



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 17th December, 2020

SPECIAL STANDARDS AND ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE

18th November 2020

Present:

Councillor K. Swinburn (in the Chair)
Councillors Bramley, Brookes, Cairns, Goodwin, Parkinson (substitute for Callison),
Rogers and Watson

Officers in attendance:

- Rob Close (Scrutiny and Committee Support Officer)
- Eve Richardson-Smith (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Paul Windley (Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager)

SA.4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Callison.

SA.5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

SA.6 AMENDMENT TO COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

The committee considered a report which proposed an amendment to the Council's Standing Orders regarding questions on the minutes of Cabinet and Committee meetings.

Ms Richardson-Smith explained that the report proposed an amendment to Standing Order 10B. She added that as Standing Orders formed part of North East Lincolnshire Council's Constitution, any changes to the Constitution had to be submitted to Full Council for formal approval. The amendment was recommended to become effective from the next scheduled meeting of Council, subsequent to its approval. The proposed amendment to Standing Orders was suggested as an improvement to the way Council meetings were managed, while still retaining the

opportunity for all elected members to question the business of Cabinet and the Committees of the Council.

Councillor Rogers sought clarification if officers felt that the amendment as proposed would present no risks whatsoever, as suggested within the report. Ms Richardson-Smith stated that elected members would retain the opportunity to ask questions, albeit on notice, which could actually represent a benefit, as elected members whom had been questioned would be able to offer a substantive response during the meeting.

In a supplementary point, Councillor Rogers suggested that this amendment was politically motivated, cynical, and could suppress debate. She felt it displayed a lack of confidence in the Conservative Group's committee Chairs and suggested that Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for Chairs should be reduced for, what she considered, a reduction of responsibility. Ms Richardson-Smith noted that Standing Orders dictated that questions on the minutes of Cabinet and the Committees of Council, were only limited to an initial and supplementary question, rather than an open debate.

Councillor Rogers' comments were echoed by Councillor Goodwin.

Councillor Watson questioned if, and how, this amendment to Standing Orders would make the process of Council more efficient as suggested within the report. Mr Windley commented that this amendment would address the uncertainty that was present at Council, when determining who should answer a question. It was noted that, while policy matters would typically receive a response from the appropriate portfolio holder, the scrutiny panel Chair also had the capacity to respond.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – That Standing Order 10B be amended as laid out within the report, effective from the next scheduled meeting of Council.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.45 a.m.