

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 13 JUNE 2016 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Steady (Chairman), Platt (Vice-Chairman), Baker, Massey, Parsons, Scott and Stephenson

Also Present: Councillor Amos

In Attendance: Head of Finance, Revenues & Benefits Services & Section 151 Officer (Richard Barrett), Head of People, Performance and Projects (Anastasia Simpson), and Senior Democratic Services Officer (Ian Ford)

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Whitmore, with Councillor Parsons substituting.

10. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 MAY 2016

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee, held on 9 May 2016, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

12. MOTION TO COUNCIL – PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE COUNCIL’S COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES IN RESPECT OF THE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Members recalled that, at the meeting of the Council held on 5 April 2016 (Minute No. 124 referred), Councillor Amos had submitted the following motion to Council:

“(a) That this Council resolves that, with effect from the 2016/2017 Municipal Year, at the ordinary meeting of the Council at which the Council’s Budget and Council Tax is approved and set no other significant business will be included on the Agenda of that meeting;

(b) That, consequently, the Council’s Constitution be amended by the insertion of a new “Council Procedure 2 – Budget and Council Tax Setting Meeting of the Council” and that the subsequent Council Procedure Rules be renumbered accordingly and that all necessary textual amendments be made thereto;

(c) That the wording of the new Council Procedure Rule 2 – Budget and Council Tax Setting be as follows:

“At the relevant ordinary meeting of the Council when the Council’s Budget and Council Tax is approved and set no business except that identified below will be included on the Agenda of the Budget and Council Tax Setting Meeting and all other Council Procedure Rules shall be construed accordingly. The Budget and Council Tax Setting Meeting shall:

(i) Receive apologies for absence;

(ii) Elect a person to preside if the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council are not present;

(iii) Deal with any business required by Statute to be dealt with before any other business;

- (iv) Approve the minutes of the last meeting;
- (v) Receive any announcements from the Chairman and/or the Chief Executive and any statements from the Leader of the Council and/or members of the Cabinet;
- (vi) Approve and set the Council's Budget and Council Tax;
- (vii) Deal with any business remaining from the last Council meeting; and
- (viii) Consider any Urgent Matters for Debate

Matters which are not on the agenda and which a Member considers should be reported urgently to the Council may, with the consent of, and in a form approved by, the Chairman, be brought before the meeting by way of a short written statement which shall be read by the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer, as part of his or her reports and communications. The Member concerned may, by leave of the Chairman, speak on the statement and move a motion unless advised otherwise by the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer.

(d) That the Council's Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the necessary alterations and amendments to the Constitution to give effect to the above."

It was reported that the crux of Councillor Amos' motion was that, with certain exceptions, at the relevant ordinary meeting of the Council when the Council's Budget and Council Tax was approved and set no other business would be included on the Agenda of the Budget and Council Tax setting meeting and all other Council Procedure Rules would be construed accordingly. Councillor Amos felt that this would be appropriate due to the need to ensure that the Budget and all proposed amendments thereto were properly and democratically debated and that having other business items on the Agenda precluded this and made the meeting run very late into the evening.

In debating Councillor Amos' motion, a number of Councillors had expressed their concerns that implementing Councillor Amos' motion would remove an opportunity for Members and the public to hold the Executive to account by submitting Questions and would also remove an opportunity for Members to submit a Motion to Council.

In the light of those concerns Council had decided to refer Councillor Amos' motion to this Committee for its consideration and report back to Council.

In deciding what recommendation to make to Council, the Committee considered the following three options and their advantages and disadvantages:

Option One – Keep the Status Quo and Recommend that Councillor Amos' Motion be not Approved

The **Advantage** of this option was that no changes needed to be made or actions taken and everything would carry on as before.

The **Disadvantage** of this option was that there could be continued instances of an Agenda at the February meeting containing a lot of ordinary business in addition to the Budget which would run a real risk of the meeting finishing very late and also Members feeling constrained in the amount of time that they could spend debating the Budget and any proposed amendments thereto.

Option Two – Recommend that Councillor Amos' Motion be Approved and Implemented

The **Advantage** of this option was that it would help ensure that the Council had a single focus on its Budget at its February meeting and could properly consider in detail the Budget and all proposed amendments thereto without Members' feeling constrained in any way in the amount of time that they could spend debating the Budget and any proposed amendments thereto.

The **Disadvantage** of this option was that it would remove an opportunity for Members and the public to hold the Executive to account by submitting Questions and would also remove an opportunity for Members to submit a Motion to Council.

Option Three - Recommend that Councillor Amos' Motion be Approved and Implemented but that an additional ordinary meeting of the Council be held each January

The **Advantage** of this option was that, in addition to ensuring that the Council had a single focus on its Budget at its February meeting, the inclusion of an additional ordinary Council meeting in January would mean that Members and the public did not lose an opportunity to hold the Executive to account by submitting Questions or also remove an opportunity for Members to submit a Motion to Council.

The **Disadvantage** of this option was that it would add another meeting to Members' already busy schedule of meetings and there would also be an ongoing minor expenditure to the Council as there would be an increase in the number of meetings that would need to be administered.

The Committee was made aware that, having considered all of the above options it was the view of Officers that Option 3 was the most favourable to the interests of both the Council as a body corporate and of Members themselves and that the Committee should recommend that option to the Council.

Members were reminded that, at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 26 April 2016 (Minute 11 referred), a provisional additional ordinary meeting of the Council to be held on 24 January 2017 had been added to the programme of meetings in anticipation that Council might agree with option 3 above.

Councillor Amos attended the meeting and explained his motion to the Committee.

After discussion of Councillor Amos' motion it was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Stephenson and:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (a) that Councillor Amos' motion to Council be approved and implemented; and**
- (b) that an additional ordinary meeting of the Council be held on 24 January 2017 (and during every subsequent January thereafter).**

RESOLVED that this Committee requests Cabinet to ensure that it is given sufficient time to consider the potential budget savings that Cabinet is contemplating in order to fit in with the Committee's commitment to proactively scrutinise the budget.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.54 p.m.

Chairman