

CIVIC AFFAIRS

13 May 2024
5.30 - 5.58 pm

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

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

2024/11/CivApologies

Apologies were received from Rob Bennett the Independent Person.

2024/12/CivDeclarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2024/13/CivMinutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February were agreed as a true and accurate record.

At this point in the meeting the Chair, with the agreement of the Committee, re-ordered the agenda to take the Committee Appointments and Constitutional Changes for Annual Council first, followed by the Honorary Freedom of the City and finally the Governance Review Proposals. For the purposes of the minutes the items have been kept as per the order of the published agenda.

2024/14/CivPublic Questions

There were no public questions received.

2024/15/CivGovernance Review Proposals

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report and outlined the key aspects to members.

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny compiled a report in February 2022 which found that the Council's current arrangements lead to a lack of collective democratic accountability, was resource heavy, opaque, did not result in

improved outcomes for the Council and was not as inclusive as it could be for residents to engage with.

The Governance Reference Group (GRG) was established to consider the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) findings and develop proposals for the Civic Affairs Committee that could be put to full Council.

The GRG in December 2023 came up with four principles for good governance and highlighted the below:

- Decision making is timely / prompt, focussed and efficient
- Decision making is accountable
- Our governance system and decision-making processes are transparent
- Encourages collaboration

The CfGS review went to great lengths to emphasise the importance of behaviours and culture.

The City Council's written constitution already incorporated the Leader and Executive/Cabinet form of governance. The constitution provided for collective Executive decision making at public meetings (e.g. Cabinet), and an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, in practice the Council operates what has been termed a 'hybrid-hybrid' system because it blended elements of the two distinct forms of governance available to local authorities - the Committee and Leader-Cabinet systems.

The GRG also commissioned officers to provide some hypothetical options for the Leader and Executive/Cabinet model based on current best practice; and that these options should consider members' desire for new arrangement to provide for strong scrutiny and enable non-executive members to have a role in the decision-making process.

Members of the Committee commented on the report which included:

- There was no overall consensus on the best model within the GRG, however the majority of the GRG were supportive of the Leader and Cabinet model.
- The Liberal Democrat Group as a whole was not supportive of the Leader and Cabinet model for a few grounds namely that there could potentially be less involvement in decision-making for non-executive councillors.

- The recommendations in the report were about working towards implementing a revised Leader and Cabinet model, which would give the opposition opportunities to contribute and have more democratic debates on key items that affect the City.
- It had been two years since the CfGS report had been completed and it was time that the Council moved forward towards a new system, stepping away from being unique in comparison with other local authorities. The work of the Chair of the GRG was noted for being collaborative.
- It was important that non-executive councillors from across all parties were given the opportunity to scrutinise the decisions of the Executive.
- There were potentially opportunities for non-executive councillors and for opposition to be involved in policy formation, before political groups ask members to project certain ideas before a later stage. More councillors could be involved within the creative stage of decision-making.

Resolved (4 votes for, 2 votes against, 0 abstentions) to recommend to Council:

- a. That the Council design and implement a revised 'Leader and Cabinet' model of decision making and authorises the Chief Executive to enable changes to be implemented from the Annual Council Meeting in May 2025
- b. To establish a member-officer design group with external technical support to develop a revised 'Leader and Cabinet' model with final proposals including an updated constitution being presented to the Civic Affairs Committee and then to full Council for adoption.

2024/16/CivHonorary Freedom of the City

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report and explained that the recommendation to grant the Honorary Freedom of the City was reserved for the extraordinary Annual Council Meeting.

Members welcomed the recommendation and asked that strong communications were put out explaining the close links HMS Protector has with Cambridge.

HMS Protector carried out a lot of work for the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), which was based in Cambridge as well as working closely with the Scott Polar

Institute. This was also the only ice breaker the British Navy had. In addition, this recommendation also addressed the serious nature that the City takes towards climate change.

It was also noted that the previous captain was the first female appointed to captain a vessel of this sort in history.

Resolved (Unanimous) to recommend to Council:

- a. To confer the Honorary Freedom of the City of Cambridge upon HMS Protector. (Nb. Granting the Freedom of the City will require at least two thirds of the Councillors present to agree to the recommendation).

