

Extract of the Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August

Update on Standards and Business Committee

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To advise the Committee of the current position and the decisions which are still required following the Council’s decision to establish the Standards and Business Committee.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- 1. note the previous decision to establish the Standards and Business Committee and approve the Terms of Reference;**
- 2. note that the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services will undertake the role of Monitoring Officer;**
- 3. note that the Committee will consist of 20 Members and representation will be based on the Quota Greatest Remainder system;**
- 4. note the allocation of the positions of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson for the remaining 2 years of the Council term;**
- 5. approve the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Standards Committee, and approve the proposed reallocation of the SRAs as outlined below;**
- 6. approve the changes to Standing Orders; and**
- 7. note that, following ratification by the Council, the Committee will be established with effect from 1st September, 2021.**

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the decisions which have been previously agreed and those which are still required to be taken regarding the establishment of the new Standards and Business Committee.

3.2 Members will be aware that the Council, at its meeting on 1st July, ratified the decision to establish the Standards and Business and

approved the Terms of Reference. It also approved the new process for Notices of Motion.

- 3.3 To give effect to those decisions, it was noted that changes would be required to be made to Standing Orders and that a report would be submitted to a meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee indicating the changes required. It would also require agreement that an associated Special Responsibility Allowance be allocated to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson positions of responsibility and funded from the reallocation of the existing Special Responsibility Allowance fund.

Monitoring Officer

- 3.4 The Committee, at its meeting on 20th September, 2020, in considering the proposals in relation to a Standards Committee, agreed to the designation of the City Solicitor into a new 'Monitoring Officer' role responsible for all issues in relation to standards. The City Solicitor will continue to undertake this role in the new Standards and Business Committee.

Representation on the Committee

- 3.5 The Committee will consist of 20 Members. The appointment of Councillors to Committees is made in accordance with Section 13 and Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 "The Act" using the default method, that is, the Quota Greatest Remainder method of proportionality, which allocates places to Parties based on the number of Councillors who stood in the name of the Party when elected using the formula outlined in Schedule 2.
- 3.6 The representation will be as follows:

One-off Quota Greatest Remainder

SF	DUP	ALL	SDLP	GREEN	PBP	UUP	PUP
6	5	3	2	1	1	1	1

Additional Positions of Responsibility

- 3.7 With the establishment of the Standards and Business Committee, there are an additional 4 Positions of Responsibility places to be selected for Years 3 and 4, that is:

Year 3	Year 4
Chairperson	Chairperson
Deputy Chairperson	Deputy Chairperson

- 3.8 These positions are allocated in accordance with Schedule 1 to the Act and using the d'Hondt order of choices. Therefore, these

seats will fall to the Alliance, DUP, SF and SDLP Parties, in that order.

Special Responsibility Allowance

- 3.9 The Council pays a Special Responsibility Allowances to those Councillors it considers having significant additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a Councillor. These special responsibilities are related to the discharge of the Council's functions and include all the Chairpersons and the Deputy Chairpersons of each of the Council's Standing Committees.
- 3.10 The Department for Communities has set the maximum amount which a Council may pay to Members in respect of Special Responsibility Allowances at £117,774, of which £61,425 is paid to the Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons. At its meeting on 19th March, 2021, the Committee agreed to increase the rates of all SRAs to meet this limit.
- 3.11 Therefore, to enable the payment of additional SRAs to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Standards Committee, it will be necessary to reallocate the amount which each Position of Responsibility receives.
- 3.12 The current and proposed rates, to include the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Standards Committee, are set out below:

Position	Current Allowances	Proposed Allowances
Chairpersons	£6,300	£5,460
Deputy Chairpersons	£3,150	£2,730
Chair BW&UH Cttee	£3,150	£2,730
Dep Chair BW&UH Cttee	£1,575	£1,365
Total	£61,425	£61,425

- 3.13 The Committee is asked to approve the proposed allowances.

