

FULL COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2019

ELECTION OF THE MAYOR – COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve changes to the process for election of the mayor.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For many years, the Town Council has elected the Mayor in the February Council meeting. This arrangement is unlawful.

- 2.2 The Local Government Act 1972 Section 15 Chairman and vice-chairman of parish council or meeting, stipulates that the Election of the Chairman/Mayor is the first item of the agenda at the Annual Meeting held in May before apologies and declarations of interest.

“The election of a chairman shall be the first business transacted at the annual meeting of the parish council and if, apart from subsection (8) below, the person presiding at the meeting would have ceased to be a member of the parish council, he shall not be entitled to vote in the election except in accordance with subsection (3) below.” (Local Government Act 1972

- 2.3 The outgoing Mayor commences the meeting and introduces the first agenda item Election of the Mayor.
- 2.4 Arranging an Installation Ceremony for the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor with the signing of Declaration of Offices prior to the Annual Meeting when the Mayor should be elected is therefore unlawful.

3.0 EVIDENCE FROM OTHER LOCAL COUNCILS

- 3.1 The Town Clerk requested details from other larger local councils regarding their arrangements for the election of the Chair. Six Councils responded.
- 3.2 Three Councils elect the Mayor and Deputy at the Annual Meeting in May with a simple exchange of Chains.
- 3.3 Two Councils have a simple exchange of Chains at the Annual meeting however after the declaration of acceptance by the Chair and Vice-Chair, the meeting is adjourned with the remaining business annotated on the agenda being dealt with a separate meeting a few days later. Following the adjournment, a dinner is held in a local hotel. The Chair invites personal guests with other attendees being Councillors and other Civic Dignitaries.
- 3.4 One Council has the Annual Meeting in a much larger venue than normal as this is a formal occasion followed by a reception in the Civic Hall for approximately 100 guests.

3.5 A couple of councils have an annual dinner to celebrate community, partnership arrangements and invite supporters and recipients of the Mayor's Charity. In one Council there's a keynote speaker related to the work that they have undertaken in the community.

4.0 PROPOSED CHANGES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

4.1 From 2020, the following process is strongly advised:

- Removal of Election of Mayor from February agenda
- Cancellation of Installation Ceremony
- Inclusion of Election of Mayor and Deputy on the agenda of the Annual Meeting in May. Please note that the Deputy is elected not selected by the Mayor.
- Conclude the Annual Meeting in full, after which there will be a small reception in the Mayor's Parlour/Hub for Councillors, Honorary Burgesses, personal guests of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

4.2 As a result of changes to the arrangements for the Election of the Mayor, it would be timely to consider other 'Civic' undertakings. **It is proposed that the Mayor continues to have discretion as to whether to have a Civic Service and the nature of this service.**

4.3 Feedback has been received from Past Mayors that there is little opportunity to reflect on the Mayoral Year and pay thanks to individuals and organisations. There was an element of this in the Installation Ceremony but the focus of this event has been very much on the new Mayor and Deputy.

4.4 **Therefore it is proposed that an Annual Community Dinner is held in April for the outgoing Mayor to celebrate their year in office, to make awards (Community Awards or revised scheme) etc.** The detail of this dinner and invitees requires further work.

4.5 Hosting a dinner with the focus on community is aligned with the Council's priorities in terms of improving partnership working, community engagement, greater transparency etc.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 To approve the following:

- Removal of Election of Mayor from February agenda
- Cancellation of Installation Ceremony
- Inclusion of Election of Mayor and Deputy on the agenda of the Annual Meeting in May.

- Conclude the Annual Meeting in full, after which there will be a small reception in the Mayor's Parlour/Hub for Councillors, Honorary Burgesses, Personal guests of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- The Mayor continues to have discretion as to whether to have a Civic Service and the nature of this service
- That an Annual Community Dinner is held