

**COUNCIL BUSINESS
COMMITTEE**

4.30 P.M.

15TH JANUARY 2009

PRESENT:- Councillors Rob Smith (Chairman), Evelyn Archer, Susan Bray, Geoff Knight, Karen Leytham, Joyce Pritchard and Morgwn Trolinger

Officers in attendance:-

Debbie Chambers
Jenny Kay

Principal Democratic Support Officer
Democratic Support Officer

27 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

28 ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT – PROGRESS REPORT

Members were updated on the Member Development Programme which included a breakdown of all training events from September to December 2008, with details of evaluations, attendance, timings and venues.

An update was provided on the roll out of the new laptops for Members. It was reported that this had been delayed due to the implementation of further security measures within the Council. Further IT training would be provided as part of the roll out programme and the opportunity for extending the use of paperless meetings could be explored.

Members were given details of progress with the priorities that had been identified by the Committee including Cabinet Support and Ward and Community Leadership.

The Committee considered the suggestion that a Members' Night be introduced on a monthly basis which would be an opportunity for Officers to pass on updates and information to Members. Council Business Committee would suggest issues and topics for discussion at these sessions as well as Management Team and senior Officers. Members discussed this suggestion and agreed that, although they supported the idea, in the current financial climate it was not appropriate, but that it should be introduced after the next election in 2011.

With regard to the 2008/09 Member Development budget, it was noted that there was £3,000 that remained unallocated. It was suggested that this should be offered as a saving in the budget process and that the budget should be reduced to £10,000 per annum until 2011/12, in time for the induction for new Members after the election when it would revert back to £15,300.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted and the Committee note that the Member Development Programme has run successfully over the last 12 months and should continue without implementing any new projects for the time being.
- (2) That the introduction of a Members' Night be delayed until 2011.

- (3) That in respect of the Member Development budget it be recommended to Cabinet as part of the budget process:
- (a) That the savings of £3000 in the 2008/09 Member Development budget be noted.
 - (b) That the Member Development budget for 2009/10 and 2010/11 be reduced to £10,000 per annum (+ inflation), reverting to £15,300 in 2011/12.
 - (c) That the Head of Financial Services be authorised to update the revenue budget accordingly.

29 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 2009

Members considered a report of the Head of Democratic Services which requested that Committee consider whether the Council should hold a Special Council meeting in Autumn of this year and if so how to take this forward.

The Committee discussed the options set out in the report and felt that in the current financial situation, the Special Council Meeting should be cancelled in 2009 but should take place in following years.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Special Council meeting due to take place in October 2009 be cancelled as a cost cutting exercise in view of the Council's current financial position.
- (2) That Special Council be reinstated in 2010.

30 CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS TIMETABLE AND MEETING TIMES - 2009/10

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report which requested Members to consider the dates, venues and start times of meetings in order that a timetable of meetings for 2009/10 could be recommended to Council for approval. A draft timetable was submitted for consideration. In particular the Committee was asked to consider increasing the number of meetings held in the evenings in order to improve the ability of Councillors in full time employment to participate.

Members considered each Committee in turn and made the following recommendations to Council:

Meeting	Start Time	Venue
Annual Council (Ceremonial)	12 noon	LTH
Annual Council (Business)	6.00 pm	MTH
Council	2.00 pm	MTH
Council Business Committee	5.00 pm	MTH
Audit Committee	6.00 pm	MTH
Budget and Performance Panel	6.00 pm	LTH
Cabinet	10.00 am	LTH/MTH alternating
Licensing Regulatory Committee	1.00 pm	LTH

Licensing Act Committee	4.30 pm	LTH
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6.00 pm	MTH
Personnel Committee	4.30 pm	LTH
Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee	4.00 pm	LTH (The meeting will return to MTH once works to enhance the Council Chamber have been undertaken)
Standards Committee	10.00 am	LTH

Concern was expressed over the length of Council meetings and it was noted that the Audit Committee would be considering the format of Council meetings as part of the Democratic Renewal Phase 2 report at their next meeting. It was anticipated that a report would be provided to the next Council Business Committee as a result on how procedures at Council meetings could be improved.

Members went on to discuss the start times of Task Group meetings. It was suggested that the first meeting of all Task Groups should take place at 6.00 pm unless there were special circumstances. The start time of future meetings and the frequency of these meetings would then be agreed at this meeting.

With regard to refreshments that were provided for some Council meetings, it was felt that there was often an over provision of food at many meetings and it was agreed to request officers to reduce the quantity of food ordered and to ensure that the food provided consisted of sandwiches only.

Resolved:

- (1) That it be noted that, following consideration of the matter by the Audit Committee as part of the Democratic Renewal Phase 2, a report will be presented to the Council Business Committee on how procedures at Council meetings can be improved.
- (2) That Council be requested to consider the Committee's recommendations on the start times of Council meetings as set out above.
- (3) That Council be requested to consider the Committee's recommendation that the first meeting of all Task Groups should take place at 6.00 pm unless there are special circumstances. The start time of future meetings and the frequency of these meetings would then be agreed at this meeting.
- (4) That officers be requested to ensure that the food provided for Council meetings should consist of only sandwiches and that the amount of food ordered should be reduced and wastage monitored.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.40 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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