Meeting between Chairs and Vicechairs of Full Council, SAC and Events committee 19/08/26

Present: Cllrs Jim Bond, Malcolm Fincken, Linda Hilton, Jackie Pell

Sarah Greatorex (Town Clerk)

Apologies: Cllr Paul Nunn

This meeting had been arranged in order to increase the efficiency of report writing and decision making and minuting of Council business, to reduce the rate of items being deferred to a later meeting, and to increase collaborative working between councillors and the Clerk. The Chairman clearly stated that he was acutely aware of the ownership of Agenda and reports. However, it is equally important that chairs and vicechairs provide the Town Clerk with leadership and support to assist her in the increasingly complex nature of our business.

When draft reports have been prepared for a meeting, pre-meeting dates should be fixed with Chairs and Vice chairs of Full Council, SAC and Events committee, before general circulation. This would enable clarification and collaboration to ensure that the information provided is robust enough to reach a decision.

Minutes

It was agreed that Minutes:

- Should summarise the main points made when coming to the decision including differing views
- Should refer where necessary to the reports which had informed the decision
- Should be open and transparent
- Should record decisions based on evidence and not emotion

Reports

It was agreed that reports need only be minimal for simple decisions, but that some matters, particularly if considerable cost is involved, would need much more detailed analysis, and would take time to prepare. The meeting considered a range of spending limits which might govern the nature of any report. However, it was agreed that such arbitrary limits would not best serve the Council's purposes at this time. Reports must include:

- What needs to happen
- Why
- Evidence for the recommendation
- Which budget funds should come from

Chairs/Vice Chairs were invited to consider the following:

1. What, if any, financial threshold should trigger the fuller-report tier — for example, £2,000, £5,000, or £10,000? It was agreed that this decision should be left to the Clerk, but they should consider questions which might be asked. Every Councillor must take responsibility for decisions taken but require sufficient information to enable an informed decision to be made.

2. Should any item likely to attract public interest, affect vulnerable or protected groups, or carry reputational significance automatically enjoy the fuller tier, regardless of cost? It was agreed that such items should automatically receive the fuller treatment

3. Would it help Town Clerk/minute-takers to have simple standing guidance on when to capture officer explanations and Member questions, alongside the resolution? It was agreed that the Minutes should refer to the report, and record the key points made. The Motion should be recorded, and the number in favour and against noted.

5. Shall we recommend that we adopt the approach on a three-month trial and see how it feels, with a review built in? It was agreed that these decisions would go to Full Council in September, and a review would be held in January.

Recommendation: that the advice on Minutes and reports be noted, and that the group will meet again in January to review progress.