

CIVIC AFFAIRS

18 October 2023

5.30 - 5.55 pm

Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Davey (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Sheil and Young

Cllr Smart (Deputy Leader, non-statutory)
Gary Clift Democratic Services Manager

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**23/33/Civ Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Healy.

23/34/Civ Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

23/35/Civ Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 September 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23/36/Civ Public Questions

There were no public questions.

23/37/Civ To consider recommendations of the Governance Reference Group 9 October 2023

The Committee received a report from the Chief Executive and Cllr Smart Deputy Leader (non-statutory) introduced the recommendations of the Governance Reference Group (GRG).

Cllr Smart proposed to the Committee that the third recommendation concerning changes to the Oral Question process at Council Meetings should be withdrawn as it required further consideration by the GRG. The Committee concurred.

In response to a request from Councillor Bennett, the guidance provided to the public on Public Question Time will be made clearer so that Councillors are made aware of not only the name of the members of the public but who they represent and how many people they are representing. It will also be the new practice to display public questions on the screen/livestream as well as including them as a supplement to the Agenda on the website.

Councillor Young confirmed that the Liberal Democrat Group were of the view that Area Committees should not be paused until a replacement had been considered and agreed. During discussion and at the request of Councillor Davey, the Committee agreed that a date should be set for proposals to come back to it and therefore should be considered at its 10 July 2024 meeting.

Recommendations to Council (unanimous)

- (i) To pause area committee meetings for two cycles (approximately six months) after the November/December 2023 cycle of meetings. (para 3.3-3.5 of the officer report)
- (ii) That Council Procedure Rules (Appendix A2 Rules of Debate on the Budget) is amended to change the length of speeches per group from up to 45 minutes to up to 15 minutes, and to note that the Council meeting on 15 February 2024 will deal with all agenda business and the scheduled 'follow on' Council meeting date of 29 February 2024 is therefore no longer required. (para 4.3 of the officer report)
- (iii) Public Questions (except for Planning Committee) to be received in writing, in full, by noon two days before a meeting, not read out, with a Councillor reply of up to two minutes, a public supplementary of up to two minutes and a councillor reply to that of up to two minutes. (para 4.5 of the officer report)

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm

CHAIR