

CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

24 January 2007
(6.00 pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Boyce (Chair), Bradnack, Hart, C Rosenstiel (Vice-Chair), Stebbings and Ward.

FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

07/CIV/01 **MINUTES**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2006.

07/CIV/02 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

07/CIV/04 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

07/CIV/05 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

07/CIV/06 **RESTRUCTURING – A SUB-COMMITTEE TO MAKE A NEW DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT**

The Chief Executive introduced this item and explained the need to appoint a sub-committee to appoint to the proposed new post of Director of Customer and Democratic Services. He added that the Director of City Services would be retiring at the end of August and suggested that a standing sub-committee should be appointed to deal with chief officer-level appointments. He suggested that its membership might be drawn from the Chief Officer Performance Review Working Party

Resolved – That a standing Appointments Sub-committee be created to appoint the new Director of Customer & Democratic Services and any other chief officer-level appointments, its membership to consist of Councillors Bradnack, Cantrill, Herbert, Nimmo-Smith, J Rosenstiel and Smart.

(Cllr C Rosenstiel took the Chair for the preceding items, as Cllr Boyce was delayed in traffic. Cllr Boyce arrived during consideration of this item and then took the Chair for the remainder of the agenda.)

07/CIV/07 NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT - APPOINTMENT OF PROPER OFFICER

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report, explaining the role of the proper officer in relation to this legislation and the need to make an appointment. He explained that doubts about the compatibility of the legislation with the European Convention on Human Rights meant that, in practice, the National Assistance Act powers in question would be used only very rarely, if at all, and only after considering all other possible alternatives.

Resolved - To authorise the Head of Environmental Services to act as Proper Officer for the purpose of section 47 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

07/CIV/08 DEVELOPING ELECTORAL REGISTRATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: ELECTORAL COMMISSION CONSULTATION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report, which summarised the Electoral Commission's consultation paper and commented on its proposed indicators. Members discussed the indicators and were broadly supportive of the officer comments, but suggested some changes and identified some additional points. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said he would draft a letter summarising the points made and would circulate it to members for comment before sending it to the Electoral Commission.

There was general discussion on difficulties in ensuring the maximum level of electoral registration. Councillor C Rosenstiel expressed concern that the number of registered voters had fallen to its lowest level since 1995 despite an increase in population. He urged investigation into the reasons for this. Members also discussed the scope for improving registration of students at Anglia Ruskin University. Councillor Bradnack suggested that the issue be raised at a meeting of the City/ARU Forum.

Resolved - That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to settle the Council's response to the Electoral Commission's consultation following circulation of a draft response to Committee members for comment.

07/CIV/09 APPROVED DUTY: MAYOR'S DAY OUT

Members considered the agenda item which set out the background to the recommendation that attendance by members to assist with the Mayor's Day Out should be treated as an approved duty for the purposes of the Council's allowances scheme.

Resolved –

1. That members note the use by the Director of Central Services of urgency powers to designate attendance at the Mayor's Day Out in 2006 as an approved duty; and
2. That the Committee designate attendance at the Mayor's Day Out as an approved duty for the future.

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

CHAIR