

MINUTES of MEETING of SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP ON POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on MONDAY, 12 AUGUST 2013

Present: Councillor Roddy McCuish (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor David Kinniburgh (Substitute)
Councillor Michael Breslin	Councillor Douglas Philand
Councillor Vivien Dance	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Anne Horn	Councillor John Semple
Councillor Iain MacDonald	Councillor Dick Walsh
Councillor Ellen Morton	

Also Present: Councillor Duncan MacIntyre

Attending: Sally Loudon, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director of Customer Services
Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Laura Cameron, Directorate Support Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence intimated.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 July 2013 were approved as a correct record.

Under item 3 (Political Management Arrangements) at point 6, the Leader of the Council asked where we were with the Audit Scotland findings. The Chief Executive provided an update to the Short Life Working Group on the current position on their work. The Chief Executive added that the Improvement Service had offered their assistance on working with the Council with regard to the political management arrangements and the Member/Officer relations. It was agreed that the Improvement Service be invited to attend the next Meeting of the Short Life Working Group.

4. POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS - SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

At its first meeting on 29 July 2013, the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) agreed to circulate the Minute of that meeting to all Councillors to invite them to submit to the Executive Director of Customer Services by 7 August 2013 views on:

- Issues that need to be addressed to make their participation in the Council business more effective;

- Possible Political Management Arrangements decision making models; and
- Comments on any of the content of the initial views of the SLWG as set out in the previous minute.

The SLWG considered a report together with responses that had been received detailed in the submitted Appendices.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3.20pm and re-convened at 3.40pm.

Decision

The SLWG:

1. Noted the contents of the report.
2. Gave consideration to the proposals detailed at Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
3. Noted that none of the proposals, as they stand, gave rise to issues of legality or competence at this time.
4. Noted that Officers will provide advice in terms of resource implications, potential impact and any lessons from other authorities on proposals identified.
5. Agreed to circulate the agreed minute to all 36 Councillors as a position statement.
6. Agreed to delegate to the Executive Director of Customer Services in consultation with the Chair and Councillor Dance to formulate the next steps which were notified as follows:

Members identified and agreed the problems:

- Too much coming to the full council to allow for effective and informed political scrutiny.
- Too little local accountability.
- Too much going to and from the centre.
- Political instability.
- Too few members involved in establishing the political and strategic direction of the council

Members agreed that our aims should be:

- Political stability
- Increased accountability
- Increased responsiveness to local needs

- Increased involvement of all elected members

It was agreed that:

1. The current governance structure is not working effectively.
2. Below council level there should be an additional structure (committees/cabinet/other model).
3. PPSL, Audit and Performance Review Committees should be retained.
4. Area Committees should be strengthened in remit and purpose.
5. The structure of reports and papers to be reviewed.

The SLWG will hold another meeting soon after the next council meeting and is conscious that its deliberations will need to take into account the report from Audit Scotland once it is made available to all members in September or early October.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Customer Services dated 7 August 2013, submitted)

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Short Life Working Group would take place on Monday 9 September 2013 in Kilmory, Lochgilphead.