

REPORT OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – FUTURE OF THE MAYORALTY

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SUMMARY: This report summarises the discussion and recommendations to Council of the Policy Development Group established by Council on 21 March 2013 on the future of the Mayoralty in Copeland

RECOMMENDATIONS: That (1) the future operating model for the mayoralty is a Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Copeland, to chair Council meetings and attend the three main civic events continuing on a reduced scale – Annual Meeting, Civic Sunday and Remembrance Sunday; and other civic engagements within Cumbria at the Mayor’s discretion and within the available budget of £3500. Attendance at events outside Cumbria or at costs in excess of the agreed budget to be funded by the Mayor personally;

(2) the current provisions in Chapter 6 of the Constitution providing that the political group having a majority on the Council has a right to nominate a Member for election to the Mayoralty in two consecutive years in three and the political group in a minority on the Council has a right to nominate a Member to the Mayoralty every third year in three, is retained; and that no other changes are made to Chapter 6 of the Constitution (Chairing the Council and the Mayor) other than deletion of the words “the majority of” in the third line;

(3) the role of Deputy Mayor is restricted to deputising for the Mayor as Chair of Council, and the Deputy Mayor’s allowance is discontinued for 2013/14 and future years;

(4) Council confirms that for 2013/14 and future years, there will be no secretarial or administrative support to the Mayoralty from within existing Council resources. Administrative support for the three main functions and support and advice to the Mayor as Chair of Council meetings will continue unchanged, as will advice to the Mayor on civic protocol in connection with attendance at specific events.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Policy Development Group was appointed by the Council on 21 March 2013 with the following terms of reference:

“To review the Mayoralty in the context of savings in support costs already decided, to include whether or not to continue with the current model of Mayoralty, and the rules for appointment of Members to the office of Mayor; and a special meeting of Council be held on the day of the 2013 Annual Meeting to consider the PDG recommendations.”

1.2 The following Members were appointed to the Policy Development Group: Councillors Jackie Bowman, Eileen Eastwood, Stephen Haraldsen, Peter Kane, David Moore, Sam Pollen, Graham Sunderland, Henry Wormstrup (or nominated substitutes). Councillor Keith Hitchen attended the second meeting in place of Councillor Eileen Eastwood.

1.3 The Policy Development Group (PDG) held two meetings on 4 and 17 April. At its first meeting the PDG chose Councillor Henry Wormstrup as lead Member in its meetings.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 At its first meeting the PDG considered background information on the Mayoralty and Chairmanship of the Council and the conventions which have been followed in Copeland since 1974.

2.2 Sections 4 and 5 of the Local Government Act 1972 require a principal council to elect one of its Councillors as Chairman and one as Vice Chairman as the first items of business transacted at each Annual Meeting, and the Chairman must preside at meetings of the Council if present, as must the Vice Chairman if the Chairman is absent. District Councils granted Borough status under Section 245 of the Act are entitled to use the style of Mayor and Deputy Mayor instead of Chairman and Vice Chairman.

2.3 It is usual, and it has been the convention at Copeland, for a Councillor to hold office as Deputy Mayor, and then to be elected as Mayor the following year. The PDG went on to consider the method for choosing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor at its second meeting.

3. THE ROLE OF THE MAYOR

3.1 At its first meeting the PDG noted that since 1974 when the Council came into existence, the Council has had an active Mayoralty with three annual Council run civic events (Annual Meeting, Civic Sunday and Remembrance Sunday) and until 2011 a fourth, the Mayor’s Charity Ball. In addition the Mayor of Copeland has traditionally attended and supported a wide range of civic engagements in the Borough and beyond, typically between 150 and 250 per year. This activity has been supported by a dedicated Secretary (full-time until 2011, part-time since), two Chauffeur/Attendants and two civic

vehicles.

3.2 As part of the budget savings the Council has necessarily had to make in 2013/14 in the current financial climate in local government, this dedicated support has been withdrawn, leaving only a small budget of to support the remaining three civic events, and a smaller number of other civic engagements.

3.3 The PDG therefore considered four options for the future of the Mayoralty in Copeland, which were:

- 1 A Chair and Vice Chair of Council, styled as such, whose sole role would be chairing of Council meetings
- 2 A Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Copeland, to chair Council meetings and attend only the three main civic events continuing on a reduced scale – Annual Meeting, Civic Sunday and Remembrance Sunday.
- 3 A Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Copeland, to chair Council meetings and attend the three main civic events continuing on a reduced scale – Annual Meeting, Civic Sunday and Remembrance Sunday; and other civic engagements within Copeland at the Mayor’s discretion and within the available budget of £3500. Attendance at events outside Copeland or at costs in excess of the agreed budget to be funded by the Mayor personally.
- 4 A Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Copeland, to chair Council meetings and attend the three main civic events continuing on a reduced scale – Annual Meeting, Civic Sunday and Remembrance Sunday; and other civic engagements within Cumbria at the Mayor’s discretion and within the available budget of £3500. Attendance at events outside Cumbria or at costs in excess of the agreed budget to be funded by the Mayor personally.

3.4 During the following discussion Councillor Sam Pollen proposed that the PDG should recommend Option 1, but this was not supported by the remaining Members.

3.5 In considering the remaining options, the majority of Members took the view that the Council should continue an active Mayoralty in support of the citizens of the Borough in so far as resources allowed, and that therefore either Option 3 or 4 should be chosen. Following a debate on both, the PDG concluded that option 3 would preclude the Mayor from attending County-wide events which might include recognition of achievements by, or awards to, citizens of Copeland; and for that reason the PDG decided to recommend that Option 4 be supported.

