

Committee: Constitution Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: Wednesday 22nd March

4

Title: Appointment of Substitutes on Committees

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Item for decision:
yes

Summary

1. This report considers the appointment of substitute members on Council committees and suggests a scheme to allow for this, if members want to take it forward.

Recommendations

2. That members indicate whether they support the appointment of substitute members.
3. That members either endorse the approach set out in paragraph 11 for recommendation to Council or make alternative proposals.

Financial Implications

4. Consideration would need to be given to whether substitute members on Planning Committee should receive a special responsibility allowance. The allowances scheme includes a special responsibility allowance of £470 for planning committee members. (2017/18 scheme.)

Background Papers

5. There are no background papers to this report.

Impact

6.

Communication/Consultation	None.
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	This might make it easier for councillors with caring or other commitments to take on committee membership knowing that they could call on a substitute if prevented from attending a meeting.
Health and Safety	None.
Human Rights/Legal	None, provided that substitutes are

Implications	properly appointed..
Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

Situation

7. This report sets out how it might be possible to appoint substitute members who can act when principal members of committees are not available. Many councils operate substitute schemes.
8. Substitute members can be called on to act in the place of full members of a committee. They therefore need to be appointed to their role in the same way as full members. In the case of UDC, this would mean that substitute members should be appointed by the full Council.
9. There are various forms a scheme for substitute members might take:
 1. One substitute per member. This benefits from clarity but is cumbersome, involving the appointment of a large number of substitutes. It also means it is less likely that all substitutes will be up to speed with the issues and would add substantially to the member training needs for Licensing and Planning. It also makes the membership of the committee less readily identifiable to the public and result in a lack of continuity in decision-making.
 2. A number of substitutes per group on committees. This mitigates the issues which are identified above. However, the greater the number of substitutes, the more a scheme will have some of the disadvantages identified above, albeit in an attenuated form.
 3. One substitute per group per committee. This encourages substitution as a last resort, preserves the identity of the committee and ownership of its decisions, and permits the substitute more easily to be involved in briefings, training etc. However, it does mean that only one substitute is available, when more than one may be needed.
10. The following scheme is proposed with a view to gaining the best balance of advantage between the possible approaches:
 - The Council will appoint up to two substitutes per committee per group, on nomination in the usual way;

- Substitute members will receive agendas, be invited to briefings and otherwise be treated as principal members.
- Substitute members on Licensing and Planning Committees will be subject to the same training requirements as principal members.
- If a principal member is unable to attend a meeting and wishes to nominate a substitute, they must:
 - Make arrangements with the substitute to attend; and
 - Notify a Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting that they are to be substituted.
- If a substitute member attends a meeting in this capacity, they will take the place of the principal member for the duration of the meeting.

11. Subject to the views of the Working Group, recommendations could be made to Council on 4th April with a view to the appointment of substitute members at the Annual Meeting.

Risk Analysis

12.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Meetings are not quorate if members are unable to attend and the Council has not appointed substitutes.	2.	1	Meetings may have to be rearranged.
That substitutes, if appointed, will not have the knowledge or training to make proper decisions.	2.	2.	Ensure that substitute members receive agendas and are invited to briefings. Require substitute members to meet the same training requirements as principal members.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.