

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Constitution Committee**  
held on Thursday, 21st November, 2019 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,  
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

## **PRESENT**

Councillor J Nicholas (Chairman)  
Councillor S Hogben (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors M Asquith, R Bailey, M Benson, J Bratherton, J Clowes, L Crane,  
S Edgar, T Fox, A Martin, R Moreton and B Murphy

## **Officers**

Kath O'Dwyer, Acting Chief Executive  
Jan Bakewell, Director of Governance and Compliance  
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance  
Martin Smith, Registration and Civic Services Manager  
Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

## **Other Members Present**

Councillors C Browne, A Moran, J Rhodes, J Saunders, A Stott and M Warren

The Chairman welcomed Councillor J Clowes who had been appointed as a member of the Committee in place of Councillor G Hayes.

## **22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor S Edgar, as Deputy Mayor, declared a non-pecuniary interest in an item on the agenda relating to the Mayoralty.

## **23 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

## **24 MEMBER SPEAKING**

There were no members wishing to speak.

## **25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 be approved as a correct record.

**26 FORMAL RESOLUTION TO MOVE TO A COMMITTEE SYSTEM FORM OF GOVERNANCE**

The Committee considered the current progress with the governance review and the proposed introduction of a committee system.

At the Chairman's invitation, the Acting Chief Executive advised the Committee that the decision to change the Council's governance arrangements should be made on the best possible information. From the recent member briefings, members had sought more information on various aspects of the proposed arrangements. It was clear to the Acting Chief Executive that at the present time, members had insufficient information to take a decision on the matter and more work needed to be done. This did not necessarily mean that the objective of introducing the new arrangements by May 2020 could not be achieved.

The Deputy Leader also addressed the Committee, commenting that, from the papers shared with members to date, there were a range of matters about which more detailed information was needed before members were in a position to take an informed decision on future governance arrangements.

**RESOLVED**

That no recommendations be made to Council in relation to alternative governance arrangements, and the officers be asked to produce further detailed work with a view to reporting back to the Governance Working Group in January 2020, but on the understanding that the Council would continue to work towards the introduction of a committee system by May 2020.

**27 ADDITION OF RUDHEATH LODGE LIAISON COMMITTEE TO LIST OF OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Committee considered a proposal to add the Rudheath Lodge Liaison Committee to the list of outside bodies, and to appoint a representative to the body.

**RESOLVED**

That

1. Rudheath Lodge Liaison Committee be added to the list of Category 2 Outside Organisations; and
2. Councillor Andrew Kolker be appointed as the Council's representative with Councillor Les Gilbert as nominated deputy.

## **28 THE FUTURE OF THE CHESHIRE EAST MAYORALTY**

Councillor S Edgar, having earlier declared an interest in this matter, left the meeting during its consideration, taking no part in the voting or discussion.

The Committee considered a report on proposed arrangements for conducting a review of the Mayoralty. This included the appointment of a member working group. Members agreed that it would be desirable, but not essential, for members of the working group to be drawn from the membership of the Constitution Committee.

The Committee considered the terms of reference for the review, along with additional background information to be presented to the working group, as appended to the report. The Working Group would also be asked to consider the Mayoral Protocol.

Members asked that paragraph 1 of the proposed terms of reference be amended to read as follows:

“1. Review and make recommendations as to the future of the Mayoralty.”

They also asked that the terms of reference be amended to reflect the exact status of the Mayor.

### **RESOLVED**

That

1. an eight Member, politically proportionate working group be established (3 Con: 2 Lab: 2 Ind: 1 Lib Dem) to review the Cheshire East Mayoralty and make recommendations to the Constitution Committee;
2. a member of the Real Independent Group be invited to attend meetings of the Working Group on a non-voting basis;
3. the Working Group adopt the terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the amendments requested by the Committee; and
4. the Working Group be presented with the background-information outlined in Appendix 2.

## **29 COUNCIL MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee gave further consideration to its original recommendations to Council on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in relation to proposed changes to meeting arrangements. This followed a survey of all members on the proposals.

The survey results had indicated broad support for all of the proposals originally recommended by the Committee.

**RESOLVED**

That, having considered the results of the survey of all members, the Committee recommends to Council that the recommendations set out in the Committee's report to Council on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019 be approved.

**30 APPOINTMENT AND RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF HONORARY ALDERMEN**

The Committee considered a report informing it of those former Members of the Council who had the requisite service in order for Council to consider their appointment to the position of Honorary Alderman. The report also discussed the rights and privileges of both Honorary Aldermen and Freeman.

**RESOLVED**

That

1. the former Members of Cheshire East Council named in paragraph 3.5 of the report be offered the position of Honorary Alderman;
2. a Special Meeting of Council be held immediately before the regular meeting of Council on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to appoint new Honorary Aldermen; and
3. free tickets to the Royal Cheshire Show and RHS Show at Tatton no longer be offered to Honorary Aldermen and Freeman.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.45 pm

Councillor J Nicholas (Chairman)