4. CHOOSING THE MAYOR

4.1 The PDG noted that there are no statutory requirements on how a Councillor is chosen to serve as Mayor (other than the requirement for election as the first business transacted at the Annual Meeting) and there are various methods in place in other authorities (though not in Cumbria) for choosing the Mayor on the basis of length of service, irrespective of political group; for alternating the Mayoralty among the main political groups; and for alternating the Mayoralty using a points system.

4.2 Most of the other Cumbria authorities choose the Mayor or Chairman from the Councillors in the controlling group, and this convention was in place in Copeland also until 2005 when the Council decided to amend the Constitution to provide that the political group having a majority on the Council has a right to nominate a Member for election to the Mayoralty in two consecutive years in three and the political group in a minority on the Council has a right to nominate a Member to the Mayoralty every third year in three.

4.3 The PDG discussed whether or not they wished to recommend Council to retain this arrangement in place.

4.4 During the discussion Councillor Henry Wormstrup proposed that Council be recommended to adopt an additional eligibility requirement whereby a Councillor would be required to have served at least one full four year term as a Councillor before being eligible to be elected as Mayor, but this proposal was not supported by other Members.

4.5 Councillor Sam Pollen, supported by Councillor Joan Hully, proposed that Council be recommended that choice of a Councillor to serve as Mayor should be at the discretion of the controlling group, but this proposal was not supported by other Members.

4.6 At the conclusion of the discussion the PDG decided to recommend Council to retain the existing arrangement whereby the political group having a majority on the Council has a right to nominate a Member for election to the Mayoralty in two consecutive years in three and the political group in a minority on the Council has a right to nominate a Member to the Mayoralty every third year in three; and that no other changes are made to Chapter 6 of the Constitution (Chairing the Council) other than deletion of the words "the majority of" in the third line.

5 ROLE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

5.1 The PDG recognise that in a scenario of a very active Mayoralty which has existed in Copeland hitherto, an active role for the Deputy Mayor in attending civic and Mayoral engagements when the Mayor is unavailable, or double-booked, would have been a necessity.

5.2 Given the reduced role and scope of the Mayoralty in future, the PDG believe that there is no longer any need for such an active role for the Deputy Mayor and are recommending that the role is restricted to deputising for the Mayor as Chair of Council. That being the case, the PDG takes the view that a separate allowance for the Deputy Mayor can no longer be justified and recommend that it is discontinued for 2013/14 and future years.

6 SECRETARIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

6.1 Given the withdrawal of dedicated support to the Mayoralty referred to in 3.1 and 3.2 above, for clarity the PDG is recommending that Council confirms that for 2013/14 and future years, there will be no secretarial or administrative support to the Mayoralty from within existing Council resources. Administrative support for the three main functions and support and advice to the Mayor as Chair of Council meetings will continue unchanged, as will advice to the Mayor on civic protocol in connection with attendance at specific events.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The PDG believe their recommendations are a realistic and proportionate set of proposals for the future of the Mayoralty in providing a limited service in support of the citizens of the Borough, within the reduced resources available.

8. STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

8.1 The Monitoring Officer's comments are: Included in the report

8.2 The Section 151 Officer's comments are: The Mayoralty is a discretionary function accordingly Council has decided to reduce the resources available to the Mayoralty at its budget meeting in February 2013. These proposals should ensure the activity is reduced to link to the new significantly reduced budget, no further funding is available and there are no dedicated staffing resources

8.3 EIA Comments: It is advised that the proposals and the undertaking of the Mayoral role will be mindful of the Council's statutory obligations in respect of the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty and reflect on equality and diversity implications and opportunities as appropriate.

8.4 Policy Framework: As referred to within the report. The report outlines the policy preferences of the PDG, reaffirms the position on how the Mayorality is appointed and outlines the role of the Mayor within the budget available and the role of the Deputy Mayor going forward.

8.5 Other Consultee Comments, if any:

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Appendix A – Constitution Chapter 6

List of Background Documents:

CHAPTER 6

CHAIRING THE COUNCIL and THE MAYOR

Role and function of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The Mayor and, Deputy Mayor of the Council will be elected by the Council annually.

The Mayor is the First Citizen of the Council and will carry out the majority of civic ceremonial duties in the Borough

The Mayor and, in his or her absence, the Deputy Mayor, will have the following roles and functions:

1. uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution, and to interpret the Constitution when necessary;
2. preside over meetings of the Council in accordance with the Constitution;
3. act as community leaders;
4. promote public involvement in the Council's activities;
5. attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the Council and/or he or she considers appropriate;
6. promote and represent the Borough.

Nomination of Members for Election of Mayor

The political group(s) having a majority on the Council has the right to make a nomination of a Member for election to the Mayoralty for 2 consecutive years in three.

The political group(s) in a minority on the Council has the right to make a nomination of a Member for election to the Mayoralty every third year in three

Nominations for appointment to the Deputy Mayor in each year will be made by the group entitled under this Article to nominate to the Mayoralty in the next following municipal year.

The Deputy Mayor will be appointed to the Mayorality in the following year including in years when there has been a changed of political control of the majority on the Council.

Where more than one nomination is made for election of a Member as Deputy Mayor, voting shall be in accordance with the provisions of the rules on voting set out in Rule 16 of the Council Procedure Rules.

Awareness training shall be undertaken by the Deputy Mayor prior to them taking up their term of office as Mayor.

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