

**COUNCIL BUSINESS
COMMITTEE**

5.00 P.M.

14TH JANUARY 2010

PRESENT:- Councillors Roger Dennison (Chairman), Morgwn Trolinger (Vice-Chairman), Susan Bray, Geoff Knight, Karen Leytham, Joyce Pritchard and Ron Sands

Officers in attendance:-

Roger Muckle	Corporate Director (Finance and Performance) (part)
Andrew Dobson	Head of Planning Services (part)
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Democratic Support Officer

26 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th November 2009 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**27 LANCASTER DISTRICT LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Corporate Director (Finance and Performance) presented a report which set out the revised version of the Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership's (LDLSP) Community Engagement Framework (CEF). The Committee was requested to consider the CEF and make recommendations to full Council. It was reported that the CEF would enable partner engagement with communities within the Lancaster District so that improvements in social, economic and environmental well being could be achieved.

Members were reminded that, at its meeting in September 2009, the Committee had considered a report regarding the consultation being carried out by the LDLSP in respect of its draft Community Engagement Framework. The Council Business Committee had referred the Community Engagement Framework for adoption by Council.

The Community Engagement Framework was subsequently submitted to Council on 16th September 2009, but a decision to adopt it was deferred as a number of responses had been received by the LDLSP Project Group in response to the consultation that required consideration.

A revised CEF document was appended to the report for consideration, which had been designed, from the start, in partnership and built upon the experience of the work of partners within the LDLSP, individual community members, small groups and organisations.

Resolved:

That the Committee support the LDLSP's revised Community Engagement Framework and recommend that the Framework be adopted by Council and that all future engagement work undertaken by the Council follows the principles of engagement set out in the document.

**28 CONSULTATION - NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
AND DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING STATEMENTS**

Members considered a report of the Head of Planning Services advising of the publication of a consultation on the draft National Planning Statements and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

A draft response to the consultation was appended to the report for consideration.

The Head of Planning Services gave Members a detailed overview of the implications of the Planning Statements for the Council which set out key national policy criteria against which applications for major new infrastructure. One of these dealt with nuclear power generation and identified Heysham as a site for nuclear energy generation.

The Committee asked a number of questions relating the proposed new Power Station at Heysham. Members also requested training sessions on the new legislation for Planning Committee Members, substitute Members and that the sessions also be made available to all other Members of Council.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted and that the responses to the consultation questions, as submitted as an Appendix to the report, be submitted as the Council's corporate response to the consultation.
- (2) That individual groups be advised to submit their own representations if they so wish.
- (3) That training sessions on new legislation be arranged for both Planning Committee Members, substitute Members and that the sessions also be made available to all other Members of Council.

29 CONSULTATION - LAKES TO DALES LANDSCAPE DESIGNATION PROJECT: PROPOSED EXTENSIONS TO LAKE DISTRICT AND NORTH YORKSHIRE NATIONAL PARKS

The Head of Planning Services presented a report which informed Members of a consultation that was taking place on the Lakes and Dales Landscape Designation Project by Natural England.

Members considered a map of the proposals which would see Leck Fells included as part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. This would mean that any planning applications from Leck Fells would be considered by the National Park and not the Council.

It was reported that Planning Officers felt it was important that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority should prepare its Local Development Framework Core Strategy to spatially align with the Lancaster District Local Development Framework Core Strategy, where appropriate to do so. This would ensure that the National Park recognised that the communities of Leck and Ireby spatially relate to Lancaster, Kendal and Kirby Lonsdale.

A number of questions were raised over the Management Board of the National Park. It was reported that, as Leck Fell was within the Lancaster District, the Council would be given a seat on the Board.

Resolved:

That, subject to the submission of comments relating to the preparation of a future Local Development Framework for the Yorkshire Dales National Park, no objections be raised to the assessment process or the proposal to designate Leck Fells as part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

30 CONSULTATION - THE FUTURE OF LANCASHIRE LOCALS

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report which advised Members of a request for comments by the Leader of the County Council to a consultation regarding the future of Lancashire Locals.

Copies of a briefing note from the Chief Executive and responses from the Free Independent Group and Liberal Democrats were circulated.

Concern was raised over the proposed dis-establishment of Lancashire Locals in terms of the opportunity for Non-Executive Councillors, Parish Councillors and the public to engage with the County Council. It was felt that Lancashire Locals were ineffective, but they at least provided a link in to the County Council and its decision making and an opportunity to scrutinize its decisions.

It was felt that the County Council should be more accessible to local people and that if Lancashire Locals was to be dis-established, a mechanism for grass roots community engagement with the County Council was needed as a replacement.

After considering the issues fully the Committee agreed that a formal response be submitted to the Leader of Lancashire County Council advising that the City Council does not support the proposals to abolish the Lancashire Locals and that the County Council should be advised that Lancashire Locals should not end until an effective alternative is in place. It was agreed that a form of wording would be prepared as a response in conjunction with the Chairman and circulated to Members to ensure that all comments made at the meeting were incorporated.

Resolved:

- (1) That, after considering the issues fully, the Committee agreed that a formal response be submitted to the Leader of Lancashire County Council advising that the City Council does not support the proposals to abolish the Lancashire Locals and that the County Council should be advised that Lancashire Locals should not end until an effective alternative is in place.
- (2) That Officers liaise with the Chairman in preparing the consultation response, to be then circulated to the Committee Members to ensure that all comments made at the meeting are incorporated.

