

## **Policy and Resources Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Monday 20 April 2015**

**10:00am Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

### **Present:**

Mr G Nobbs (Chair)

Mr S Agnew

Mr M Baker

Mr B Borrett

Mr M Castle

Mr A Dearnley

Mr J Dobson

Mr D Harrison

Mr C Jordan

Mr I Monson

Mr S Morphew

Mr D Ramsbotham

Mr R Smith

Dr M Strong

Mrs A Thomas

### **Substitute Members Present:**

Miss J Virgo for Mrs J Leggett

Mr A White for Mr A Proctor

### **Other Members Present:**

Mr R Bearman

Mr R Coke

Mr J Joyce

Mrs S Whitaker

### **1. Apologies**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J Leggett

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest

### **3 Items of Urgent Business**

3.1 There were no items of urgent business.

### **4 Review of Governance Arrangements**

4.1 The annexed report (4) by the Head of Law and Monitoring Officer was received.

- 4.2 The report summarised the review of the Council's new governance arrangements commissioned by the Council to assess how those arrangements were operating in practice and made a number of recommendations about ways in which they could be improved.
- 4.3 The Committee noted that the Group Leaders (the '**Review Steering Group**') had met twice to consider feedback on this matter (from a member survey, workshops, and suggestions from external stakeholders and officers) and had agreed to the recommendations contained in the report.
- 4.4 In response to comments made by Mr Dobson seeking the opportunity to "in meeting" change the constitution if the Council so agreed, the Head of Law and Monitoring Officer said that it was for the Council to determine its own constitution and the power to change the constitution laid with the Council. She said that Members had given very full consideration to the contents of the constitution and changes should not be made lightly. They should only be made by the Council after seeking proper advice from officers and receiving a full understanding of the implications of the change.
- 4.5 In response to comments made by Mr Smith, it was pointed out by the Head of Law and Monitoring Officer that the report envisaged that the Chairs of Service Committees would be expected to attend Policy and Resources Committee to answer Members' questions and that the Chairs of Service Committees would not become Members of the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 4.6 Mr Dobson moved, duly seconded:
- "This Council recognises that the existence of discrete entities of the Administration and the Opposition are not formally recognised under the existing Committee system and therefore calls on the officers to bring forward proposals on how these two functions can be properly defined and recognised in the Council's constitution."
- On being put to the vote this motion was **AGREED** with no votes against and two abstentions.
- 4.7 Mr Morphey then moved, duly seconded:
- That with regard to paragraph 3.1.7 of the report, it should be a matter for the full Council to appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Economic Development Sub-Committee."
- On being put to the vote the motion was **AGREED**, there being 9 votes in favour and 7 votes against.
- 4.8 Mr Dobson then moved, duly seconded:
- To add as an ADDENDUM to the review of the Committee system of Governance:

“That the previous “Councillor Call for Action” be re-constituted as an instrument for operation within the Committee system.”

On being put to the vote the motion was **LOST**, there being 8 votes in favour and 9 votes against.

4.9 The Committee then **RESOLVED** (by 9 votes in favour and 8 votes against):

That (subject to the addition of those motions which had been agreed earlier in this meeting) Full Council be recommended to agree to the following:

- a) Committee Chairs will be expected to attend all meetings of the Policy Resources Committee in a non-voting capacity in order to ensure that Service Committee views are shared, Service Committees are held to account and service priorities are integrated into any strategy and policy decisions;
- b) that the role profile of Group Spokespersons is enhanced to include a greater input into agenda planning and to increase their role as a conduit into broader group relationships and their participation in scrutiny and challenge;
- c) for Chairs and Vice-Chairs to be required to agree and publish their respective areas of responsibility on an annual basis promptly following the AGM;
- d) to allow an additional time slot of up to 15 minutes to expressly permit members of the public to raise questions through their local member at Committee meetings, with discretion for the Chair to allow members of the public to address the Committee in exceptional circumstances where there is an issue of significant public concern or where a petition is being presented;
- e) that the time allocated at full Council for questions to Committee Chairs be increased from five to ten minutes and the time for questions to the Leader be twenty minutes which could be either questions to the Leader in relation to the role generally as well as in his/her role as Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee;
- f) that the Protocol for Conducting Committee Business referred to in Section 3.2.1 be agreed and incorporated in the Constitution;
- g) that the proposals for Area Committees that were included in the Constitution agreed at the Council’s AGM in 2014 now be removed;
- h) that the provision for a Chairman’s casting vote included in the procedures for Council meetings should be replicated in the procedures for Committee meetings;
- i) that the Working Groups Protocol will be incorporated in the Constitution;
- j) that the procedures for nominations of Service Committee and of Economic Development Sub-Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs at the Council’s AGM be expressed to permit a slate of nominations.

The meeting concluded at 11.35 am

**CHAIRMAN**



**If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Tim Shaw on 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.**