2024/17/CivCommittee Appointments and Constitutional Changes for Annual Council

The Committee received a report on the appointments to committee's and Chair's/Vice Chair's.

It was noted that on the Cambridge Joint Area Committee that this Municipal Year the Green party would take a seat and the Lib Dems would have a seat but that for the following Municipal Year the Lib Dems would take this seat back so they would have two seats.

Resolved: (unanimously) to recommend to Council:

- i. Appointments to city council committees and joint partner bodies below:

Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee 8 (5 Labour + 2 Lib Dem + 1 Green)

Pounds, Nestor, Swift, Divkovic, TBC

Payne, Hauk

Glasberg

Alternates – Griffin, Sheil, Martinelli, Flaubert, Tong

Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee 8 (5 Labour + 2 Lib Dem + 1 Green)

Nestor, Baigent, Swift, Griffin, Divkovic

Porrer, Bick

Clough

Alternates – Pounds, Todd-Jones, Lee, Lokhmotova, Bennett

Housing Scrutiny Committee 9 (6 Labour + 2 Lib Dem + 1 Green)

Griffin, Robertson, Gawthrope Wood, Baigent, Swift, Thittala

Martinelli, Lee

Tong

Alternates: Nestor, Pounds, Young, Porrer, Bennett

Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee 8 (5 Labour + 2 Lib Dem + 1 Green)

Robertson, Gawthrope Wood, Sheil, Baigent, Todd-Jones

Bick, Young

Bennett

Alternates – Lab TBC, Lab TBC, Porrer, Martinelli, Clough

Civic Affairs Committee 6 (4 Labour + 1 Lib Dem +1 Green)

McPherson, Gawthrope Wood, Sheil, Robertson

Young

Bennett

Alternate – Holloway, Bick, Clough

Employment (Senior Officer) Committee 6 (4 Labour + 1 Lib Dem + 1 Green)

Davey, Carling, Gilderdale, Moore

Bick

Bennett

Alternates: Labour TBC, Porrer, Clough

Licensing Committee 10 (6 Labour + 3 Lib Dem + 1 Green)

McPherson, Bird, Moore, Griffin, Pounds, Wade

Blackburn-Horgan, Young, Lib Dem TBC

Clough

Alternates – Davey, Lib Dem TBC, Bennett

Planning Committee 9 (6 Labour + 2 Lib Dem + 1 Green)

Smart, Baigent, Thornburrow, Gilderdale, Carling, Dryden

Porrer, Lokhmotova

Bennett

Alternates – Nestor, Todd-Jones, Flaubert, Young, Howard

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority - 1 seat

A.Smith

Alternate - Davey

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 Labour

Lab TBC, Lab TBC

Alternate – Lab TBC

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Audit and Governance Committee 1

Labour + one alternate

S.Smith

Alternate – Lab TBC

Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly 3 (2 Labour + 1 Lib Dem)

S.Smith, Thornburrow, Bick

Joint Development Control Committee - Cambridge Fringes 6 (4 Labour+ 2 Lib Dem)

S.Smith, Baigent, Smart, Thornburrow

Porrer, Flaubert,

Alternates – Gilderdale, Nestor, Young, Lokhmotova

Cambridge Joint Area Committee 6 (4 Labour + 1 Lib Dem + 1 Green)

Thornburrow, Robertson, Baigent, Moore

Young

Bennett

Alternates – Carling, Lab TBC, Martinelli, Tong

ii. Nominations for Chairs and Vice-Chairs 2024/25

Environment and Communities Services

Chair - Pounds

Vice-Chair – Nestor

Planning and Transport

Chair – Nestor

Vice-Chair – Baigent

Housing

Chair – Griffin

Vice-Chair (nb. Tenant/Leaseholder is Chair of Part 1 of the meeting) -
Robertson

Strategy and Resources

Chair – Robertson

Vice-Chair – Gawthrope Wood

Civic Affairs

Chair - McPherson

Vice-Chair – Gawthrope Wood

Licensing

Chair - McPherson

Vice-Chair - Bird

Planning

Chair - Smart

Vice-Chair (Labour) – Baigent

Vice-Chair (Lib Dem) - Porrer

JDCC

Chair – S.Smith

The meeting ended at 5.58 pm

CHAIR