

CONSTITUTION TASK GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 5.30 pm on 6 JANUARY 2005

Present:- Councillors P A Wilcock – Chairman.
Councillors C M Dean, V J T Lelliott, A R Row and A R Thawley.

Officers in attendance:- A Bovaird, S McLagan, M J Perry and M T Purkiss.

CTG31 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor E J Godwin.

CTG32 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CTG33 BUSINESS ARISING

CTG29 – The Role of Full Council and Review of Committees

There was some discussion as to how a guillotine could be put into practice. It was felt that a guillotine would be more effective if major items were put at the start of the agenda and agenda management was more rigorous.

CTG34 THE ROLE OF FULL COUNCIL AND REVIEW OF COMMITTEES

The Task Group considered a report from officers on a possible revised model for the Constitution. This model had been supported at the last meeting and included provision for 10-12 Council Meetings with no policy committees. In effect, all policy decisions would be made by Full Council and this would ensure that all councillors could be involved in key decisions. Regulatory committees such as Licensing and Development Control would remain, as well as a Standards Committee and Staff Appeals Committee. Also, there would still be a legal requirement to have at least one Scrutiny Committee.

It was considered that the delegation scheme could be extended and there could be a call in system similar to that used at Development Control whereby a Member would be able to ask that a decision be referred to the Council. The call in procedure for the Scrutiny Committee would not be affected.

Under this arrangement the annual work programme would be set by the Council and a number of task groups would be set up to progress issues and make recommendations to Council. It was noted that the meetings of task groups would be open to the public and the agenda and minutes would be made publicly available. It was also considered that the size and membership would depend upon the subject matter. The Task Group considered that, where possible and practicable, proportionality should be retained on the task

groups. It was suggested that the independent Remuneration Panel needed to be made aware of the suggested changes to the Constitution and Mick Purkiss said that he would be meeting with the Chairman of the Panel on 18 January to discuss progress. The Task Group also suggested that members of the Panel should be invited to the Member Workshop on 1 February 2005.

The Task Group then considered a revised model for the Constitution based on the existing committee structure but showing greater synergy with the officer departmental structure. It was considered that both options should be put before the Member Workshop on 1 February.

CTG35 **ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEMBER WORKSHOP**

The Member Workshop would be held at 7.30 pm on 1 February 2005. The Task Group considered that the programme for the Workshop should include an introduction by the Chairman of the Task Group and a two-minute presentation on each of the visits to other councils as follows:

Maldon	-	Councillor Lelliott
Wellingborough	-	Councillor C Dean
Watford	-	Councillor Wilcock
South Norfolk	-	Councillor Row
Tynedale	-	Councillor Godwin

The Task Group considered that the Workshop should then be split into groups to look at both of the options and to consider the benefits and disadvantages of each. The workshop would then conclude with a plenary session bringing all these points together.

It was important that the workshop was well advertised to encourage the greatest possible attendance. Councillor Wilcock agreed to contact all councillors by e-mail to encourage them to attend, and the workshop would also be advertised in the usual ways.

CTG36 **NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the Task Group would convene for a few minutes after the workshop and if necessary a further meeting of the Task Group would be held at 6.00 pm on 3 February 2005.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm.