

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on
Tuesday, 26 June 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Dr. Douglas de Lacey – Chairman
Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Henry Batchelor
Nigel Cathcart
Bridget Smith
Aidan Van de Weyer

Dr. Martin Cahn
Mark Howell
Peter Topping

Officers: Patrick Adams
Gemma Barron
Rory McKenna
Jason Clarke
Kathrin John

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing
Deputy Head of Legal Practice
Development Officer
Democratic Services Team Leader

Councillor Philip Allen was in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Apologies for Absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bridget Smith stated that she had carried out consultancy work for Barrington Parish Council. She explained that she had received advice from the Deputy Monitoring Officer and would not participate in the debate or vote on agenda item 7, Community Governance Review for Barrington.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2018.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Deputy Head of Legal Practice presented this report, which invited the Committee to recommend a pilot scheme to Council that would allow members of the public to make written representations to full Council meetings, without giving prior notice. He explained that this would not affect the existing arrangements for asking questions at Council and submitting petitions. The current arrangements did not allow members of the public to make submissions after the agenda had been published.

It was noted that the Chairman would be able to vary or suspend the procedure, if, for instance, a large number of requests were received.

Members of the Committee made the following points:

- The public should be able to speak at Council without notice.
- The public should be able to ask a supplementary question without notice.
- Only councillors should be able to speak at Council without prior notice.

Councillor Mark Howell proposed that the recommendation should be amended to ensure that only South Cambridgeshire residents were permitted to make written representations under the proposed scheme. Councillor Bridget Smith expressed concern that this could prohibit both residents from neighbouring authorities and representatives of partner organisations from making representations on cross border issues. The Deputy Head of Legal Practice explained that time constraints could make it difficult to determine whether the member of the public was a resident of the District and it could be seen as discriminatory to prohibit participation on the grounds of their residency. Councillor Mark Howell's proposal did not have a seconder and so the proposal fell.

It was suggested that it was unlikely that a large number of residents would take advantage of this proposed change and so there was no reason to object to the proposed pilot scheme.

A vote was taken, and with 8 votes in favour and 1 abstention, the Committee

RECOMMENDED THAT COUNCIL Introduces a twelve month pilot scheme to allow the public to make written representations at full Council meetings in accordance with the scheme set out at Appendix A.

5. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Deputy Head of Legal Practice presented this report on the appointing of a Task and Finish Group to undertake a comprehensive review of the Council's Constitution, including its codes and protocols.

The Committee made the following comments in support of this proposal:

- The Constitution should be put into plain English.
- The aim should be to make the Constitution shorter.
- The review should be comprehensive, as the Constitution was approximately 20 years old.
- The Task and Finish Group should consider co-opting external representatives onto the Group.

It was noted that the aim was for a report, with recommendations, to be considered by next year's Annual Council meeting.

Councillors Claire Daunton, Mark Howell and Aidan Van de Weyer all volunteered to serve on the Task and Finish Group.

A vote was taken and the Committee unanimously

AGREED To establish a task and finish group to undertake a comprehensive review of the Council's Constitution to include its codes and protocols and to submit recommendations thereon to this Committee for onward recommendation to Council.

6. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - MILTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Development Officer/Programme Manager presented this report, which requested that the Committee consider a request from Milton Parish Council to decrease the number of parish councillors from 15 to 12.

The Committee unanimously

AGREED

- A) The request from Milton Parish Council for a Community Governance Review to decrease the number of parish councillors from 15 to 12.
- B) For officers to agree a timetable, to be included within the terms of reference, in consultation with Milton Parish Council.

7. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - BARRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Development Officer/Programme Manager presented this report, which invited the Committee to consider a request from Barrington Parish Council to increase its Council size from nine to 13 parish councillors. The letter from Barrington Parish Council, dated 26 January 2018 requesting an increase, was circulated at the meeting.

As local member for Barrington, Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer explained that development was planned in the parish and that he was confident that there would be enough parishioners willing to serve on the Parish Council.

Those members of the Committee who were able to vote, unanimously

AGREED

- A) The request from Barrington Parish Council for a Community Governance Review to increase the number of parish councillors from nine to 13.
- B) The draft terms of reference at Appendix B.
- C) For officers to agree a timetable in consultation with Barrington Parish Council.

8. ADDITIONAL POWERS - SOUTH TRUMPINGTON PARISH MEETING

The Programme Manager/Development Officer presented this report, which invited the Committee to consider the request from South Trumpington Parish Meeting to grant it additional powers.

Councillor Philip Allen stated that he was speaking as Chairman of South Trumpington Parish Meeting and not as a District Councillor. He explained that South Trumpington was a small community, with no land or buildings to maintain. The Parish Meeting had raised funds through its precept, but needed to be granted the power to spend it. It was noted that the Parish Meeting did employ an experienced clerk.

It was noted that an electorate in excess of 150 was required to form a parish council and the current electorate for South Trumpington was 166.

The Committee unanimously

- AGREED** The request from South Trumpington Parish Meeting to grant all the requested powers, as laid out in the letter from the Parish Meeting dated 30 May 2018.

9. UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 4 September 2018 at 10am.

The Meeting ended at 10.50 a.m.
