

## PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

23 November 2023

Present:-

Councillors J Hart (Chair), J Hodgson, S Hughes, C Whitton, P Prowse and Y Atkinson

Councillors Biederman and Leaver attended remotely

\* **43**      **Election of Chair**

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

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Hart be elected Chair for the meeting.

\* **44**      **Minutes**

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

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023 be signed as a correct record.

\* **45**      **Items requiring urgent attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

\* **46**      **Local Member Protocol - Think Local Councillor**

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, (LDS/23/20) which presented a Local Member Protocol – ‘Think Local Councillor’ for adoption into the Council’s Constitution.

The Committee noted that following matters raised by a number of Elected Members, a request was made for the Governance Review Working Group to consider a protocol which focussed on Officer communication and consultation with Elected Members.

Research had been carried out, examining guidance and best practice from other authorities and a proposed protocol was considered by the Working Group on the 2 October 2023.

The Governance Review Working Group Members were supportive of the guidance, and endorsed the protocol and recommended its presentation to the Procedures Committee.

The proposal aligned to the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 by supporting the commitment of ensuring that the Council made good decisions, was transparent and supported being a trusted and inclusive Council that heard the voices of communities and listened and learned.

The proposed Local Member Protocol '**Think Local Councillor**' strengthened current processes and would need to be formally communicated to service areas in order to achieve its purpose.

Members raised the following matters and asked questions as follows:

- that the reference to consultations should be wider than highways and planning matters;
- the importance of considering the impact on adjoining divisions;
- the role of parishes; and
- the importance of maintaining confidentiality and understanding when matters might be embargoed.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Committee endorse the Local Member Protocol, as at Appendix A of the Report, subject to the amendments to clarify the wider range of consultations and the recognition of the importance of adjoining / adjacent divisions, to be included alongside the Council's Protocol on Member / Officer Relations listed at 6h of the Constitution, and therefore recommend its adoption to the Council.

\* **47**      **Scrutiny Procedure Rules - Part 4d**

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, (LDS/23/21) which proposed minor updates to Part 4d of the Constitution (Scrutiny Procedure Rules).

As part of the work of the Governance Review Working Group, a review of the Scrutiny function had commenced in early September. The review was ongoing, but it was noted early in the review that not many Constitutional changes would be required as part of the work.

The Governance Working Group considered a small number of proposed changes to the current Scrutiny Procedure Rules at its meeting on 2 October 2023, which were intended to update current working practices and ensure alignment to other parts of the Constitution.

The changes proposed were reflected in Appendix A of the Report which included a rewording of section 10, which ensured that the ability of Members of the Committee to submit agenda items under Standing Order 23, reflected the Member led process of Scrutiny in aligning such matters to its agreed work programme. The changes also reflected the updated terminology of

spotlight reviews, standing overview groups and masterclasses. The proposed changes also removed the reference to the Joint Budget Scrutiny which was removed from Council processes several years ago. Scrutiny also routinely undertook site visits which was in contradiction to the current guidance, so again this had been updated.

The proposal aligned to the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 in supporting the commitment of ensuring the Council made good decisions and was transparent.

In summary, the proposed amendments sought to update current processes, removing references to outdated practice and ensuring alignment with other areas of the Constitution.

Members asked questions in relation to section 18 of the procedure rules and suggested clarification of the working practices outlined at paragraph 10.5.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Committee recommend that Council adopt the proposed minor amendments to Part 4(d) – Scrutiny Procedure Rules, as annotated at Appendix A of the Report, subject to section 10.5 being reworded to reflect working practices of sub committees, task groups and spotlight reviews.

**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 11.03 am