

## CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2014 at 10.00 am in Council Chamber, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

**Present:** Dr Jonathan Sexton (Chairman); Councillors Hayton, Nicholson and Watkins

### 31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wright and Mrs Bacon.

### 32. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

### 33. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

On the proposal of Councillor Nicholson, seconded by Councillor Hayton, it was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party held on 13 March 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

### 34. POSSIBLE REVIEW OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR BACKBENCH MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS OF FULL COUNCIL

Upon consideration of the report, Working Party members made points and suggestions as follows:

1. The review in question should only take place in the wider context of the recent Peer Review or following the district council elections in 2015.
2. Adoption of options could:
  - a) result in longer meetings of the Council – *it was noted that paragraph 7.3 of Annex 1 suggested that Council meetings in Thanet were already longer than those of neighbouring councils.*
  - b) have an adverse effect on resource implications, *as per paragraph 3.1.2 of the report.*
3. The former practice of receiving written reports from the Chairman of Scrutiny at each of the ordinary meetings of full Council, should be re-introduced, providing that such reports were for information only and not subject to debate.
4. As indicated by the list at paragraph 4 of Annex 1, backbench Members already had ample opportunity to take part in meetings of full Council. Additionally, they were able to speak under Council Procedure Rule 24.1 at meetings of the executive, committees, boards and panels.

It was proposed by Councillor Nicholson, seconded by Councillor Hayton and AGREED:

1. TO RECOMMEND to Standards Committee:

- a) THAT no change to the Council Procedure Rules affecting Members' participation at meetings of full council is made at the present time;
  - b) THAT a written report for information be received at each ordinary meeting of Council from the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel, providing that such reports were not open for debate.
2. THAT, prior to submitting recommendations at No. 1 above to the Standards Committee, a report be brought to the Working Party, outlining the necessary constitutional changes.

It was FURTHER AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Watkins, seconded by Councillor Hayton:

THAT officers review the current practice of enabling debate at meetings of full Council on reports back that are purely "for information" relating to petitions and motions on notice, and bring a report to the next meeting of the Working Party.

Meeting concluded : 10.35 am