

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAYORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 22 March 2011 at 4.00 pm
in the Mayor's Parlour, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor J R Hale (Chairman),
Councillors Aitkens, Mrs Bone, Mrs Charlesworth, Farmer, Houlder
and Nettleton

6. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

7. Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2011 were incorrect in that they did not record the decision taken on the nomination for Deputy Mayor for the civic year 2011/2012. It was agreed that minute 5 be amended and that a second resolution be recorded that stated *'Councillor Buckle be nominated for election as Deputy Mayor for 2011/2012 and his name be formally submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 19 May 2011, subject to him formally consenting to such nomination'*.

Subject to the above amendment the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. Annual Meeting of the Council and Mayor Making: 19 May 2011

The Committee considered Paper B520 (previously circulated) which sought the allocation of roles and decisions in respect of the Annual Meeting of Council on 19 May 2011.

The following tasks were allocated to the following Councillors as indicated:-

(1) Election of Mayor

(a) To move: Councillor Oliver; and

(b) To second: Councillor Hale.

(2) Vote of thanks to the Retiring Mayor and Mayoress and election of Deputy Mayor

Councillor Houlder to seek Councillors to undertake proposing and seconding the motions.

(3) Vote of thanks to the Retiring Deputy Mayor and Consort

(a) To move: Councillor Farmer; and

(b) To second: Councillor Farmer to seek a Councillor to second the motion.

The following statements/decisions were made:-

(1) Procedural Business

- (a) Procedural business to be held in the Athenaeum.
- (b) Councillors will assemble in The Apex and process to the Athenaeum.

(2) Commentary

Nick Wells to be asked to provide the commentary.

(3) Floral Decorations in the Athenaeum

To be provided by Rosemary Roe and Stowmarket Flower Club.

It was agreed that the above decisions may need to be reviewed following the Borough Council elections on 5 May 2011. It was agreed that officers may then need to contact relevant Councillors to seek appropriate replacements.

RESOLVED:-

That the roles allocated and decisions taken in respect of the Annual Meeting of Council be as detailed above.

9. 2011 Civic Dinner to the Outgoing Mayor and Mayoress

The Committee considered Paper B521 (previously circulated) which sought approval for various roles/decisions in respect of the Civic Dinner for the outgoing Mayor and Mayoress on 19 May 2011.

The following decisions were made:-

(1) Ticket Price: £28.00.

(2) Toasts:

- (a) The guests to be proposed by Councillor Mrs Gower; and
- (b) Response by the Dean of St Edmundsbury.

(3) Vote of Thanks:

Youngest Councillor, to be decided after the elections on 5 May 2011.

(4) Music:

Music to be provided by Bury St Edmunds County Upper School Music Department.

(5) Caterer:

West Suffolk College.

(6) Flower Arrangements:

Rosemary Roe and a member of Stowmarket Flower Arranging Club.

(7) PA: John Roe

(8) Guest List

A detailed discussion was held regarding the proposed non-paying VIP Guest List. It was concluded that the Dean of St Edmundsbury and Guest be added to the non-paying VIP Guest List.

RESOLVED:-

That the decisions as detailed above be implemented.

10. Mayoralty

The Committee considered a briefing note (previously circulated) on maintaining the level of the Mayoralty/Civic Events budget for the next five years and consideration that the current arrangements, whereby the Mayor usually became the Deputy Mayor the year after his or her official year in office, be reversed.

During previous budget debates it had been suggested that the Council should reduce the costs of the Mayoralty Service. To date this has not occurred but as Government budget settlements got tighter it was inevitable that more pressure would be placed on this service. It was considered timely to consider these issues now because the current Mayor's Secretary/Civic Events Officer had indicated that it was her intention to retire at the end of December 2011.

The report provided background detail as follows:-

Appendix 1: events attended by the current Mayor during the year period 22 May 2010 to 12 February 2011;

Appendix 2: an analysis of the type and nature of the events and the duties undertaken;

Appendix 3: budget information; and

Appendix 4: comments on the operation of the office of Mayor by the current Mayor, Councillor Ian Houlder.

Councillor Houlder introduced his paper, Appendix 4, and drew relevant issues to the attention of the Committee.

There was a consensus that the Mayoralty/Civic Events Service provided by the Borough Council was fully appreciated and highly valued by Councillors, the public and other agencies, such as the Royal Households, County Council, Cathedral, military organisations, voluntary and community groups. It was considered that there was no ready way of measuring the value for money that the Mayoralty/Civic Events Office provided but there was no doubt that the events were extensively well covered in the local press, on radio and by TV and often attended by many people.

The Committee concluded that it would be beneficial if the budget was not reduced for the next five years but also recognised that the Council's priorities, allied to budgetary pressures, may change over this period. However, it was concluded that a recommendation be presented in the deliberations on the 2012/2013 budget and beyond that the Mayoralty/Civic Events budget should not be reduced over the next five years.

A discussion was then held regarding whether the current arrangements where the Mayor usually became the Deputy Mayor the year after his or her official year in office was reversed so that when the Deputy Mayor was appointed he or she, in effect, was the Mayor Designate for the subsequent year. The Committee considered the possible benefits of appointing the Deputy Mayor who subsequently became the Mayor, which included offering an induction period, shadowing the Mayor at events and covering for the Mayor at various functions. However, it was questioned how much the Deputy Mayor would actually 'learn' in this year and that each Deputy Mayor was an individual and would have their own style in undertaking their duties. There was a consensus that the current system had operated well and that there had not been any significant problems encountered with the current appointment process. In addition, there was a concern raised that by appointing the Mayor in effect well over a year in advance of taking up their appointment, could lead to problems as circumstances could change over this considerable period of time.

There was some concern expressed that there was reduced attendance at Mayoralty/Civic Event functions, which meant that a Deputy Mayor/Mayor may not have gained experience of these type of functions before taking office. It was agreed that all Members, but particularly new Members of the Council, should be encouraged to attend Mayoral/Civic Events.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the Mayoralty/Civic Events budget be not reduced for the next five years, to ensure that the work that was undertaken continued to be of the same high professional standards, and this be fed into the budgetary process for 2012/2013; and
- (2) the current process for the appointment of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor continue whereby the Mayor became the Deputy Mayor in the following year.

(Councillor Aitkens arrived during the consideration of this item.)

11. Date of next Meeting

It was agreed that there should be no need for a further meeting of the Committee to consider arrangements for the Annual Meeting of Council on 19 May 2011.

EXEMPT INFORMATION – EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC TERMS OF FORMAL RESOLUTION

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

12. Deputy Mayor: 2011/2012

The Committee confirmed its decision taken at the meeting of 14 February 2011 namely that 'Councillor Buckle be nominated for election as Deputy Mayor for 2011/2012 and his name be formally submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 19 May 2011, subject to him formally consenting to such nomination.'

There was a consensus that the appointment of Councillor Buckle as Deputy Mayor was in response to an unusual situation and that Councillor Buckle would not automatically become Mayor in 2012/2013.

The meeting concluded at 5.47 pm.

CHAIRMAN