

Audit and Governance Committee

Tuesday 5 September 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Allen, in the Chair.

Councillors Harrison, Dr Mahony, Raynsford and Stevens.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Finn and Independent Member Annette Benny.

Also in attendance: Louise Clapton (Senior Auditor), Alison Critchfield (Acting Head of Legal), Carolyn Haynes (Lead Accountancy Manager), Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk), David Northey (Interim Section 151 Officer) and Hannah Whiting (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 3.37 pm and finished at 4.57 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

18. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

19. **Minutes**

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023 as a correct record.

20. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

21. **Stage One - Constitutional Changes**

Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk) ran through the proposed changes, with support from Alison Critchfield (Acting Head of Legal), and the following points were highlighted and discussed by the Committee:

- a) Article 5, paragraph 5.5 needed rewording as it read that following the death of the Lord Mayor, they could return;
- b) How to word the paragraph relating to not requiring a vote for reports to note at City Council meetings;
- c) If an age limit should be put in place for petition signatures and how this would be policed, or if 'regardless of age' would be better.

During these discussions it was agreed that the following further amendments would be made:

1. Both 'Councillors' and 'Members' had been used interchangeably in the document previously and only Councillors would be used moving forward;
2. Article 5 paragraph 5.5 would be changed to read "If the Lord Mayor resigns or dies the Deputy Lord Mayor will act as Lord Mayor until the next appropriate Meeting of the Council where a new Lord Mayor will be elected by the Council";
3. Article 5 would have an additional paragraph that would read "If the Lord Mayor is incapacitated the Deputy Lord Mayor will act in their place until the Lord Mayor is able to return to the role.";
4. Article 11 paragraph 11.5 would have the word 'annually' added to the end of the following sentence: "in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1 million";
5. Part B, Paragraph 19.5 would be changed to read "Reports which contain only recommendations "to note" may not require a vote, unless a vote is called for by Councillors.";
6. The second bullet point of paragraph 2.1 in the Petition Scheme would have "regardless of age" added.

The Committee then agreed to:

1. Recommend amended Part A, Part B and Petition Scheme Guidance to City Council for approval;
2. To review the Officer/Member Protocol at a later meeting.