

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2014 AT 4:00PM

Present: Councillors John Kane (Chair); David Banks; Jackie Bowman; Eileen Eastwood; Allan Forster; Geoff Garrity; Gilbert Scurrah; Dave Smith; Felicity Wilson and Henry Wormstrup.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors George Clements; John Jackson; Ian Hill; Alistair Norwood; Sam Pollen and Elaine Woodburn.

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive; Tim Capper, Democratic Services Manager; Leila Cox, Communications Officer and Clive Willoughby, Member Services Technical Support Officer.

Also Present: Councillors John Bowman; Hugh Branney; Yvonne Clarkson; Peter Connolly; Karl Connor; Margarita Docherty; Jon Downie; Stephen Haraldsen; Keith Hitchen; Lena Hogg; Allan Holliday; Joan Hully; Alan Jacob; Peter Kane; Michael McVeigh; David Moore; David Riley; Robert Salkeld; William Southward; Peter Stephenson; Graham Sunderland; Gillian Troughton; Peter Tyson; Douglas Wilson and Carole Woodman.

OSC 46/13

Directly Elected Mayor Form Of Governance

This item was introduced by the Chief Executive and Committee then received a presentation from the Democratic Services Manager on the process for a Directly Elected Mayor form of Governance. Copies of the slides used are attached to these minutes.

During the presentation, Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. They were advised that:-

- The Referendum vote was a simple majority of the votes cast regardless of the turnout.
- A further Referendum on the Directly Elected Mayor issue could not be held for a period of 10 years, even if a valid petition was submitted.
- Electors eligible and who had registered for a Postal Vote, would be able to vote by that method in the Referendum.
- The Referendum count would take place immediately after the verification of both the European Election and Referendum ballot papers. This would take place at Egremont Market Hall commencing after Close of Poll on 22 May and continuing overnight into 23 May.

- Any current Council employee could stand for election as Directly Elected Mayor, but if elected, would be required to resign from the Council's employment before taking office.
- If the Directly Elected Mayor died in office, this would trigger an election.
- The Directly Elected Mayor's must have an Executive which would consist of elected Councillors appointed by him/her and but can be from any political party or Independent member.
- The Directly Elected Mayor cannot change the Local Plan, but could influence it.
- Committee memberships would continue to be politically balanced and set by the Group Leaders.
- A Directly Elected Mayor would have no powers over the Town and Parish Councils in Copeland.
- The cost of the last election (Police & Crime Commissioner) in November 2012 was £121,746.64 As the Directly Elected Mayor Referendum cost would be shared equally with the European Election, the estimated cost would be £60k. If there was a vote in favour of a Directly Elected Mayor, an election in October would then be an estimated further cost of £120k, making a total of £180k.
- A Directly Elected Mayor could appoint a 'Mayor's Assistant (Political Assistant). This would be a new post on a Fixed Term Contract and funded from within resources available to the Council.
- Any allowance paid to the Directly Elected Mayor and his/her Executive would be part of the Members' Allowance Scheme and would be set by Full Council after receiving a recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- There are only two models of governance available. The current Leader and Executive or a Directly Elected Mayor and Executive.
- Referendum regulations detail definitions and Election Returns that must be completed and submitted to the Electoral Commission. Guidance on this will be provided to Members in due course.

Additionally, Members asked the following questions, the answers for which would be obtained and circulated after the meeting:-

- Can a former Council employee stand for election as Mayor?
- Can staff of Elected Mayor be externally funded?
- What is the latest date for registering for a Postal Vote?

The Chief Executive and Democratic Services Manager were thanked for the presentation.

RESOLVED – That

- a) the presentation be received,
- b) the answers to the additional questions be obtained and circulated to all Members.

The meeting closed at 5:40pm

Chairman

Date