

North Tyneside Council

Report to Standards Committee

Date: 25 January 2018

ITEM 7

Title: Meeting Chairing Skills

Report from Service Area: Law and Governance

Responsible Officer: Vivienne Geary, Head of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer (Tel: 643 5339)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

As a part of the Committee's 2017/18 work programme it was agreed that a generic bullet point list on Chairing Skills be developed. This report provides a bullet point list but also references the recently updated "A councillors workbook on chairing skills" published by the Local Government Association (LGA).

1.2 Recommendation:

The Committee is recommended to review and endorse the bullet point list (subject to any amendment the Committee considers appropriate) and the LGA workbook "A councillor's workbook on chairing skills" and suggest that they are used in the development of chairing skills for Members of the Authority.

1.3 Information:

As Members will be aware, the Committee agreed as a part of its 2017/18 work programme to develop a generic bullet list on Chairing Skills.

The following bullet point list has been developed for a Chair to consider when chairing a meeting:

- to inform themselves as to the business and the objects of the meeting;
- to open the meeting and determine that the meeting is properly constituted and that a quorum is present;
- to request the declaration of interests and receive apologies for absence;
- to preserve order in the conduct of those present (including members of the public and the press) with reference to the relevant Rules of Procedure;
- to confine discussion within the scope of the meeting agenda and reasonable limits to time;
- to decide whether questions and proposed motions and amendments are in order;
- to decide points of order and other incidental questions that require a decision at the time with reference to the relevant Rules of Procedure;
- to ascertain the "sense" of the meeting by:
 - Putting relevant questions to the meeting;

- Summarising the report recommendations including any amendments to the recommendations made in the meeting prior to taking a vote;
- If necessary and so minded, giving a casting vote;
- Declaring the result; and
- Causing a ballot or named vote to be taken if duly demanded
- to approve the draft of the minutes or other record of proceedings;
- to adjourn the meeting when circumstances justify or require that course; and
- to declare the meeting closed when its business has been completed.

In addition to the above the Chair should always take into account legal advice provided to them in relation to the conduct of the proceedings of the meeting.

“A councillor’s workbook on chairing skills” – Local Government Association

The Local Government Association have recently published an updated “councillor’s workbook on chairing skills”. The workbook has been designed as a distance learning aid for councillors. It is intended to provide councillors with insight and assistance with the key skills which will help them to be effective in their role. Copies of the workbook will be available at the meeting for Members to view and consider.

A full copy of the workbook is available at:

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11.61%20Chairing%20skills%20-%20a%20councillors%27%20workbook_1.pdf

The workbook can be used as a standalone learning aid or alongside other material such as e learning modules or sessions which are provided by the Authority and can be accessed via the Learning Pool or as a part of the Member Development Programme.

The workbook sets out the key roles of a Chair and provides practical guidance on handling the mechanics of chairing a meeting. The workbook also provides an explanation of qualified privilege in the context of local authority meetings and the protection that is available from claims of defamation.

The bullet point list and the workbook provide an outline of the skills that a Chair of a meeting needs to use. The Committee are requested to endorse the bullet point list and the workbook and suggest that they are used in the development of chairing skills for Members of the Authority as a part of the Member Development Programme.

1.4 Appendices:

None.

1.5 Contact officers:

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1.6 Background information:

None.