

GOVERNANCE AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Meeting - 23 November 2017

Present: P Hogan (Chairman)
D Anthony, J Lowen-Cooper, D Pepler and D Smith

Also Present: M Bezzant

Apologies for Dr W Matthews
absence:

11. MINUTES

The minutes of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee held on 27 September were agreed as an accurate record.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION - PART B:

In accordance with the agreed constitutional review work programme, Members undertook a detailed review of Part B - 'Procedure Rules'.

The Council's Constitution was last reviewed in 2014/15 and an updated version came into effect in May 2015. This took into account the reduction in the number of members and incorporated shared working arrangements with Chiltern District Council in place at the time. However, Members were advised that it has been necessary to amend the Constitution to ensure that it is up to date and user friendly, and to introduce harmonised procedures with Chiltern District Council where this would facilitate more effective running of shared services. Therefore, Members were advised that the Procedure Rules had been updated to reflect changes to Committees that had taken place since May 2015, and that all references to the "proper officer" had been amended to reflect the relevant specified officer.

Members noted that changes had been made to both Annual and Ordinary Council rules in order to clarify procedures and make clear the decisions that would be taken at each meeting. Members felt that formalised, relevant presentations at Council meetings should be placed higher on the Agenda for the benefit of presenters.

The Committee questioned the proposed new procedure for making temporary changes to membership of committees. It was confirmed that proposed changes would be submitted to the Democratic & Electoral Services Manager by the Group Leader or their deputy or other nominated person in advance of the meeting date.

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It was questioned whether the notice of Summons to Meetings should include a reference to paper summons when electronic communication was now the norm. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services agreed to check the relevant legislation and report back to Members at a forthcoming meeting.

Members felt that imposing a time limit of 15 minutes to wait for a meeting to be quorate would not allow for exceptional circumstances to be taken into consideration. It was therefore requested that the regulation be amended to read "or longer at the discretion of the Chairman in exceptional circumstances".

The Committee were minded to retain Rule 15 – Themed Debate, as Members felt that themed debates might usefully be taken forward in future.

The Committee were advised on the rules surrounding the recording of meetings. It was noted that the public had a statutory right to record meetings via audio without notifying democratic services, but that permission was needed for filming or photography which could cause disruption to a meeting. Members were advised that, although members of the public could object to being filmed or photographed, Councillors could not.

The Committee requested that the following paragraphs/sentences be re-written to make them easier to understand:

- Appendix 2: 2 (Ordinary Meetings – bullet point n).
- Appendix 2: 10.3 (Notice of Questions) – make clear that the rule is a *or b*, not a *and b*.
- Appendix 2: 20.2 (Recording of Proceedings) – to read "audio and/or visual equipment".
- Appendix 3: 3.1 (Decisions of Cabinet – bullet point e) – to refer to delegation by Cabinet to another authority.

The amendments to the document as agreed would be reflected in the final draft Constitution presented for consideration by the Committee as outlined in the Committee's work programme.

RESOLVED that the proposed revisions to the Procedure Rules shown in Appendices 1 to 7 be agreed subject to the incorporation of the amendments set out in the minute above.

The meeting terminated at 7.03 pm