

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 2 December 2013 at 5.00 pm
in Room GFR12, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs P A Warby (Chairman)
Councillors Chung, Farmer, Mrs Levack, Redhead and
Thorndyke

BY INVITATION: Councillor Mr Cox

37. Substitutes

No substitutions were declared.

38. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clifton-Brown

39. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

40. Declarations of Interests

Members' declarations of interests are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

41. Amendment to Terms of Reference of the Democratic Renewal Working Party

The Working Party considered Report E180 (previously circulated) which suggested an amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Democratic Renewal Working Party.

The Learning and Development Advisor reminded the Working Party that a Joint Member Learning and Development Group (JMLDG) had been established in December 2012 to contribute to and support member development opportunities. The current constitution of the group was eight members across political parties.

Currently, the decision making process for member development was different in both authorities and it was suggested that, to improve efficiency, the processes should be aligned. Members were reminded that the Joint Charter Application would be taking place in September 2014 and it would be beneficial if the practices and reporting processes were aligned by then.

Members agreed that this was a sensible solution but there was some concern that decisions would be made by Cabinet and not Full Council. It was proposed that the constitution of the group should be the Portfolio Holder plus three members from each authority.



RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) the amended Terms of Reference of the Democratic Renewal Working Party, as detailed in Appendix 2 to Report E180, be approved.**
- (2) the constitution of the Joint Member Learning and Development Group to consist of the Portfolio Holder and three members from each authority.**

42. Amendment to the Constitution: (1) Filming of meetings and (2) Sealing documents

Councillor Mrs Levack arrived during the consideration of this item.

The Working Party considered Report E181 (previously circulated) which recommended that two amendments be made to the Constitution.

The first amendment was with reference to the filming of meetings and use of social media. The Monitoring Officer explained that the constitution currently stipulates five working days notice be given if someone wishes to record a meeting. This was now out of touch with advances in technology as recording devices have become much smaller and unobtrusive (such as mobile phones). It was proposed that the constitution be amended to ensure there is no impediment to those who may wish to record meetings as in Appendix 1 to Report E181.

The Monitoring Officer drew attention to the new wording for the Constitution in 2.1 (7A.2) which would warn any person attending a meeting that it may be recorded or broadcast and that anyone who objected to being filmed should advise the Committee Administrator who would instruct that the person was not included in the filming.

Although some concern was expressed that notice of filming would not have to be given in advance, the Members supported the proposed amendment. Members did point out that the front of agendas would need to be amended as they currently requested that all attendees should 'switch off communication devices' during the meeting. It was agreed that the revised wording would be e-mailed to all members of the Working Party for comments before being introduced.

The second amendment was with reference to the signing and sealing of documents. The Monitoring Officer explained the process by which certain documents have to be completed 'under seal'; this is where the council affixes an official seal which is embossed, uniquely numbered and the details recorded. The constitution currently states that the seal is attested by two specified officers. It was proposed that the required number of signatories is reduced to one, and that the number of officers who able to sign is increased (see 27.3 of Report E181). This would streamline the process and bring it into line with Forest Heath District Council.



RECOMMENDED:-

That Council approves the changes to the constitution set out in Appendices to Report E181 in respect of the recording of meetings and the use of social media in meetings, and the signing and sealing of documents.

43. Dates of Future Meetings

The Working Party confirmed the following meeting dates: -

Thursday 13 February 2014; and
Thursday 8 May 2014.

All meetings to commence at 5.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 5.38 pm.

CHAIRMAN