seek to clarify the existing and conflicting scientific research through the commissioning of a new independent report.
2. Write to the other Councils of the TVCA within 28 days to urge them to work together on addressing these environmental issues through, for example, sending a joint letter to the TVCA expressing our concerns and asking for next steps.
3. To recommend that the Economic Development, Environment, and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel gives consideration to adding this environmental issue to the scrutiny topics in the work programme.

The Chair invited Councillor Branson to speak to the Motion.

Councillor Branson stated that the issue had already been highlighted in the press. There had been mass morbidity of crabs and lobsters in the Tees Estuary, and it was having a major impact on fishing catch. There had been protests by local fishermen and there had been concerns from dog walkers regarding the effect on the health of dogs when walking on beaches.

There had been 2 separate investigations carried out. The investigation carried out by DEFRA was not able to identify the cause, but they referred to the presence of algae bloom in the sea. They thought this could be the cause of the issue as it led to oxygen depletion. DEFRA were unable to discover any toxicity in the water. DEFRA relied on satellite pictures to identify the location of the algae bloom; they did not carry out any physical tests.

The findings of DEFRA were challenged by the fishermen and the Whitby Commercial Fishing Association, and they commissioned a marine biologist, Tim Deere-Jones to carry out an independent investigation. Mr Deere-Jones discounted the investigation by DEFRA regarding the presence of algae bloom because for it to be present, the water would need to be over 68° Fahrenheit and the temperature in the sea did not reach those levels.

Mr Deere-Jones identified the presence of a chemical called pyridine in the water around the Tees Estuary. He carried out an investigation into the levels of pyridine in the crabs and discovered that it was seven times higher than the level found in crabs in the south of England. The conclusion of Mr Deere-Jones was that the issue was caused by dredging.

Councillor Branson stated that the true cause of the problem needed to be ascertained. The aim of the motion was to request the TVCA to commission a new report to look at the issue again. The motion also requested that all the other Tees Valley authorities write to the TVCA

regarding their concerns about the issue.

Councillor Cooper advised that DEFRA, the Environment Agency, and Natural England were still looking into the issue. He queried regarding who would fund the commissioning of the new report and why a new report was needed.

Councillor Cooper proposed an amendment to the motion. The amendment was that point 1 and 2 of the motion be deleted so that only point 3. "To recommend that the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel gives consideration to adding this environmental issue to the scrutiny topics in the work programme" remained.

Councillor Polano seconded the amendment to the motion.

Councillor Cooke queried why the Council would not want to write to the TVCA as this was the organisation that sat above the other 4 authorities. All the other authorities intended to submit similar motions to their respective Council meetings. Councillor Cooke pointed out that there were clearly inconsistencies regarding the two reports.

Councillor M Storey stated that he did not see any reason to remove point 1 and 2 of the motion.

Councillor Branson stated that the reason the motion asked TVCA to look at the issue was because the economic health and safety implications were very important. If the issue was not tackled, it could cause substantial harm to the crab and lobster population. The concern was that the issue had not been investigated properly.

The Chair invited the Monitoring Officer to put the proposed amendment to the vote.

Following the vote, the amendment was not carried.

Councillor Hellaoui stated that it was imperative that the authorities received independent research. In September 2021, PD Ports had facilitated the dredging of the Tees Estuary. In October 2021, there was a significant increase in the deaths of sea life in the area. The January/February investigation had referred to temperatures of 20 to 24 degrees, but the actual temperature was likely to be nearer 13 degrees which was not conducive to the presence of algae bloom.

The investigation carried out by Tim Deere-Jones had been crowd funded and he had found no evidence of algae bloom in the sampling that he had carried out. The sample of the mud that had been dredged had revealed contamination. If there was contamination in the area, it would affect future development and public health. Councillor Hellaoui stated that it was therefore important to have a full investigation and receive a detailed report on the outcome.

The Chair invited the Monitoring Officer to conduct a vote on the original motion.

Following a vote, the motion was carried.



22/26 **NOTICE OF URGENT MOTIONS (IF ANY)**

There were no Notice of Urgent Motions submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

22/27 **VACANCIES ON COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council received a report which sought nominations for appointment, following resignations from Committees and vacancies that remained outstanding following the Annual meeting.

