

**COUNCIL BUSINESS  
COMMITTEE**

4.30 P.M.

12TH MARCH 2009

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

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Susan Bray

Officers in attendance:-

Roger Muckle	Corporate Director (Finance and Performance)
Richard Tulej	Head of Corporate Strategy
Debbie Chambers	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Democratic Support Officer

**31 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**32 CORPORATE PLAN 2009/10**

The Corporate Director (Finance and Performance) presented a report which requested Members to consider the draft Corporate Plan 2009/10. The Committee was requested to note the progress that had been made so far on the Plan and to consider how they wished to bring forward a completed draft Corporate Plan which would then be recommended to Council.

Members were reminded that at Council on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009, Council had delegated consideration of the outstanding sections of the Corporate Plan to Council Business Committee.

Members discussed the priorities and objectives set out in the draft Corporate Plan and how these related to the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership (LDLSP). It was reported that the Plan combined the strategic district wide aspirations that were contained within the LDLSP's Sustainable Community Strategy with the specific priorities of Cabinet.

Members requested a briefing on the LDLSP to assist them to fully consider the draft Corporate Plan.

It was agreed that a briefing should be set up before the next meeting of the Committee on the LDLSP.

***Resolved :***

- (1) That the Committee note the extent and scope of the piece of work delegated to them by Council to bring forward a completed draft Corporate Plan for 2009/10.

- (2) That the Committee notes the progress made to date and that it is proposed to recommend a final version of the Plan to Council on 18<sup>th</sup> May.
- (3) That the Committee consider the draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 at its next meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009.
- (4) That a briefing on the LDLSP for Council Business Committee Members take place before the next meeting.

### 33 CIVIC PROGRAMME - RECEPTION FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS

Members considered a report which gave details of the Overseas Students Reception that had taken place on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2008 and requested Members to consider if it should be reinstated as part of the annual Civic Programme.

Regarding the financial implications contained within in the report, Members were informed that Budget Council had recently taken place and the actual cut made to the Civic Budget for 2009/10 had been £400, not £4,300 as anticipated at the time of drafting the report. The budget had therefore been reduced from £15,000 to £12,300 for 2009/10. (The balance of £2,300 being the budget for Floral Decorations in 2009/10, which was cut in full as proposed).

It was reported that the event had proved to be very successful and it was recommended that it should be reinstated as an annual event. Members considered the feedback from students who had attended the event. It was noted that feedback from the Universities would have been useful and it was suggested that this be provided for the Committee.

***Resolved :***

- (1) That following the success of the 2008 event, the Reception for Overseas Students be reinstated in the Annual Civic Programme and improvements made to the event, providing these will not incur any additional costs.
- (2) That feedback be sought from the Universities and circulated to Members of Council Business Committee when available.

### 34 CIVIC REVIEW - CITIZENS' AWARD SCHEME

The Principal Democratic Support Officer presented a report requesting Members views on establishing a Citizens' Award Scheme in 2009/10. Members were reminded that the Committee had agreed at its meeting in September not to form a Citizenship Panel and instead to consider the introduction of a Citizen's Award Scheme. The Committee had at this meeting, approved an application form for the Award.

Members were again reminded that the budget for Civic functions had not been cut as recommended at Budget Council for 2009/10.

The Committee considered the options as set out in the report and it was agreed that Option 3, to abandon the scheme, was the preferred approach in the current financial climate.

**Resolved :**

That the Council Business Committee agree to abandon plans to establish a Citizens' Award Scheme at this stage.

**35 PUBLIC SPEAKING AT CABINET MEETINGS**

The Committee considered a report which set out recommendations from Cabinet on a proposed amendment to the Council's Constitution regarding public speaking at Cabinet meetings.

Members were advised of problems that had arisen at a recent Cabinet meeting when Cabinet Members had wanted to ask questions of a speaker but were not permitted to do so under the current limitations within the Council's Constitution.

The Committee discussed the options as set out in the report and agreed to the amendment to the Constitution to improve the current system in place for public speaking at Cabinet meetings.

It was felt that some members of the public may face problems providing a written copy of their speech and it was suggested that Officers could provide practical assistance if necessary.

**Resolved :**

- (1) That Council Business Committee approves amending Paragraph 2.7 of Part 4, Section 4 of the Council's Constitution in line with Cabinet's recommendation :-
  - (a) That public speakers at Cabinet be asked to provide a written version of their speech or questions in advance (unless there are special circumstances); and
  - (b) Be prepared to respond to questions from Cabinet Members at the meeting if necessary.
- (2) That the leaflet supplied to members of the public who have registered to speak include details of how to access help and assistance from Democratic Services with any special requirements.

**36 REFERRAL FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE - DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL PHASE 2**

The Principal Democratic Support Officer presented a report which gave details of a number of referrals from the Audit Committee regarding Democratic Renewal.

It was reported that the recent White Paper, Communities in Control, outlined plans to introduce a new duty for Local Authorities to respond to petitions to ensure that those with significant local support were properly debated. The Audit Committee recommended that it would be more appropriate for Overview and Scrutiny to consider such petitions.

With regard to Council meetings, the Audit Committee had requested Council Business Committee to consider restrictions on questions from Councillors at Full Council meetings. Members discussed options for this at length and agreed that questions

should be limited to 2 questions from a Councillor at Council meetings and that questions from Councillors should be moved to the end of the agenda before Cabinet Minutes.

**Resolved :**

- (1) That the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution be amended to state that petitions should be passed to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and carry out any inquiry work, as appropriate, before reporting back to Cabinet or the relevant decision-making body.
- (2) That, regarding questions from Councillors at full Council meetings :
  - (a) questions be limited to 2 questions from any one Councillor.
  - (b) the standing item "Questions under Procedure Rule 12.2" be moved to the end of the agenda before Cabinet Minutes.
- (3) That the Committee notes the information in this report regarding the further features of the Modern.gov committee management system.

**37 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Group Administrators were invited to put forward nominations for any changes to memberships of committees. The changes submitted by the Green and Labour Groups were accepted.

**Resolved :**

That the following nominations and changes to membership of committees be accepted.

**Personnel and JCC**

Remove Councillor Barry, replace with Councillor Chapman

**Planning**

Remove Councillor Bryning, replace with Councillor Redfern

**Standards Committee**

Remove Councillor Barry, replace with Councillor McCulloch

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.15 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Jenny Kay, Democratic Services telephone 582065 or e-mail [jkay@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:jkay@lancaster.gov.uk)**