



Standards and General Purposes Committee minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards and General Purposes Committee held on Thursday 8 April 2021 in Via MS Teams Video Conference, available to the public at <https://buckinghamshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 11.02 am.

Members present

J Waters, H Mordue, B Adams, S Adoh, M Appleyard, A Collingwood, C Etholen, G Harris, S Lambert, L Smith BEM and M Stannard

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Bloom, Knight and Moore.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 February 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Review of the Constitution

The Committee received the report on the review of the Constitution, under the Local Government Act the Council was required to prepare and keep up to date the Constitution. The Shadow Authority had adopted a new Constitution for Buckinghamshire Council which took effect from 1 April 2020 with a proposal to review this document in April 2021 to ensure the Council's operation as a new authority was properly supported and governed by the Constitution.

A Constitution Members Working Group consisting of the Chairmen and Vice-chairmen of both this Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee had met a number of times to consider proposed changes and provide initial comments to help inform the review of the Constitution as required by full Council.

As the Audit and Governance Committee has responsibility to maintain an overview of those aspects of the Council's Constitution which relate to decision-making, the

Contract Procedure Rules and the Financial Procedure Rules, proposals for changes to the Constitution, apart from the Code of Conduct, were presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 24 March 2021 which were approved without amendment and were attached as Appendix A to the report.

The proposed changes to the Constitution included a number of areas such as joint arrangements, community boards, council and committee procedure rules, planning committee procedures and protocol, senior appointments and pay committee, contract procedure rules and delegations. The Councillor Code of Conduct was also attached at Appendix B.

Members considered Appendix A and commented as follows:

Proposals 16-17 (Strategic Sites Committee / Area Planning Committees)

- That it might be helpful for any decision on determining the route of an application through Committee, to be made by the Service Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategic Sites Committee and the relevant Area Planning Committee.
- That once a decision was made to decide an application at Committee, particularly the Strategic Sites Committee, then local Members should be informed.
- **Proposal 9** (Planning Speaking Arrangements) – it was clarified that when a number of people registered to speak for / against an application, then they had to share the speaking time allocated.
- That where large applications were considered by the Strategic Sites Committee, the Chairman should have some discretion to vary the speaking arrangements for that application.
- **Proposal 10** (Automatic right of the Member calling in to speak at Committee) – Members were supportive of this proposal.
- **Proposal 15** (Town/Parish Council request for call in) – Members were supportive of this proposal.
- **Proposal 20** (Speaking Arrangements for Regulatory Committees) – Members were supportive of this proposal.
- **Proposal 21** (Senior Appoints and Pay Committee) – Members were supportive of this proposal, whilst also commenting that they hoped that the power would not need to be used.
- **Proposal 24 (Waivers)** – it was explained that the current process was felt to be cumbersome but the proposal still required a minimum of 3 separate approvals to be obtained for each waiver. Most waivers related to commercial issues rather than legal issues. While information on waivers was reported 6 monthly to the Audit and Governance Committee, a concern was expressed that this oversight took place after waiver decisions had been made.
- **Proposal 25 (Delegations)** – that as the senior management team worked as one, it would be sensible for the Deputy Chief Executive or Directors to be able to make an immediate urgent decision, if required.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the proposals for changes to the Constitution be noted.**
- (2) That, subject to Officers updating the Appendices to take account of the views expressed at the meeting, Council be RECOMMENDED to agree the proposals for changes to the Constitution.**

5 Work Programme

The Committee considered the Work Programme and noted that items on Code of Conduct Complaints Report 2020-21 and Public Health and Covid Secure Measures put in place for the Local Elections would be considered at the next meeting on 15 April, 2021.

Other agenda items on the Work Programme would be reported to the first meeting following the elections (7 July 2021).

RESOLVED –

That the Work Programme be noted.