
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 12 May 2021 from 5.00 pm - 5.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Vice-Chairman), Angela Harrison, Ken Ingleton, Denise Knights, David Simmons, Roger Truelove (Chairman), Mike Whiting and Corrie Woodford.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, David Clifford, Jo Millard and Larissa Reed.

APOLOGY: Councillor Ben J Martin.

632 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

Part A Minutes for Recommendation to Council

633 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS: CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Committee considered the report which set out proposed changes to the Council's committee structure and to introduce three Cabinet Advisory Committees. The Cabinet Member for Planning said that the proposal would open-up decision making for all members and was a step towards a full committee system. He thanked members of the Policy Development Review Committee (PDRC) whose recommendations had been considered and thanked the Monitoring Officer for his input. The Leader drew attention to the recommendation from PDRC for 15 members to sit on each Committee and advised that as the 7 Cabinet members could not sit on a Committee, some members may sit on more than one of the three Committees.

In the discussion that followed, members asked questions and raised comments which included clarification on how well developed the process was, comparing how the Area Committees needed improvement, timescales, clarification on how a Cabinet Member would deal with advice from a committee if they did not agree, and resource implications to support the new committees. In response, the Cabinet Member for Planning said that Cabinet Advisory Committees were less complicated than Area Committees and suggested implementing follow-up working groups after each cycle as this had helped improve the Area Committee process. The Leader said if Cabinet did not agree with recommendations from a Cabinet Advisory Committee, they would explain why. He said that officer resource would be budgeted for but had not yet been committed, and the process of working towards a Committee System would commence in October 2021.

Several members spoke in support and highlighted the benefits of all members of the council being involved in decision making. A member suggested a review after each cycle of committees.

Members agreed to update the title of each committee to the following:

- Community with Economy and Development;
- Policy and Finance with Housing; and
- Environment with Health and Wellbeing.

Recommended:

(1) That changes to Part 3.2.1 of the council's constitution as set-out in the report be 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