

CIVIC AFFAIRS

30 January 2013

6.00 - 6.45 pm

Present: Councillors Boyce (Chair), Rosenstiel (Vice-Chair), Marchant-Daisley, Herbert and Benstead

Officers Present:

Chief Executive – Antoinette Jackson
Head of Human Resources – Deborah Simpson
Head of Legal Services – Simon Pugh
Democratic Services Manager – Gary Clift
Electoral Services Manager – Vicky Breeding
Committee Manager – Martin Whelan

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

13/1/CIV Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Pitt.

13/2/CIV Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st November were approved as a true and accurate record.

13/3/CIV Declarations of Interest

There were declarations of interest.

13/4/CIV Public Questions

There were no public questions.

In response to a question from Cllr Herbert regarding errors in the Council's initial financial modelling, the Chief Executive said that she was in discussion with the Council's external auditors, Ernst and Young, regarding their review, which would be reported to Civic Affairs. Members would also be updated prior to the Council budget setting meeting on 21st February.

13/5/CIV Developer Contributions, Area Committees and Project Appraisals - Amendment of the Constitution

The committee received a report from the Head of Legal Services proposing changes to the constitution to enable area committees to be consulted on, and to consider, project appraisals for capital schemes for which area committees were responsible.

The Head of Legal Services informed the committee that Councillor Dryden, as Chair of South Area Committee had suggested an amended form of wording to that recommended in paragraph 3.4 of the report. This, in two instances, meant deletion of the phrase "provided that relevant Ward Councillors have been consulted where appropriate" and its replacement by "provided that relevant Ward Councillors are always consulted". The Head of Legal Services said that he saw no objection to this.

Councillor Herbert expressed concern about the number of changes made to the Constitution within a short period of time relating to procedures for Area Committees, and to an excessive level of detail. Councillor Herbert also asked for consideration to be given to simplifying the Constitution. The Head of Legal Services expressed sympathy with the objective stated but said that the proposed changes were needed to make the scheme of delegation to officers work properly for area committee capital schemes.

Resolved

- i. (5 votes to 0) to accept the wording suggested by Councillor Dryden
- ii. (2 votes to 0) to recommend the Council to amend the Constitution as follows:
 1. Amend the first paragraph of Section 9.3.1 of Part 3 by the insertion of the words shown in bold italics:

Subject to Section 9.3.1A, in the case of new capital schemes, the following approvals (together with approval to the necessary budget provision) must be obtained before any scheme may proceed.

2. Add new section 9.3.1A to Part 3:

In the case of new capital schemes, responsibility for which has been delegated to Area Committees by the Executive, the following approvals (together with approval to the necessary budget provision) must be obtained before any scheme may proceed.

- **For schemes where the estimated cost is £15,000 and below:** once included in the Area Committee's programme, may proceed without further committee consideration, provided that relevant Ward Councillors provided that relevant Ward Councillors are always consulted.
- **For schemes where the estimated total cost is over £15,000 and up to £75,000:** a capital project appraisal and procurement report proforma must be completed and referred to the relevant Area Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokes for approval. The schemes may then proceed without Area Committee consideration, provided relevant Ward Councillors provided that relevant Ward Councillors are always consulted.
- **For schemes where the estimated total cost is over £75,000:** a capital project appraisal and procurement report pro-forma must be completed for consideration and approval by the relevant Area Committee.

13/6/CIV Pay Policy Statement 2013/14

The committee received a report from the Head of Human Resources setting out a draft Pay Policy Statement for 2013/14. The Localism Act requires the Council to approve and publish a pay policy statement by 31 March each year. The Committee was asked to recommend the pay policy statement to the full Council on 21 February.

The Head of Human Resources drew the Committee's attention to recommendations made by the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

regarding the adoption of a “living wage” policy for staff and agency workers. The full Council would consider these on 21 February.

Councillor Herbert expressed concern that there were examples at other authorities of significant redundancy payments being made to senior officers who then were promptly re-engaged elsewhere in the public sector. Councillor Herbert noted that redundancy payments were only repayable in these circumstances if an officer takes up a post with another body covered by the local government redundancy rules. Councillor Herbert asked whether there was scope to change these rules to require repayment by employees re-engaged in the public sector within a longer period. The Head of Human Resources said that she would investigate the scope for local discretion and write to Councillor Herbert.

Councillor Herbert also suggested that the section of the pay policy statement dealing with tax avoidance should be strengthened. He suggested that member approval should be needed before the Council contracted with a consultant through a company, where the company arrangement was designed to avoid tax. The Head of Human Resources agreed to report further to the committee on the scope for further measures to discourage tax avoidance.

Resolved (5 votes to 0) to recommend to the Council:

- i. To approve the Living Wage proposals as part of the Pay Policy Statement 2013/14.
- ii. To approve the draft Pay Policy Statement 2013/14 attached as Appendix 1 of the committee report, with the inclusion of proposals relating to the Living Wage as recommended by the Civic Affairs Committee (see updated Pay Policy Statement 2013/14 attached).
- iii. To note the request for a briefing note on the options for extending the period between redundancy and re-engagement within the public sector, which would require repayment of redundancy payments.
- iv. To note the request for a report on the scope for further measures to discourage tax avoidance arising from the employment of consultants through companies.

13/7/CIV Request for additional item to Civic Affairs agenda 30/1/13 from Cllr Johnson - Jack Warren Green polling district

The committee received an oral report in response to a request from Cllr Johnson regarding Jack Warren Green polling district. Councillor Johnson explained the rationale behind the request.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that he had been in correspondence with Councillor Johnson, and confirmed that it would not be possible to complete the required process prior to the County Council elections. The committee were advised there was merit in progressing this as part of a Polling District Review.

The Electoral Services Manager was asked to provide an update on forthcoming events regarding electoral matters. The committee were advised that it was a legal requirement to implement Individual Electoral Registration by 2014, and that the process would begin this summer. It was also explained that the City Council were required to undertake and complete a Polling District Review by the end of 2014, although it was currently planned to do this in 2013. The committee was advised that it was intended to delay the publication of the register will be in March 2014 following a delayed canvass.

The committee made the following comments on the report

- i. The proposals were welcomed, however it was suggested that the most appropriate polling district for Laughton Court should also be considered in the review.
- ii. Whilst the principle of equality of polling district sizes was suggested, specific examples such as Romsey where it was advantageous to have unequal polling districts.
- iii. It was suggested that the committee endorsed the principle of transferring Jack Warren Green and Laughton Court from AA to AB polling districts. The committee agreed to this suggestion.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that a report would be presented to a future Civic Affairs meeting to allow members to shape the review of the polling districts, prior to statutory consultation.

Resolved (5 votes to 0) to

- i. Endorse the principle of transferring Jack Warren Green and Laughton Court from AA to AB polling districts

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

CHAIR