



Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: John Mitchell

Constitution Working Group

Date: Tuesday, 23 June 2015
Time: 18:30
Venue: Chief Executive's office
Address: Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Members: Councillors Robert Chambers, Alan Dean, John Freeman, Stephanie Harris, Barbara Light, Edward Oliver, Joanna Parry, Vic Ranger (Chairman)

AGENDA PART 1

Open to Public and Press

- 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 3 - 4
- 3 Matters Arising
- 4 To consider alternative ways of engaging with the wider community to replace area forums
- 5 To consider the criteria for nominating honorary aldermen - original report to Council attached 5 - 8

For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services

Telephone: 01799 510433, 510369 or 510548

Email: Committee@uttlesford.gov.uk

General Enquiries

Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Telephone: 01799 510510

Fax: 01799 510550

Email: uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk

Website: www.uttlesford.gov.uk

**CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 6.00pm on 2 DECEMBER 2014**

Present: Councillor J Menell (Chairman)
Councillors J Davey and L Wells.

Officers present: J Mitchell (Chief Executive), M Perry (Assistant Chief Executive - Legal) and M Cox (Democratic Services Officer).

CWG12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Evans, D Morson, J Rich, D Watson and S Howell.

CWG13 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CWG14 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING

The Full Council meeting on 21 October 2014 had considered the working group's report on overview and scrutiny under the Cabinet system. Members had generally welcomed the comments made and the possible recommendations for a way forward. The meeting had suggested that the Chief Executive could arrange a Member workshop on scrutiny to consider ways that it could work more effectively within the council.

The Chief Executive said that as it was now only 5 months until the district elections, it would probably be more appropriate for this issue to be considered by the new council as part of the Member induction process.

Officers had started to look at some of the concerns, particularly in relation to pre-scrutiny for the budget process. As a result, for this year's budget the reports for the scrutiny committee had been produced at an earlier stage and at a more strategic level.

It was AGREED that the proposed scrutiny workshop be deferred until after the May elections.

CWG15 NEW STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL FROM MAY 2015

At the previous meeting, the working group had agreed to review the council's current structure of committees and working groups and consider a new structure based on 39 seats, following the district election in May 2015.

It was noted that the council structure for 2015/16 would be determined at the first meeting of the new council in May 2015 and any proposal put forward at this stage will not be binding on the new council. However, it was useful now to consider how the reduction of members from 44 to 39 could be accommodated within the structure, and to develop a draft timetable, so that at least in the initial stages of the new council, the day-to-day business of the council could continue.

Members received information on the council's structure, terms of reference and existing timetabling arrangements.

The report recommended 2 changes to the existing structure

- i) To delete the Staff Appeals Committee. This committee had not met for over 6 years, as the council has changed the way that it dealt with appeals from its employees. The group agreed that it wasn't sensible to appoint members to a committee that didn't meet.
- ii) To reduce the membership on the two regulatory committees. It was suggested the membership of both Licencing and Planning should be 10, as per the overview and scrutiny committees. The Assistant Chief Executive-Legal confirmed that 10 members was an adequate number for the Licensing Committee. In relation to the Planning Committee, Members suggested that a membership of 12 was a more appropriate number as this committee met frequently and would need to cover for member absence.

These two suggested changes would still provide each member with a seat on council and one of the main committees.

It was agreed that the terms of reference for the main committees should be left for the new council to consider. Members considered the terms of reference of the council's three working groups. It was clear that the work undertaken by the Electoral and Constitution working groups and the LJC was ongoing, and these working groups should remain in the structure.

The working group then considered a table setting out the current frequency of the various committee meetings, on which principles the timetable of meetings has been based for the last four years. Many of the dates were determined by operational deadlines, particularly in relation to budget setting.

At this stage Members considered that the timetable of meetings for 2015/16 should be prepared on a similar basis to previous years. However, in the light of previous discussion on scrutiny the new council might wish to consider the most appropriate way to timetable these meetings.

It was AGREED that a report be prepared for Full Council recommending a council structure for 2015/16 and frequency of meetings based on the comments made above

The meeting ended 6.30 pm

Committee: Full Council

Agenda Item

Date: 14 December 2010

13

Title: Honorary Aldermen

Author: John Mitchell, Chief Executive

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report has been prepared at the request of the Leader of the Council, and following discussions with the leaders of the other two political groups.
2. It explains the legislative provisions under which a Council may confer the status of Honorary Alderman on a former member of the Council and the procedure to be adopted.

Recommendations

- a) That the Council considers whether to introduce the concept of honouring former members of the Council by offering them the position of Honorary Alderman.
- b) If the Council supports the principle referred to in a) above, to consider whether
 - i. initial nomination(s) be considered after the Annual Council meeting in May 2011
 - ii. Candidates for the honour should normally have served at least 20 years (*or some other period*) as an Uttlesford district councillor
 - iii. Nominations can be put forward by any existing member of the Council
 - iv. Nominations be referred to the Chairman of the Council, who would consult with political group leaders and the Chief Executive before deciding whether to convene a special Council meeting to consider the nomination
 - v. A certificate be presented to each individual acknowledging their appointment as an Honorary Alderman, with an appropriate citation
 - vi. Honorary Aldermen receive the privileges referred to in paragraph 10 of this report

Financial Implications

There are no costs associated with the recommendations.

Background Papers

3. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report.

Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	The proposals contained in this report have been discussed informally by political group leaders.
Community Safety	No impact
Equalities	No impact
Health and Safety	No impact
Human Rights/Legal Implications	No impact
Sustainability	No impact
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	No impact

Situation

5. This report has been prepared at the request of the Leader of the Council, and following discussions with the leaders of the other two political groups.
6. Under Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Council is empowered to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on *'persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past members of that Council, but who are not then councillors of the Council'*.
7. A number of councils use these provisions as a means of formally acknowledging 'eminent' service of former members, and this tends to be triggered by the number of years served. Some councils set this level as low as 12 or 15 years, but it generally seems to be in excess of 20 and in some instances 25 years.
8. Any nomination to confer the status on a former member who qualified could be considered (on an informal and confidential basis) by a small group of

Full Council, item 13 – Honorary Aldermen

members as to whether that person had rendered eminent services to the Council when he/she was a member. This could be done by the Chairman of the Council, in conjunction with political group leaders who, in turn, could take 'soundings' from within their own group.

9. A conferment ceremony would then take place at a specially convened meeting of the Council. The resolution to appoint to the position of Honorary Alderman has to be passed with not less than two-thirds of members present voting in favour of the nomination(s).
10. An honorary alderman may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide, but does not have the right to attend Council or Committee meetings, or to receive allowances. Privileges could include:
 - a. Invitation to major civic ceremonies, such as Chairman's receptions; and
 - b. Inclusion in the mailing list for Council publications (such as the annual Council calendar)
11. If the Council agrees the principle of introducing the concept of Honorary Alderman status, it would seem appropriate to consider any initial nomination(s) following the Annual Council meeting in May 2011.
12. It would also be necessary to consider whether the ceremony should include the presentation of an appropriate badge or certificate to the individual in question. Whilst the cost of preparing a certificate would be at minimal cost and could be met from existing budgets, formal badges would be more expensive and would require specific budgetary provision.

