

PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

20 September 2022

Present:-

Councillors F Biederman, J Hart, J Hodgson, S Hughes, C Leaver, C Whitton and I Hall (Chair)

Apologies:-

Councillors J Brazil

* **22** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022 be signed as a correct record.

* **23** **Items requiring urgent attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* **24** **Members Home Addresses - Public Disclosure and Publication**

The Committee considered the Report of the County Solicitor (Interim) which asked the Committee to review the issue of public disclosure of Members home addresses.

They noted that following the Standards Committee's consideration of the Government's response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's Review of Local Government Ethical Standards, that Committee had asked that further work be carried out for options aiming to improve Councillors' safety, including disclosure of addresses.

In that original Report, there had been 26 recommendations, the second of which was regarding the disclosure of Councillors home addresses, specifically asking that Government ensure that candidates standing for / accepting public offices were not required publicly to disclose their home address (i.e. that the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 be amended).

The Standards Committee had expressed concern over the public disclosure of Members addresses, particularly in light of increased incidents of abuse, harassment and intimidation experienced by Councillors as well as the legislative position for disclosure of Councillor addresses, as outlined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 and also the threshold for determining non-disclosure of councillor addresses.

The Report gave some Benchmarking data as well as National Campaigns such as the LGA debate not hate campaign <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/debate-not-hate> and also the ninth Census of Local Authority Councillors in England.

The Report proposed that all Members were contacted and asked if they wished for their home address to be published on their profile page, or whether the County Hall address or another Council premises address was utilised as a correspondence / business address. The preference would then be reflected on the profile page on the website.

Members also discussed the LGA 'debate not hate' campaign being reflected on the democracy webpages, the legal position with addresses on election notices and the logistical position with potentially additional postage.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Biederman, **SECONDED** by Councillor Leaver, and;

RESOLVED that the suggestion of publication of home addresses on individual profile pages is a choice for individual Members, notwithstanding the current legislative position that the register of interests must include a home address unless the Member concerned and Monitoring Officer deem this to be a "sensitive interest, be endorsed.

* **25** **Draft Calendar of meetings - 2023/2024**

The Committee considered the draft calendar of meetings for 2023/24 prepared in line with the pattern of previous years, known determinants and relevant factors.

The Committee noted that the budget cycle had been pushed back as far as was possible in terms of Scrutiny meetings and Budget Consultations in order to support the finance process as part of budget setting.

There was also a proposal for four Council meetings per year as opposed to five, to contribute towards required budget savings.

The calendar also included Scrutiny masterclasses and Member Development sessions.

Members discussed the merit of commencing Full Council at 2.00pm as opposed to 2.15pm and also the difficulty of the budget meeting always falling in the February half term.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hughes, and

RESOLVED that the draft Calendar for 2023/2024 be approved for publication, noting that Council meetings remained at the start time of 2.15pm.

26 Casting Vote of Chair (Election of Chair)

The Committee reviewed Standing Order (33) which related to the process of voting on appointments, including Standing Order 33(4) which outlined the process for an equality of votes (where the Chair did not exercise their casting vote the matter should be determined by lot)

They also noted the process for appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs to Committees and that in relation to the Highways and Traffic Orders Committees (Standing Order 24(1)), they elected a Chair and Vice-Chair at the first meeting of those Committees after the Annual Meeting of the County Council, further noting that it was technically possible (except in an Election year) for the existing Chair to use their casting vote to put themselves back in the Chair for the forthcoming year.

The Committee considered whether this was appropriate.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor Leaver and

RESOLVED that Standing Orders be amended to remove the right of an existing Chair to use a casting or second vote to place themselves back in the chair role for the forthcoming year. Any tied vote in this instance would be determined by lot.

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 11.12 am