

Report of the General Purposes Committee held on 16 January 2019

Present: Councillor Tim Mitchell (Chairman), Paul Swaddle (Vice-Chairman) and David Boothroyd

1. Changes to Full Council Meetings and the Programme of Meetings 2019-2020

- (a) We have considered a report on the Programme of Meetings for the 2019-2020 municipal year which in the case of Committees follows broadly the same programme as in recent years. For the reasons set out below revisions to the programme of meetings for full Council meetings are recommended together with changes to the relevant Council meeting procedures.
- (b) The Council's procedures, set out in the Constitution, provide for the Leader, at an Extraordinary Council meeting held in early March each year to make a speech on the Council's aims and objectives for the following year and formally adopt the Council Tax resolution.
- (c) On advice from the City Treasurer and in accordance broadly with the approach adopted in each of the last two years, it is proposed that the Leader's Speech and Budget Proposals be considered at an Extraordinary Council meeting in November. This allows for departments to better plan on a full year basis for the following fiscal year. Any changes which impact on the budget approved will be reported to the Cabinet in the following February and then to the full Council in early March when the formal Council Tax Resolution will be determined. The formal Council Tax resolution may only be adopted once the relevant information from the precepting authorities has been received. It must be adopted by full Council prior to 11 March each year.
- (d) The programme of full Council meetings is proposed to be adjusted to accommodate the above mentioned proposals. If this programme is adopted it will be necessary to make minor adjustments to the Council meeting procedure, which currently provide for the Budget and Council Tax to be agreed at the same meeting.
- (e) Given that the Leader gave a Leaders' Speech in July 2018 and the Council in November also debated and approved their provisional budget for 2019-2020 it is proposed to convert the Council meeting programmed for March 2019 to an Ordinary meeting at which the Council will consider the formal Council Tax resolution, upon the recommendation of the Cabinet.

We recommend:

- (i) That the programme of meetings set out in Appendix 3 to the Council agenda be approved.

- (ii) That the Council approve the programme for full Council meetings, as follows:

15 May 2019 (Annual); 26 June 2019; 18 September 2019; 13 November 2019 (Leader's Speech and Budget); 22 January 2020; 4 March 2020 (including Council Tax); 20 May 2020 (Annual).
- (iii) That the Council approve the revised procedures for the Leader's Speech and budget proposals set out in Appendix 3 to the Council agenda, including the associated changes to Standing Orders.
- (iv) That the Council, for the reasons set out in paragraph (e) above, agree that the Extraordinary meeting programmed to be held on Wednesday 6 March 2019 now be held as an Ordinary Council meeting.

2. Members Allowances Scheme 2018-2019 (Amendment) and Scheme for 2019-2020

- (a) The current Members' Allowances Scheme was adopted by the Council on 7 March 2018. The Scheme for the 2018/19 municipal year was approved by the full Council, upon recommendation from the General Purposes Committee. As in previous year's regard was given to the findings and recommendations detailed in the report of the London Council's Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors which was last published in January 2018.
- (b) The Scheme for 2018-2019 was amended by the Council on 16.05.18 to increase the Basic Allowance and all Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) by 2% and following a full review on 11.7.2018 further increased the SRAs to reflect the increased workloads for leading members and specific sub-committees.
- (c) Following the decision of the Leader to appoint additional Cabinet Members and therefore the proposal to appoint a further Policy and Scrutiny Committee – see report listed as Appendix 4 to the Council agenda, further in-year amendments to the scheme are proposed to ensure an SRA can be paid to the Chairman of the new Committee. There is already sufficient provision in the scheme to pay an SRA to up to 10 Cabinet Members and up to 10 Deputy Cabinet Members.
- (d) The proposed scheme, effective from 1 April 2019 for 2019-2020 has been prepared on the basis of the current scheme with the additional Special Responsibility Allowances referred to in paragraph (c) above included. All allowances, with the exception of those relating to IT, travel and subsistence have been inflated by 2%, as previously agreed. Following the decision to transfer the CityWest Homes responsibilities in-house provision for the City West Board Members to receive a SRA has been removed.

We recommend:

- (i) That the Council approve the amended Members' Allowances Scheme with immediate effect as set out in paragraph (c) above.
- (ii) That the Council be recommended to approve the Members' Allowances Scheme attached in Appendix 4 to the Council agenda for 2019-2020 with effect from 1 April 2019.

3. Establishment of a new Policy and Scrutiny Committee

- (a) On the 19 December 2018 the Leader of the Council created two new Cabinet Member posts (Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture and Community and Cabinet Member for Digital and Customer Services) which took effect from the 1st January 2019. These portfolios previously sat within the portfolios of the former posts of Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Education, Community and Place Shaping and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services respectively.
- (b) It is proposed to establish a new committee to carry out the Policy and Scrutiny functions in respect of matters relating to those duties within the terms of reference of the two new Cabinet Members. This will, in turn, provide for the Policy and Scrutiny committees that currently cover these functions to give more time to other matters within their remits. With the Council's housing management functions, currently overseen by CityWest Homes, returning in-house from the 1st April the Policy and Scrutiny Committee that covers housing will want to allocate more of its time to scrutinising the new arrangements.

We recommend:

- (i) That Council agrees to establish a new Policy and Scrutiny Committee (Communities and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee) with the terms of reference and proportionality as set out in Appendix 5 to the Council agenda.
- (ii) That the Council amend the membership of the Westminster Scrutiny Commission by one Member to enable the Chairman of the new P&S Committee to be a Member.
- (iii) That the Council authorises Officers to adjust the terms of reference of those Policy and Scrutiny Committees whose Cabinet Member reporting lines are impacted as shown in paragraph 4.9 of Appendix 5 to the Council agenda.

Tim Mitchell, Chairman

Background Papers

Report to General Purposes Committee (16.1.19)