

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS SERVICES SCRUTINY
PANEL
HELD ON THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2014
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1
AT 7.00 - 8.55 PM**

Members Present: Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), A Watts (Vice-Chairman), Mrs J Lea, Mrs M McEwen, A Mitchell MBE, J Philip, Mrs C P Pond, D Stallan and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Other members present:

Apologies for Absence: D Dorrell, G Waller and S Weston

Officers Present S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), P Maginnis (Assistant Director Human Resources), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

16. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

It was noted that Councillor A Mitchell was substituting for Councillor G Waller.

17. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last Panel meeting held on 23 September 2014 be agreed subject to the following amendment:

Minute Item 13 Constitution Review – Initial Scoping Report, under “RESOLVED” (2) (a) “That the Panel create sub-groups to scrutinise sections of the Constitution and report back to the Panel” be amended to read “That, if and when the panel becomes overloaded with this task, sub-groups be appointed to scrutinise specific parts of the Constitution and report back to the Panel.”

18. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made pursuant to the Member Code of Conduct.

19. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME

(a) Terms of Reference

The Panel’s Terms of Reference were noted.

(b) Work Programme

It was advised that the Development Control Chairmen and Vice Chairmen’s meeting on 2 December 2014 would be discussing procedures at planning sub-committees which formed part of the Constitution Review. Their views would form part of a

subsequent discussion regarding planning sub-committees at the Planning Scrutiny Panel next month.

20. JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Director (Human Resources) regarding the Review of the Terms of Reference – Joint Consultative Committee.

Following a Management Board report in December 2012, it was acknowledged that the Terms of Reference for the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) had not been reviewed for a period of considerable time. Therefore Management Board agreed that a review of the JCC should take place.

The JCC was the Council's forum whereby discussions took place with the recognised trade unions in line with the representations at a regional level. However the Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) had identified that non-union members were not represented at the JCC. Whilst technically correct, as trade unions were not required to represent non-union staff, it was noted that:

- (a) The trade union representatives who attended the Committee had to be employees of the Council;
- (b) There were 9 trade union representatives from a range of service areas who between them were likely to hold a range of views similar to employees who were not trade union representatives; and
- (c) All representatives, whether staff or member, were permitted to share their views with the Committee and did so.

It was advised that work was progressing outside the review of the JCC Terms of Reference regarding internal staff communications. The Council had appointed a graduate under the National Graduate Development Programme, the Council's Management Board had agreed that they carry out a review of staff communications/engagement. As part of the review they would draft and develop an Employee Engagement Strategy.

Currently, the Lead Officer for the JCC was in a position to be able to take forward the views of employees and present these to the committee. Additionally, there had been a specific responsibility added to the Terms of Reference to inform staff of the outcome of the Committee meetings via District Lines.

Members supported applying the current substitution rules to this committee.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Joint Consultative Committee's Terms of Reference be recommended to the Cabinet for approval.

21. CONSTITUTION REVIEW - ARTICLES

The Panel received a report and appendices from the Assistant Director Governance and Performance Management regarding the Constitution Review – Articles of the Constitution.

At their last meeting the Panel had agreed to commence their review of the Constitution with proposals for amended articles. The Panel received proposals for changes from officers, for these amendments and made further suggestions.

Some articles were recommended for re-writing and would be submitted to future Panel meetings and would be subject to consultation with Members and would be eventually require the assent of Full Council.

Members noted that in regard to Article 10 – Area Committees (Sub-Committees), a PICK form had been referred to the Planning Scrutiny Panel who would be discussing it on 9 December 2014 and making recommendations to this Panel. All re-drafted sections would be re-submitted for approval by the Panel at a subsequent meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management be requested to amend the relevant articles and re-submit new drafts to a future Panel meeting.

22. CONSTITUTION REVIEW - COUNCIL PROCEDURAL RULES

The Panel felt that they had made good progress on the Articles of the Constitution but this had left them little time to complete the evening's agenda. It was therefore decided to adjourn Item 8 Constitution Review – Council Procedural Rules to the Panel meeting scheduled for February 2015. Panel Members were requested to retain their copies of the current agenda for this meeting.

23. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Panel Chairman advised that she would provide a verbal update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting on progress made with the Constitution Review.

24. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Panel was advised that its next scheduled meeting was on Tuesday 13 January 2015, however because key staff could not attend this meeting, it was agreed that the Panel would meet on Monday 16 February 2015.