Changes to Standing Orders

- 3.14 As previously indicated, a number of changes to Standing Orders are required to give effect to the Committee. These are as follows:

13. Notices of motion

- 3.15 **Amendments required to SO 13**

- (a) All notices of motion shall be given in writing to the Chief Executive not later than ~~seven~~ **fourteen** days at least before the Council meeting. Such notices shall clearly state the nature of the motion intended to be submitted to the Council and shall bear the names of the proposer and seconder.
- (g) If a notice of motion fails to be considered at a meeting of the Council, such notice of motion will only be included on the Summons Paper for the following meeting if submitted in writing to the Chief Executive by the Member concerned not later than ~~seven~~ **fourteen** clear days, at least, before the date of that Council meeting.

3.16 Additional paragraphs to SO 13

- (m) The Standards and Business Committee will have delegated authority to adopt or reject Notices of Motion. The Lord Mayor will indicate at the Council meeting those Notices of Motion that have been considered by the Standards and Business Committee and whether such Notices of Motion were rejected or adopted. In either case, the proposer only may speak on the issue at Council.
- (n) The Standards and Business Committee will refer all Notices of Motion directly to a standing committee when the matter to which the Notice of Motion refers falls within the remit of that committee. At Council, the Lord Mayor will indicate that the Notice of Motion was received and referred. There will be no speakers on such Notices of Motion at Council.
- (o) The Standards and Business Committee will refer Notices of Motion for consideration by full Council when the Notice of Motion relates to a strategic or constitutional matter.
- (p) The Standards and Business Committee will not have the power to amend the wording of any Notice of Motion that is being referred to the full Council for debate.
- (q) Any amendments to Notice of Motions to be proposed at the Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to the full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.
- (r) In referring any matter to the full Council, the Standards and Business Committee may determine to restrict contributions to the debate in relation to any Notice of Motion to one per political party. At the Council meeting, the Lord Mayor will clearly indicate if the restriction applies.

17. Amendments to be submitted in writing and seconded

Amendment required to SO 17

3.17 All notices of motion shall appear on the agenda for the Council meeting. ~~All amendments to amend a notice of motion and a~~
Any amendments to Notices of Motion to be proposed at Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to the full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.

3.18 All amendments to amend a motion that the proceedings of a Committee are approved and adopted shall, where practicable, be submitted to the Lord Mayor in writing by the proposer, and read to the meeting, and such amendment shall not be discussed by anyone other than the proposer until it has been seconded.

36. Standing Committees

Amendment required to SO 36

3.19 The following shall be the Standing Committees of the Council:

(h) Standards and Business

37. Duties of Committees

3.20 The Standing Committees shall be responsible to the Council for the matters described hereunder and shall control the various Departments which carry out the functions of the Council, that is to say:

(h) Standards and Business Committee

The main functions of the proposed Standards and Business Committee is to promote, sustain and safeguard the conduct of Councillors within the Council; to promote a collaborative working relationship between senior officers and Members; to ensure the probity of all the Council's proceedings; and to review and improve processes in relation to bringing business before the Council

(The Standing Order to include the remit of the Committee as previously agreed by the Council and appended to the report).

Next Steps

3.21 If the Committee agrees to the recommendations, then Democratic Services will, prior to the meeting of the Council on 1st September, seek from the Party Leaders the names of those Members being nominated to sit on the Committee and, from the relevant Parties, the names of those Members who will act as Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson in year 3 of the Council Term.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.22 As the proposed Special Responsibility Allowances will be paid from a recalculation of the existing SRA budget, there are no

additional financial or resource implications related to the above recommendations.

- 3.23 The Committee will be serviced by existing resources within Democratic Services and Governance and Compliance.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.24 There are not any equality or good relations considerations associated with this report.”**

After discussion, it was

Moved by The High Sheriff (Councillor Long),
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Committee agrees to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to reject recommendations 5 and 6 within the report.

On a vote, five Members voted for the proposal and thirteen against and it was declared lost.

The Members of the Committee subsequently agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.