

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS SERVICES SCRUTINY
STANDING PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2013
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1
AT 7.00 - 8.45 PM**

Members Present: J Philip (Chairman), A Watts (Vice-Chairman), R Morgan, Mrs C Pond, Mrs M Sartin, Mrs P Smith, D Stallan, Mrs J H Whitehouse and G Waller

Other members present:

Apologies for Absence: R Cohen, Mrs R Gadsby and Mrs M McEwen

Officers Present I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

11. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting of the Panel meeting held on 25 June 2013 be agreed.

12. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

It was noted that Councillor Mrs P Smith was substituting for Councillor Mrs R Gadsby.

13. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

It was noted that there were no declarations made pursuant to the Member's Code of Conduct.

14. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME

(a) Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were noted.

(b) Work Programme

It was noted that Item 9 Review of Polling Stations was scheduled for January 2014.

15. PROCESS REVIEW ON APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL

The Panel received a report from the Senior Democratic Services Officer regarding the Vice Chairman of Council – Appointment Review.

At the annual meeting of the Council it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be asked to undertake a review of the process for the nomination

to and appointment of the Vice Chairman of Council. Subsequently, the committee had delegated that review to this Panel. At the Panel meeting on 25 June, members asked for a further report with information regarding how other local authorities arranged their appointment process for the position of Vice Chairman of Council.

Points System

The Points System was operated by the Council during the period 2000 – 07. The system created a rotational system linked to numbers of Councillors in any group. The system was replaced with the current system by May 2007.

Firstly it took control of the appointment process away from the members, and secondly, no independent members would ever have been made Chairman, as it was based on group strengths.

Online Research

During the summer, the Council received help from a student intern Roisin Perry, who had undertaken online research with other authorities. Over 80 other local authorities had been looked at. It was advised that a majority of other authorities did not have a defined process except that the Vice Chairman was appointed at the annual meeting.

The Panel supported the following:

- (1) The individual elected to the office of Chairman of Council should be elected on merit by the Council at its annual meeting.
- (2) The appointment of the Vice Chairman of the Council should be undertaken by the Council on the basis of merit in accordance with the following provisions:
 - (a) Nominees for the office of Vice-Chairman of the Council should be required to submit a nomination form supported and signed by not less than 15 serving District Councillors by the date on which the Appointments Panel holds its first meeting in any municipal year;
 - (b) Nominees for Vice-Chairman of the Council may be Councillors from any political group on the Council or any independent or unaffiliated Councillor;
 - (c) Nominations should be considered by the Appointments Panel for onward recommendation to the Annual Council meeting;
 - (d) The person appointed by the Council as Vice-Chairman of the Council should normally be elected as the Chairman of the Council for the following Council year;
 - (e) If, a Vice-Chairman was unable to be elected as Chairman of the Council following their year as Vice-Chairman, the procedure outlined in (a) to (c) above, should also apply to the election of a new Chairman; and

- (f) The Council may suspend the operation of the appointment process set out under (a) to (c) above, at an Annual Council meeting. A motion to that effect giving reasons as to why this would be in the best interests of the Council could only be adopted if the equivalent of 65% of Council members present at the meeting voted in favour.

RESOLVED:

That a revised version of Constitution Article 5 be prepared by officers incorporating these proposals for consideration at the next Panel meeting plus consultation with all members via the member's Bulletin.

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

The Chairman of the Panel would update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made concerning the Process Review on Appointment of Vice-Chairman of Council.

17. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Panel was scheduled for Tuesday 19 November 2013 at 7.00p.m. in Committee Room 1.

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