

**CONSTITUTION TASK GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 4.00 pm on 17 FEBRUARY 2005**

Present:- Councillor P A Wilcock – Chairman.
Councillors E J Godwin and A R Thawley.

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

CTG37 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C M Dean, V J T Lelliott and A R Row and A Bovaird.

CTG38 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CTG39 BUSINESS ARISING

The Member Workshop on 1 February 2005 had provided a useful steer and it was agreed that the summary from the flip chart would be appended to these Minutes.

The Task Group considered that it was important to keep other Members advised of progress throughout the review process and then look at the need for a further Member workshop later in the year.

CTG40 A REVISED DISCUSSION FOR THE CONSTITUTION

Councillor Wilcock had prepared a discussion paper for consideration by the Task Group. Members considered the details of this and it was noted that the following elements were not contested:-

- Regulatory committees (Licensing and Development Control) would remain;
- The Standards Committee would remain;
- An annual work programme would be agreed at the Council meeting in May each year;
- Routine matters would be reported in a restructured bulletin or be delegated to officers and would be removed from committee agenda.

It was considered that the role of Full Council should be discussed at a future meeting in conjunction with looking at a more rigorous programme of workshops. There appeared to be a feeling that council meetings should be

made more meaningful and the Task Group looked at the types of items and decisions that currently went to Council, Committee, Scrutiny and workshops and how these could best be dealt with in the future.

At the workshop, there did not appear to have been a strong feeling to radically change the committee structure and it was agreed that the issue of committees and task groups would be considered at a future meeting.

At the workshop, the key area identified for improvement was scrutiny and the Chairman considered that there was scope to look at this in conjunction with area forums. In the discussion paper, he had suggested the setting up of three area forums without delegated powers to report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These would be made up of the Members of the geographic area and would elect their own chairman. However, it was noted that there could be difficulties with the call in procedure and this and the other issues around Scrutiny would be looked at, at a future meeting.

It was pointed out that if there were to be an increase in the frequency of council meetings and area forums were introduced, a reduction in the number of other meetings would be required unless staffing resources were increased.

Following further discussion, it was agreed that each of the main areas of work should be considered at separate meetings in the future with a further meeting to help pull all the strands together. The following timetable was agreed:-

3 March 2005 – committees and task groups
7 April 2005 – council and workshops
12 May 2005 – scrutiny and area forums
2 June 2005 – overall review

(All meetings at 6.00 pm in the Chief Executive's Office).

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm.

MEMBERS' WORKSHOP – CONSTITUTION: 1 FEBRUARY 2005

- No change not an option
- Revised policy committee – realignment to EM/departments
- Use of Full Council/Annual Programme
- In-depth investigation of role of Scrutiny/different models
- Investigation of Policy Development – Scrutiny relationship (use of monthly reports)
- Potential use of Area Committees or Fora (all models pros – cons)
- Use and status of task groups
- Task Group Fact-Finding? Interim workshop - Draft Proposal “in-day” conclusions