The report included a list of current vacancies on various committees and an outside body and nominations were put forward at the meeting by individual members.

**ORDERED** that the following vacancies allocated in accordance with the wishes of the political groups, be approved by Council:

**Schedule B**

**LIVE WELL – SOUTH TEES HEALTH BOARD**

2 Vacancies – No nominations received

**Schedule C**

**CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

1 Vacancy – Councillor Grainge appointed

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL**

1 Vacancy - No nominations received

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

1 Vacancy - No nominations received

**CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES' SCRUTINY PANEL**

1 Vacancy – Councillor Nugent appointed

**CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY STEERING GROUP**

1 Vacancy – No nominations received

**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

1 Vacancy: Councillor Gascoigne appointed

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

1 Vacancy: Following a vote Councillor C Hobson appointed

**SOUTH TEES HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

1 Vacancy: Councillor Rooney appointed

#### **TEES VALLEY HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

1 Vacancy: Councillor Blades appointed

#### **TEESSIDE PENSION FUND COMMITTEE**

1 Vacancy: Councillor Wilson appointed

#### **WORKS COUNCIL**

1 Vacancy: Councillor Thompson appointed

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#### **Outside Body**

#### **NORTH EAST REGIONAL EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATION (NEREO)**

1 Vacancy: Councillor Cooper appointed

#### 22/28 **UPDATE ON URGENT DECISIONS**

The Director of Legal and Governance Services and the Mayor submitted a report which provided Council with an update with regard to all urgent decisions that had been taken under the urgency rules.

**ORDERED** that the report be noted

#### 22/29 **UPDATE TO THE CONSTITUTION**

A report was submitted by the Executive Member for Finance and Governance and Director of Legal and Governance Services and Monitoring Officer regarding an update to the Council Constitution.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance advised that at the last meeting of Full Council, the Update to the Constitution Report was deferred due to concerns raised by Members that the Monitoring Officer was able to make minor amendments to rectify typing errors, name changes etc, or where there were legislative requirements to the Constitution, without member approval.

The Constitution and Members' Development Committee held on 15 June 2022, proposed to amend the current Monitoring Officer delegation to read.

"Minor amendments may be made by the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Chair of the Council and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance, to ensure that the Constitution complies with all relevant legislation, together with such other amendments as the Monitoring Officer may be authorised to make by Council".

The following amendments to the Council Procedure Rules were proposed:

#### **Council Procedure Rules**

##### **Recorded vote**

Amendment to Paragraph 65 of the Council Procedure Rules

If 12 councillors present at the meeting demand it, or if a motion related to a decision regarding the approval of the annual budget, the council tax or the issuing of the precept, the

names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be recorded and entered into the minutes. A demand for a recorded vote will override a demand for a secret ballot (which can be used when voting for positions on committees).

### Cancellation of Council Meetings

Amendment to Paragraph 12 of the Council Procedure Rules

In order to provide clarity, it was proposed that the text regarding Paragraph 12 – Cancellation of Meetings, of the Council Procedure Rules be amended to include:

**Once the proper officer has given notice and summons of a meeting**, the Chair, or the Vice Chair in the Chair's absence, (or the Monitoring Officer if they are satisfied that there is no appropriate business to be considered at the meeting), can postpone, re-arrange, or cancel a meeting of Council, provided:

- (a) twenty-four hours-notice of the cancellation of the meeting is given; and
- (b) that the reason for cancellation is given.

Chairs, or Vice-Chairs in the Chair's absence, of the relevant committee can postpone, re-arrange, or cancel meetings of a committee. A meeting of the Council or its committees or sub-committees may not be cancelled or postponed after the meeting has been duly convened.

### **Inclusion of Group Leader Role Profiles within the Constitution**

The Group Leader Role Profile (appendix 1) to be included in the Council's Constitution at Part 6 – Codes and Protocols.

### **Replacement of Senior Management Chart**

The updated version of the Senior Management Chart should be inserted into the Constitution at Part 5 – Management Structure.

### **Key Decision Threshold**

For clarification purposes, the amount of the key decision threshold, £150,000 (taking into account the lifetime costs or savings of the project), had been included within the Constitution at Article 12 - Paragraph 12.3 – Decision Making.

### **Standards Committee – Changes to the Terms of Reference**

Terms of Reference - Standards Committee

Restrictions: Cannot include the Elected Mayor or Executive Leader and may not be chaired by an Executive Member.

To make reports or recommendations to the Council in relation to: -

- the approval by the Council of local codes of conduct for Members and officers, codes of practice, standing orders and protocols, taking account of national models and guidance or case tribunals.
- the implementation of local codes of conduct etc., and the dissemination throughout the Authority of information and guidance on their operation.
- consideration of any reports relating to the conduct of Members or officers which may be referred to it by the Council's Chair, Monitoring Officer or by the Chief Finance Officer under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, including issues relating to Members' and officers' interests and the maintenance and management of any relevant registers of interests.
- consideration of relevant reports referred by the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer and make recommendations thereon to the Council as necessary.
- Grant dispensations to Councillors, Co-opted Members and Parish Council

Members from the requirements relating to declarations of interest as set out in Section 32 of the Localism Act 2011. The Monitoring Officer may grant a dispensation where the matter is urgent and report it to the next available Standards Committee.

- The determination, following an investigation, of allegations of breaches of Members' Codes of Conduct within such statutory provisions or guidance as may exist and the imposing of any relevant sanctions.
- Discharge of all the above functions required by the Localism Act 2011 in relation to Parish Councils.

### **Access to Information Rules**

The revised Access to Information Procedure Rules be approved and included in the Constitution.

### **The Officer Employment Procedure Rules**

The Council previously approved the changes highlighted below to the Terms of Reference of the Chief Officer Appointments Committee, however these changes should also be reflected in the Officer Employment Procedure rules which also form part of the Constitution.

The provision for the Chief Executive to agree Interim appointments of Directors for up to six months was already included under the Chief Officer Appointment Committee Terms of Reference but needed to be replicated in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules. The changes to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules were outlined in bold.

Appointment of Executive/Strategic/Assistant Directors, Monitoring Officer, and Chief Finance Officer

(a) The appointment of Executive/Strategic/Assistant Directors, the Monitoring Officer, and the Chief Finance Officer will be made by the committee referred to in Rule 3 above, **unless the appointment is on an interim basis (6 months or less).**

**(b) Interim appointments of Directors, for 6 months or less are delegated to the Head of Paid Service. Longer and permanent appointments to be reserved to the Chief Officer Appointments Committee.**

(c) An offer of employment to these posts shall only be made where no well-founded objection has been received from any member of the Executive.

Following a vote, it was **ORDERED** as follows:

That Council approve the following:

(a) The proposed changes to the Constitution as detailed above and notes that the Monitoring Officer would, under delegated powers, amend the Constitution accordingly.

(b) The current Monitoring Officer delegation be amended so that any changes to the Constitution would be made by the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Chair of the Council and the Executive Member for Finance and Governance.

### **PAPER-LITE AND REMOTE MEETINGS**

A report was submitted by the Executive Member for Finance and Governance and Director of Legal and Governance Services and Monitoring Officer regarding paper-lite and remote meetings.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance presented the report. The report requested Council to consider the implementation of a four-month trial of paper-lite meetings, meaning that all councillors would access their committee papers through

Modern Gov.

To ensure all concerns in the implementation of this pilot were addressed, it was proposed that members would be offered guidance, support, and training alongside a degree of flexibility for members to print off their own meeting papers, either at home, through a multi-functional device within the Town Hall, or request that a copy be posted out.

Council was also asked to consider its stance on retaining the flexibility of remote committee meetings for non-decision-making meetings.

Following a vote. It was **ORDERED** that:

- I. A four-month trial of paper-lite meetings be held for all Council, Executive or any other Council meeting, Panel or Working Group by embracing the current technology available to councillors and officers.
- II. That face-to -face meetings be resumed for all Council constituted formal committee meetings including scrutiny and advisory committees. This would not preclude 'experts' such as foster carers (Corporate Parenting Board) or health professionals (Health scrutiny) attending remotely but all Committee members would be required to attend the meeting in person. This would be reviewed should further government guidance or legal clarity can be achieved.