

3. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2013 (copy attached).

4. Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary or local non-pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, when appropriate, to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.

Part 1 – Public

5. Member Development: Update

Report **D356** attached.

6. Amendment to the Constitution: Addition to Scheme of Delegation to Officers

Report **D357** attached.

7. Review of Petitions Scheme – E-Petition Facility

The 2011 Localism Act revokes the 2009 requirement of councils to have a petitions scheme. Notwithstanding this relaxation in the legislation, it is suggested that the Borough Council retains its petitions scheme as this is an important democratic tool, and is used regularly.

However, the freedoms and flexibilities offered by the 2011 Act also mean that the Council is no longer required to maintain its own electronic petitions (e-petitions) system on its website if a better digital alternative can be found. The Council's existing e-petitions system is provided under a contract which ends in December 2013 and must be renewed/cancelled by September. The annual cost of the contract is currently around £1900 a year.

The possibility of alternatives can be explored when a decision is made whether or not to renew the current software, within the existing budget. The process of choosing and implementing software is a matter routinely delegated to officers under the Council's constitution. However, as a matter of housekeeping, it may be necessary to amend the petitions scheme in the constitution to implement any new e-petitions system (in-house or externally hosted). This is simply because the current scheme includes instructions to petitioners which reflect the process dictated by the existing software.

Accordingly, it is **RECOMMENDED**:

That the Working Party recommends to full Council that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman of the Democratic Renewal Working Party and the relevant Portfolio Holder, to amend and update the Petitions Scheme in the

Council's constitution to reflect any future changes in the electronic petitions (e-petitions) process required by a change or improvement in software or technology, provided that such changes maintain accessibility to the scheme and are consistent with the existing guidelines and terms and conditions regarding validity, transparency and privacy.

**8. Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:
Approval of the Council's Annual Accounts**

Report **D358** attached.

9. Members' Attendance Statistics: 2012/2013

Report **D359** attached.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

The Working Party is requested to confirm the following meeting dates: -

Thursday 12 September 2013;
Monday 2 December 2013 (Thursdays fitting in with full Council not available);
Thursday 13 February 2014; and
Thursday 8 May 2014.

All meetings to commence at 5.00 pm.

Part 2 – Private

NONE