



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

# MINUTES

## General Purposes

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **General Purposes** held on **Wednesday 16th January, 2019**, Room 3.4, 3rd Floor 5 Strand, London, WC2 5HR.

**Members Present:** Councillors Tim Mitchell (Chairman), Paul Swaddle (Vice-Chairman) and David Boothroyd

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Robert Rigby

#### **1 MEMBERSHIP**

1.1 There were no changes to the membership.

#### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2.1 There were no declarations.

#### **3 MINUTES**

3.1 That the Chairman, with the consent of the members present, signed the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2018 as a true and correct record of proceedings.

#### **4 CHANGES TO FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS AND THE PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2019-2020**

4.1 The Committee considered a report that sought approval to the Programme of Committee Meetings for the 2019/2020 municipal year which in the case of Committees followed broadly the same programme as in recent years.

4.2 Revisions to the programme of meetings for full Council meetings were recommended together with related changes to the relevant Council meeting procedures. It was proposed to receive the Leader's Speech and consider the Budget Proposals in November rather than March each year to allow departments to better plan on a full year basis for the following fiscal year. Other variations proposed were largely intended to better balance the programme of Council meetings.

- 4.3 The Committee noted that as 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 was proposed to convert the Council meeting programmed for March 2019 to an Ordinary meeting at which the Council would consider the formal Council Tax resolution, upon the recommendation of the Cabinet.
- 4.4 With regards to the proposals to bring forward the Leader's Speech and Budget process to November, the Committee noted that whilst the formal settlement for local government will remain to be announced officers will have sufficient advance information from the Treasury on which to base proposals. The Committee considered that in the event that there are substantial changes to the formal settlement in December the Council could agree to hold an Extraordinary meeting in March to enable a full budget debate to take place.
- 4.5 The Committee commented that at the last budget meeting a substantial amount of time was taken up by recorded votes, four in total. Councillors queried whether there is a legal requirement to hold a recorded vote for every proposed amendment or if this was just required for a vote on the substantive motion.
- 4.5 Members also queried the definition of an Extraordinary meeting and asked whether the budget meeting can be referred to differently?

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the programme of meetings set out in Appendix 3 to the Council agenda be approved.
- (ii) That the Council approves 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 approved 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) to the report, agreed that the Extraordinary meeting programmed to be held on Wednesday 6 March 2019 now be held as an Ordinary Council meeting.

**5 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2018-2019: AMENDMENT AND SCHEME FOR 2019-2020**

- 5.1 Following the decision of the Leader in December to appoint additional Cabinet Members, which has resulted in proposals to appoint a further Policy and Scrutiny Committee, further in-year amendments to the Members

Allowances Scheme 2018-2019 were proposed to ensure a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) could be paid to the Chairman of the new Committee. The Committee was informed that there was already sufficient provision in the scheme to pay an SRA to up to 10 Cabinet Members and up to 10 Deputy Cabinet Members.

- 5.2 The Committee was informed that the proposed scheme, effective from 1 April 2019 for 2019-2020 had been prepared on the basis of the current scheme with the additional Special Responsibility Allowances referred to in paragraph 5.1 above included. All allowances, with the exception of those relating to IT, travel and subsistence had 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 had been removed.
- 5.3 The Chairman clarified that the 2% uplift in members' allowances was linked to the pay increase agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government and unions for local government staff. It was not an annual increase.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Council approved 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.

**6 CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 The Committee was informed that it was to 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 would, 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 1<sup>st</sup> April the Policy and Scrutiny Committee that covers housing would want to allocate more of its time to scrutinising the new arrangements.
- 6.2 Whilst the Committee supported the proposals, it noted the variances in Committee remits. The Chairman commented that the Family and People Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee has one of the largest remits and having consulted the Chief Whip of the Minority Party suggested that it might be advantageous for the Committee to reinstate a Health Sub-committee to provide more time for the Committee to consider Adult Social Care matters. It was further noted that a wider review of the Committee remits was likely to be undertaken in advance of the next municipal year to address these issues.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That Council agreed 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 authorised 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.

The Meeting ended at 6.20 pm

**CHAIRMAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_