
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Virtual Meeting held Via Skype on Wednesday, 17 March 2021 from 5.30 pm - 5.49 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock, Mike Dendor (substitute for Councillor David Simmons), Angela Harrison, Ken Ingleton, Denise Knights, Ben J Martin, Roger Truelove, Mike Whiting and Corrie Woodford.

OFFICERS PRESENT: David Clifford, Robin Harris, Jo Millard and Larissa Reed.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Monique Bonney, Steve Davey, Alastair Gould, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes, Lee McCall, Richard Palmer, Hannah Perkin and Ken Rowles.

APOLOGY: Councillor David Simmons.

553 INTRODUCTION

The Chairman explained that the meeting would be conducted in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No. 392.

In welcoming all Members, the Chairman explained which Swale Borough Council officers were in attendance.

554 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 December 2020 (Minute Nos. 341 – 345) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

555 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

556 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS: MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

The Deputy Leader introduced the report which sought to recommend changes to the Council procedure rules on motions with notice (Rule 15) and amendments to motions (Rule 17). He said the proposals would allow for better debate and gave more clarity. He proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Ben J Martin.

In highlighting the significant implications that might arise without advance consideration, the Monitoring Officer said the proposals allowed for more consideration of an evidence-based decision. He drew Members' attention to pages 10 and 12 which set out the updated wording.

In the debate that followed, Members raised points which included:

- the proposed changes would assist in making informed judgements;
- welcomed the changes as it was sometimes difficult to read amendments in small font on a screen during a virtual meeting;
- would give a better debate; and
- sought clarity on the discretion of the mayor to allow points of order or urgent amendments.

The Monitoring Officer said that the raising of points of order during Council needed to be handled with greater reference to the definition of a point of order given in the procedure rules.

Recommended:

(1) That the changes to the Council procedure rules as set out in the appendices to the report be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

557 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME - PARENTAL AND SICKNESS LEAVE

The Leader introduced the report which sought to recommend a provision for parental and sickness leave for Councillors in the Members' Allowance Scheme, as recommended by the Swale Independent Remuneration panel. He said the amendment to the scheme sent an important message, supported diversity and had a limited cost implication. He proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Mike Baldock.

Members spoke in support of the proposal, which some other Boroughs already supported, and said that the change removed barriers and might encourage a more diverse range of residents to stand for election in the future.

Recommendation:

(1) That the changes to the Members' allowances scheme as set out in paragraph 3.3 in the report be endorsed and recommended to Full Council for adoption.

Chairman

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