

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Civic Sub-Committee**
held on Tuesday, 9th February, 2010 at The Board Room, Town Hall,
Macclesfield, SK10 1DX

PRESENT

Councillors H Davenport, T Beard (for Cllr Cartlidge), S Jones, A Kolker,
W Livesley, D Topping, A Moran and P Whiteley

Apologies

Councillor R Cartlidge

Officers

Brian Reed, Democratic Services Manager
Paul Jones, Democratic Services Team Manager
Paul Mountford, Legal and Democratic Services

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Harold Davenport be appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

(Councillor Davenport in the Chair)

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Terry Beard, Arthur Moran, and Paul Whiteley declared personal interests, having been appointed honorary aldermen by their former authorities.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

4 ELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

The Sub-Committee had been established primarily to consider alternative approaches to the election of the Mayor and appointment of the Deputy Mayor and to consider the adoption of a Mayoral Code of Practice.

Members considered a report outlining a number of alternative approaches to the Mayoral selection process. In the cases of many local authorities, the current year's Deputy Mayor automatically became the Mayor for the following year. This was often regarded as an ideal way in which the

incoming Deputy Mayor could gain experience of the office of Mayor prior to election. Where the Deputy Mayor automatically became Mayor for the following year, the focus shifted to the way in which the proposed Deputy Mayor was selected. Members agreed with this approach.

Members had before them a paper setting out a number of different approaches by North West local authorities and the demised authorities to the selection of the Deputy Mayor. These were based on such criteria as seniority (length of service), political proportionality or invitation by the Council's ruling group.

In debating the matter, Members generally felt that seniority was not the best approach. Very often, a senior Member was not interested in accepting the appointment or was not ideally suited to it. Younger or less experienced Members often brought enthusiasm and energy to the office and were able to engage with younger people. Members agreed, however, that normally, any candidate for the post should have a minimum of one full term's experience as a councillor. They also agreed on the need for all political groups to have an opportunity to be involved in the selection process.

Members also considered a draft Mayoral Code of Practice which could be adopted by the Council. A number of civic issues were referred to in the draft document. The Sub-Committee made various suggestions for incorporation in the draft document to be submitted to the Governance and Constitution Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED

That Council be recommended to agree that

- (1) each year, the Deputy Mayor will normally succeed to the Mayoralty in the following year;
- (2) each year, the Deputy Mayor will be chosen for appointment by Council by the political group which has the majority of Council Members, provided that in making such choice, another political group or groups may be invited to put forward a nomination for consideration by the majority group;
- (3) this approach be adopted in respect of the election of Mayor and appointment of Deputy Mayor for the 2010/2011 Civic Year and beyond; and
- (4) the draft Mayoralty Code of (Mayor and Deputy Mayor) Practice, as appended to the report, be adopted by the Council, as amended to reflect the above approach, and be incorporated into the Council's Constitution with such consequential amendments as the Borough Solicitor considers necessary to give effect to the wishes of Council.

5 HONORARY ALDERMEN AND FREEMEN

Members considered a report setting out recommendations upon several matters relating to the Honorary Aldermen and Freeman of the Council who had been admitted under the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) Regulations 2008.

A provisional list of Honorary Aldermen and Freeman who were admitted by the demised East Cheshire authorities was circulated at the meeting.

An Honorary Alderman could attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide but did not have the right to:

- attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet or a committee of the Council other than as a member of the public (including a joint committee upon which the Council is represented); or
- receive any of the allowances or other payments to which councillors are entitled.

The admission of a person to be an Honorary Freeman did not confer the rights granted to be an Honorary Alderman.

Every Council should have its own criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen, a list of rights and duties and its own ceremony for their Admission. Section 249 (6) of the Act allowed Councils to spend 'such reasonable sum as they think fit' on presenting an address or casket containing the address to the Honorary Alderman. Details of the rights and privileges conferred by the demised authorities were circulated to the Sub-Committee.

Part 1, Chapter 5 – of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 extended existing privileges to include the daughters as well as sons of a Freeman of a city or town, and provided for women to have the right to be admitted and to use the title of 'Freewoman'. A civil partner would be in the same position as a spouse or surviving spouse of a person admitted to the freedom of a city or town. The honorary titles of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman could also be awarded. This legislation came into force on 1st April 2010.

In considering arrangements for Cheshire East, Members sought clarification of a number of matters:

- whether those included in the list of honorary aldermen and freemen would be prevented from standing for election in 2011
- whether, if allowed to stand and subsequently elected, they would be able to continue to use their title
- whether those standing down in 2011 would by then have satisfied the criteria for being appointed as honorary aldermen
- the definition of 'term of office' and the implications of boundary changes and being elected for initial periods of less than four years

The Officers undertook to clarify these matters for the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That

- (1) the Democratic Services Manager write to all Members of the Council with a view to confirming the accuracy of the list of honorary aldermen and freemen;
- (2) all Members of the Council be consulted on what rights and privileges should be granted to honorary aldermen and freemen in Cheshire East; and
- (3) a further report be submitted to the next meeting setting out a proposed scheme for the appointment of honorary aldermen and freemen in Cheshire East.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.10 pm.

Councillor H Davenport (Chairman)