
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Committee Room, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 12 June 2019 from 5.00pm - 5.34pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Vice-Chairman), Mike Dendor, Harrison, Alan Horton, Denise Knights, Richard Palmer, Roger Truelove (Chairman), Mike Whiting and Corrie Woodford.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Katherine Bescoby, David Clifford and Estelle Culligan.

41 **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

42 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 September 2018 (Minute Nos. 233 – 238) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

43 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

44 **CONSTITUTION CHANGES**

The Chairman introduced the report, explaining that the aim of the proposals was to make Council meetings more open and interactive, and for less time to spent on the Leader's Statement.

In respect of the Planning procedure rules, the proposal suggested would allow a representative from more than one parish/town council to speak if the application affected more than one parish/town council area.

Procedure Rule 14 – Member Questions

Debate ensued on Appendix 2, which centred on the time limit allowed for this item; the current practice of providing a written question and answer in advance of the meeting; and whether a three minute time limit for each supplementary question and answer was necessary.

Members agreed with the proposed changes subject to keeping the maximum time limit for questions to 30 minutes and removing the time limit for the supplementary question and answer. Wording would be added to reflect that supplementary questions should be short and relate to the original question, and the answer should be promptly answered. Members agreed to also remove the first sentence of the procedure rule which was considered to be unnecessary.

Procedure Rule 18 – Leader’s Statement

The Leader explained his intention not to provide a written Leader’s Statement but to give a verbal update at each meeting on the work of the Cabinet. There was discussion regarding the proposal to only allow the Leader of the Opposition to respond, rather than all Members, and on the time limit suggested.

It was agreed that the Leader would provide a list of bullet points in advance of the Council meeting to the Opposition Group Leader, so that he was aware of the topics that would be covered.

In respect of the timing of this item, it was agreed that the Leader should be given seven minutes to give his statement; the Opposition Group Leader five minutes to respond: and the Leader three minutes to respond.

Planning Committee Procedure Rules – Public Participation Rules

Discussion ensued on Appendix 6 and changes were suggested to the wording to make it clear that (a) and (b) referred to parish/town council areas and not wards. It was also clarified that one representative would be allowed to speak for each category, and that for (b) this meant that one representative from each parish/town council area affected.

There was discussion regarding the need for the Council to approve the changes before they could be implemented, and it was agreed that the report on changes to the constitution would be updated to reflect the discussion at the General Purposes Committee and would be added as the first item to the agenda for the Council meeting on 26 June 2019. This would allow the changes to take immediate effect at that meeting.

Recommended:

(1) That the Council amends the Constitution as follows:

(1.1) Council Procedure Rule No. 14, Member Questions, as set out in Appendix 2, subject to the changes outlined in the above Minute.

(1.2) Council Procedure Rule No. 18, Leader’s Statement, as set out in Appendix 4, subject to the changes outlined in the above Minute.

(1.3) Public Participation Rules, section 5, Planning Committee, as set out in Appendix 6, subject to the changes outlined in the above Minute.

(2) That the above changes to the Constitution take immediate effect.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel