

# **A revised discussion for the Constitution**

## **Summary for discussion**

- Full Council Meetings – six weekly with revised agendas
- Revised Committee Structures
- Regulatory committees remain
  - Licensing
  - Development Control
- Standards Committee remains
- Scrutiny Committee – reduce and amalgamate into one
- Area Forums – trial for one year
- Annual Work Programme – agreed by annual meeting of full council
- Workshops – rigorous adherence to maximum monthly schedules
- Routine Decisions – review delegation and improve member reporting
- Task Group – clarify scope and timescale at annual meeting of full council
- Member Remunerations – adjust in line with workloads within existing budget

## **Full Council – (more work on this required)**

This would be revised to allow it to operate as an assembly bringing in all members to make major policy decisions along the lines of a Parliamentary system of debates. The role of committees would be asked to develop the detail of policy and manage the day-to-day implementation. This could replace some workshops.

Further work would be required to make the Full Council more meaningful, but by allowing all members to meet more frequently through social interaction, would improve the level of understanding of the whole council!!!!

## **Committees (more work required on this)**

To review the make up of the existing committees to discuss with EMT, Chair and members the best linkage. They may be better topic based.

The Standards and Regulatory Committees are to remain, although Licensing will require to be monitored closely to ensure that it meets its new remit.

## **Scrutiny**

All Scrutiny and Overview functions and review of Performance would be put to one scrutiny committee. It would request re-consideration of decisions (call-ins), ask for particular areas of the Council's work to be reviewed, monitor the Council's performance through best value reviews, and preparation for CPA.

## **Area Forums**

Set up three Area Forums without delegated powers to report to the overview and scrutiny committee. These would be made up of the members and the Chair elected from the membership of that group. They would meet three times per year geographically based on Great Dunmow, Stansted and Saffron Walden. These could incorporate:

- The State of the District debate
- Liaison with Parish Councils

- Local Highways issues
- Consultation on Council Tax
- It could also be used to contribute to the scrutiny role

## **Annual work programme**

At the May meeting each year, the Council will agree a work programme for itself. This will include:

- Identification of areas of activity
- Agreed timescales for the work (start date, finish date, interim reports)
- Agreed mechanism for the work to be carried out – officers, member-officer working group, Member Task Group
- Agree terms of reference for each group
- Identify a chair, lead officer and clerk for each task group

From this information it should be possible to construct an outline agenda for each council meeting, which avoids too many significant items coming to council at the same meeting.

Each June / July the Members and EMT/JMT will meet to review the options for the work plans and budget priorities for the following year

## **Workshops**

More rigorous programming of workshops linked to the agreed annual work programme – i.e. one per month, agreed and publicised well in advance, BUT have the opportunity to use Council meetings for more rigorous debate of proposals given greater frequency and better managed agenda.

## **Routine decisions**

- Report straight to restructured bulletin
- Delegated to officers;
- Removed from Standard agendas

## **Task Groups**

The Annual meeting will identify Task Groups and their reporting structure. The meetings are not open to the public as committees are, but agendas, minutes, reports will be published

Any member will be entitled to attend and speak at any task group – but not vote unless a member. Most Task Groups would be open to the public as committees currently are – unless dealing with items that would currently be ‘Part 2’.

## **Member Remuneration**

Chair, VC, Leader, DL, Chairs of policy, regulatory, standards and scrutiny and group leaders would have permanent allowances.

Others roles and would need to be discussed and agreed by the Independent Remuneration Panel – a scheme would need to be designed within existing budgets which gave appropriate recognition to members taking on chairs roles reflecting scale and complexity of tasks.

**Suggested implementation date: October 05**

**Peter Wilcock; 08/02/05**