

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2015**

MEMBERS:	Councillors Bull, Engert, Rice (Chair), Ryan and Weston
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Apologies Cllr Morris

Also present Cllr Newton

**MINUTE
NO.**

SUBJECT/DECISION

STCO06.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Morris, for whom Cllr Engert was substituting.
STCO07.	FILMING AT MEETINGS The Committee noted the arrangements in respect of filming at meetings, as outlined by the Chair.
STCO08.	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business.
STCO09.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.
STCO10.	ABOLITION OF AREA COMMITTEES AND AREA FORUMS The Committee considered the report on the abolition of area committees and area forums, as introduced by the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance. The following questions and concerns regarding the report were raised by Cllr Engert: i) The paper included insufficient financial detail regarding the arrangements proposed to replace the area committees and area forums. Without this information, it was not possible for the Committee to make an informed decision. It was also ambiguous from the report whether the proposals for area budgets would be considered by the Cabinet, or a Cabinet Member signing process. ii) It was not clear what public consultation had been undertaken in relation to this recommendation – local residents’ organisations advised that they had not been consulted on these proposals. iii) The previous area funding initiative had been expensive to operate – this report did not set out how ward budgets would be administered, what financial safeguards would be put in place and what resources would be required in the form of officer time. There was also the potential for the abolition of area committees and area forums to increase the demand for neighbourhood forums, which would have a cost implication.

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Cllr Engert felt that no decision on this matter should be taken without a report setting out full details and costings, and setting out evidence of public consultation.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance responded to the issues raised by Cllr Engert, and confirmed that a report proposing ward budgets would be considered at a Cabinet Member signing. In terms of public engagement, this proposal formed part of wider work looking at changing the way in which the Council engaged with residents. It was reported that attendance at all but one of the area committees and area forums had been low, illustrating that they were not proving effective means of engaging with local residents. It was confirmed that costs associated with the proposed ward budgets were still being calculated, and would be fully set out in the separate report regarding this matter. Details of the way in which the ward budgets would be administered were also being developed, but the need for a streamlined approach was emphasised.

The Committee discussed the possibility that ward budgets would enable those areas where area committees and area forums had been successful to use their funding to continue with similar arrangements, while enabling those areas where the area committees and area forums had been less well-attended to adopt different approaches. Cllr Engert expressed concern, however, that the loss of officer support for such meetings would have been detrimental to those areas wishing to continue with them. The Committee noted that this report related primarily to the abolition of the area committees and area forums, and that more detailed proposals regarding area budgets would be covered by a separate report.

On a vote of four in favour and one against, it was

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommend to Full Council that they:

- i) Approve the abolition of area committees and area forums;
- ii) Direct the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance to make any necessary and consequent amendments to the Council Constitution; and
- iii) Note that a report proposing ward budgets will be prepared for a Cabinet Member signing in June 2015.

STCO11. AMENDMENT TO THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME FOR 2015/16

The Committee considered a report on amendment to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2015/16, as introduced by the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance.

On a vote of 4 in favour and 1 abstention, it was

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	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the Committee recommend to Full Council that it resolves to amend the current Members' Allowances Scheme for 2015/16 to take effect from 15 May 2015 to increase the Basic Allowance, Mayoral Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances as set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme appended to the report.</p>
<p>STCO12.</p>	<p>REMOVAL OF THE DESIGNATED INDEPENDENT PERSON REQUIREMENT FOR THE DISMISSAL OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE, MONITORING OFFICER AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</p> <p>The Committee considered a report on removal of the Designated Independent Person requirement for the dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer, as introduced by the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance.</p> <p>In response to questions from the Committee, it was reported that there were 2 independent persons within the borough who could be called on to form a panel in the event such action became necessary, and that independent persons would be called from neighbouring boroughs in the event that those appointed by Haringey were not available. It was further confirmed that the amendments to Section K – Officer Employment Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution set out that no disciplinary action other than suspension could be taken in respect of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer until an Independent Panel had been formed. In response to a question regarding advice available to Full Council on these matters, it was reported that advice to Full Council would typically be provided by the Monitoring Officer, and that external, independent, legal advice would generally also be sought.</p> <p>It was</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) That the Committee note that in accordance with Article 15.03(a) of the Constitution ('legislative change'), the Monitoring Officer will make the necessary changes to the Constitution at<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Part 3 Section B, Responsibility for Functions: Sections 1 and 3 (The Full Council and the Staffing and Remuneration Committee), andb. Part 4 Section K, Officer Employment Procedure Rulesas set out at appendix 1 to the report.ii) That the Committee refers the proposed changes set out above to Full Council for noting at its meeting on 14 May 2015.iii) That the Committee recommends to Full Council that it delegates to the Monitoring Officer authority to establish the Independent Panel subject to any statutory requirements and to agree its terms of reference in consultation with the Head of Human Resources.

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	<p>As the last meeting of the Committee for the municipal year, the Chair thanked the committee members and officers for their work over the past year.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 7.27pm.</p>
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Cllr Reg Rice

Chair