

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee held in the Swale 3, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 10 July 2012.

PRESENT: Mr P J Homewood (Chairman), Mr P B Carter, Mr G Cowan, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr T Prater (Substitute for Mrs T Dean), Mr B J Sweetland, Mr M J Whiting and Mr M A Wickham (Substitute for Mr M C Dance)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

15. Minutes - 13 June 2012

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2012 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

16. Proposed amendments to the County Council Constitution and consequential changes to the new governance arrangements

(Item 4)

The Head of Democratic Services informed the Committee that this report had been withdrawn from the agenda as work on the complete revision of the Constitution had not yet been completed.

17. Petition Scheme Review

(Item 5)

(1) In respect of the recommendation to the County Council, Mr P B Carter moved, seconded by Mr A J King that the number of signatures required to trigger a debate at County Council be reduced to 10,000 persons who live, work or study in Kent; that petitions that achieve between 2,500 and 9,999 signatures be referred to the relevant Cabinet Committee (subject to the agreement of the Chairman of the relevant Cabinet Committee and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder); that district petitions of 1,000 or more signatures be considered at the most appropriate local level (usually by a Local Board, Locality Board or a Joint Transportation Board); that petitions with fewer than 1,000 signatures be referred to the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder who will decide on the most appropriate course of action, which may include a discussion at a Local Board, Locality Board or Joint Transportation Board; and that the revised arrangements be reviewed after one year.

(2) Mr T Prater moved, seconded by Mr G Cowan as an amendment that the number of signatures required to trigger a debate at County Council meetings be set at 7,000. This amendment was withdrawn following the seconder's withdrawal of his support for the amendment.

(3) On being put to the vote, the motion set out in (1) above was carried unanimously.

(4) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the petition scheme recommended to the County Council together with the amendments and aspects to be retained as set out below;

(i) that petitions should be signed by people who live, work or study in Kent and that otherwise there be no change to the details that must be included for a petition to be valid – as set out in paragraphs 3(3) & (4) of the report;

(ii) the timescale for processing and responding to petitions be **retained** as set out in paragraph 3(5) of the report;

(iii) the **replacement** of the current list of ways that the County Council will respond to petitions with the following wording:

“Each petition that does not have the required number of signatures to trigger a debate will receive a written response from the appropriate Cabinet Member(s), which will set out their views on the petition and what action, if any, will be taken.” (as set out in paragraphs 3 (6) to(8) of the report);

(iv) the provision to consider petitions on matters outside the County Council’s direct remit but over which it may have some influence be **retained** as set out in paragraph 3 (9) of the report;

(v) the **amended** provision for a debate at County Council to be triggered by a petition that achieves 10,000 or more signatures, the provision for debates for those petitions that achieve between 2,500 and 9,999 signatures at the appropriate Cabinet Committee; district petitions of 1,000 or more signatures be considered at the most appropriate local level (usually by a Local Board, Locality Board or a Joint Transportation Board) and provision for petitions that achieve up to 1,000 signatures to be referred to the appropriate Cabinet Member(s) for response as set out in paragraphs 3 (10) & (11) of the report, which may include a discussion at a Local Board, Locality Board or Joint Transportation Board and that;

(vi) the time allocated to the lead petitioner and Cabinet Member to speak on the petition at County Council or Cabinet Committees debates be **amended** to three minutes as set out in paragraph 3 (12) of the report;

(vii) the **retention** of the facility for e-petitions as set out in paragraphs 3 (13) & (14) of the report;

(viii) the **removal** of the requirement for an officer to give evidence at the Scrutiny Committee if a petition requesting this achieves a certain number of signatures as set out in paragraph 3 (15) of the report); and

- (ix) the process set out in the scheme for reviewing the way that a petition has been dealt with be **amended** to refer any requests to the Selection and Member Services Committee and the terms of reference of that Committee be amended accordingly as set out in paragraphs 3 (16) & (17) of the report; and
- (b) the petition scheme agreed by the County Council be reviewed by the Committee after 12 months.

18. New Template for the Annual Review Report

(Item 6)

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the new template for Annual Review reports be endorsed as set out in the Appendix to the report; and
- (b) all Members be invited to complete their report for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 using the new template.