31 CONSULTATION - DRAFT GUIDANCE ON THE DUTY TO RESPOND TO PETITIONS

The Principal Democratic Support Officer presented a report detailing the draft response of a consultation on draft Guidance on the Duty to Respond to Petitions.

It was reported that the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 contained a duty on local authorities to respond to petitions. Draft statutory guidance and secondary legislation had been produced to underpin this duty which was now out to consultation.

The Committee considered the draft response to the consultation that had been prepared, which was appended to the report.

Resolved:

That the draft response to the Government's consultation paper on the draft guidance on the duty to respond to petitions be approved to enable a response to be submitted by the deadline of 24th February 2010.

32 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2009-2011 REVIEW - KEY MEMBERS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Members considered a report on Key Members' Roles and Responsibilities as part of the Member Development Strategy Review 2009-2011.

The Committee was reminded that the Member Development Strategy was reviewed in June 2009 along with the outcome of an internal audit of Members Expenses and Civic Functions. One of the actions from this audit was to set out the roles and responsibilities of key Members and how they link to Corporate Plan priorities in the Council's Member Development Strategy.

It was agreed that the Member Development Strategy should be amended to include the roles and responsibilities and that 'job descriptions' should be prepared for Committee Chairmen when time and resources permitted.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Committee approve the additional section for the Member Development Strategy 2009-11 outlining the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members and how these link to the Corporate Plan.
- (2) That 'job descriptions' for Committee Chairman be added to the Strategy when time and resources permitted.

33 CIVIC REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT

The Principal Democratic Support Officer presented a report which provided an update on the Review of the Civic Function which had been agreed by Council in December 2006. The Civic Review Implementation Plan was appended to the report for Members' information.

It was reported that there were five items remaining in the implementation plan and two that required actioning.

With regard to the criteria of Freeman, Members were advised that the Borough Freedom Act had recently been passed and this had implications in this area. A report would be submitted to Council Business Committee once the implications of this Act had been explored.

The final issue was that of the introduction of a Town Crier. It was reported that this would be at a cost of over £2,000 to purchase a uniform. It was felt this was too costly and would take almost a quarter of the Mayoral budget for the 2010/11 year. In view of this Members requested that the services of an existing Town Crier(s) be sought, being subject to budget provision, as set out in the recommendations of the report.

Resolved:

- (1) That progress and the action taken to date be noted.
- (2) That, in respect of the item relating to Freeman, a further report be submitted to Council once the implications of the Borough Freedom Act have been properly explored and viable options can be considered.
- (3) That, in respect of the Town Crier, the services of an existing Town Crier(s) be

sought for future Civic events, if appropriate, should budget provision allow and no further action be taken with regard to establishing a new post of Town Crier at the present time.

34 CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS TIMETABLE & MEETING TIMES 2010/11

The Chief Executive submitted a report which requested Members to consider the dates, venues and start times of meetings in order that a timetable of meetings for 2010/11 could be recommended to Council for approval. A draft timetable was submitted for consideration. Members were advised, at the meeting, of the views on commencement times of the Chairman of the Licensing Act Committee.

With regard to the forthcoming General Election, Members were informed that there was a possibility that the date of the Annual Council would need to be rescheduled dependent on the date of the election.

Members were requested to consider specifically the start times of the first meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups which currently met at 6.00 p.m. The Committee felt this was acceptable and should remain unchanged.

It was suggested that the month of August which usually remained meeting free was now being booked up with meetings. It was agreed that the August recess should be maintained at all times and that no additional meetings should be booked in that month.

The Committee went on to discuss the start time of the Licensing Act Committee which had been moved to 4.30 p.m. the previous year. It was agreed that this should remain the same.

Members questioned whether the start time of Licensing Act Sub-Committee which currently was set at 10.30 a.m. could be moved to 9.00 a.m. or 9.30 a.m. to accommodate Councillors who worked. It was agreed that this would be investigated further and reported to Council for consideration.

Concern was expressed over the timescale for refurbishment of Morecambe Council Chamber which would allow Planning Committee meetings to move back there. It was agreed that an update on this would be requested and included in the referral report to Council.

Members were reminded that the Committee had, at its meeting in June, agreed that a series of Service Briefings be included as a priority in the Member Development Strategy. It was agreed that the dates of these briefings should be included in the Meetings Timetable as the first Thursday in the month alternating between Morecambe and Lancaster, subject to room availability. It was noted that the Briefings would not be formal meetings, or be part of the Council's decision-making process. The Briefings would include topics of interest for members of the Council. It was noted, at the meeting, that there was enough information to brief members on for at least a 12 month period.

Resolved:

- (1) That Council Business Committee recommends the Meetings Timetable 2010/11 to Council for approval.
- (2) That Council be requested to consider the Committee's recommendation that the first meeting of all Task Groups should remain at 6.00 p.m. unless there are special circumstances, with the Task Group at its first meeting then considering

the times and dates of future meetings.

- (3) That Members note the scheduling of the Annual Meeting and of the possible need to reschedule this if a General Election is called close to this time.
- (4) That an August recess be maintained at all times.
- (5) That Officers investigate whether the start time of Licensing Act Sub-Committee, currently set at 10.30 a.m., could be moved to 9.00 a.m. or 9.30 a.m. to accommodate Councillors who work and be reported to Council for consideration.
- (6) That an update be included in the report to Council on the timescale for the refurbishment of Morecambe Council Chamber which would allow Planning Committee meetings to move back there.
- (7) That Briefings for Members be included in the Timetable on the first Thursday in every month with the venue alternating between Lancaster and Morecambe, subject to room availability.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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