

CONSTITUTION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Present:

Councillor T Cox (Chair)

Councillors G Bennett M Sullivan
P Gilchrist
J Grier
T Murphy

In attendance:

R Jones
G Kerr
J McCosh

14 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed attendees and viewers to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was webcast and retained on the Council's website.

15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Tom Laing, who was deputised by Councillor Angie Davies.

16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they are.

Independent Persons in attendance at the Committee declared their interest in item 6, Revisions to the Constitution, in regards to the subject of the Independent Persons Allowance. The Chair noted and appreciated this declaration, and acknowledged advice from the Monitoring Officer that Independent Persons would not need to declare an interest and leave the room as they are not entitled to vote.

17 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 be approved.

18 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

No questions were received.

19 REVISIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Director of Law and Corporate Services introduced the report. The report provided a summary of the discussions held by the Governance Working Group over the course of the last municipal year in respect to proposed changes to the Constitution. The proposed changes were in relation to: Officer Code of Conduct, Member Officer Protocol, Media Protocol, Financial Procedure Rules, Members Allowance Scheme, Public Questions and Petitions, and Minor amendments.

In relation to the Members Allowance Scheme, the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel, Peter Bounds, addressed the Committee, outlining the 2 proposals the panel had put forward. One proposal suggested the allowance for Independent Members of the Constitution and Standards Committee and the Audit and Risk Management Committee, be increased from £30 per meeting to £60 per meeting. The second proposal suggested that the Chair of the Liverpool City Region Transport Committee, if a member of Wirral Council, should be paid 65% of the Special Responsibility Allowance of the Leader of Wirral Council, which amounts to £10,305.58.

Members commented on the changing responsibilities of the Chair of the Transport Committee and recognised the need for such remuneration. Members also thanked Peter and his colleagues for their work on the Independent Remuneration Panel.

In relation to the Public Questions and Petition Scheme, members were in agreement of the proposal to reduce the deadline for submitting a petition from 10 days prior to the meeting to 3 days prior, at 12 noon, as well as increasing the time allowed for debate of said petition from 15 minutes to 30 minutes.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Angie Davies, it was,

Resolved - That the proposed amendments to the Constitution, as detailed in sections 3.3 to 3.13 of the report, be referred to the Council for consideration and approval at the Annual Meeting in May 2024.

20 LICENSING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Law and Corporate Services. The report was submitted to Committee for comment and agreement that the draft Council Members' Licensing Code of Good Practice be presented to Council for inclusion in the Constitution.

Members praised the Code of Good Practice as a valued addition to the constitution and noted that it mirrored the Planning Code of Good Practice.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Tony Murphy, it was,

Resolved – That the committee,

- 1. Recommends to Council that the Draft Licensing Code of Good Practice appended to this report be approved by Council and be included within the Council's Constitution, subject to the views of the Regulatory and General Purposes Committee and the Licensing Act Committee.**

Agrees that the Draft Licensing Code of Good Practice and the recommendation of the Constitution and Standards Committee be referred to the Regulatory and General Purpose Committee and Licensing Act Committee for their consideration.

21 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024/25 AND 2025/26

The Director of Law and Corporate Services introduced the report. The report recommended amendments to the previously agreed dates for Council and Committee meetings for the municipal year 2024/2025 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. The report also recommended draft dates for the municipal year 2025/26 at Appendix 2.

Members reflected the importance of having a calendar set in advance for those of them who work full time, and were appreciative of the changes made to rectify common movements.

Members questioned the proposed sequence of meetings in July 2024 and 2025, as drafted the Political Group Meetings were scheduled too far in advance of the publication of the council Summons. Members requested that the Director of Law and Corporate Services give consideration to the views expressed by Members and that the July 2024 and July 2025 meeting sequence be amended prior to submission to Council for approval.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Mike Sullivan, it was,

Resolved – That Council be recommended to approve the calendar of Meetings for 2024/25 and 2025/2026, subject to the Director of Law and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chair and Group spokespersons, amending the sequence of meetings in July 2024 and July 2025.