

## **TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2**

### **1. Questions from Councillor James Upjohn – Report 'Change of Governance Arrangements'**

- (i) Leader, should there be a public consultation on such a monumental and costly change to council workings?
- (ii) We recently switched to pre-scrutiny, after a vote at full council, has this been implemented yet and if yes how effective is it?
- (iii) Is it a good idea to switch to a committee structure? Has any research been done on Hybrid Models?
- (iv) The report at 7.6 refers to consultation proposed with key stake holders and the implementation of the new arrangements. For the consultation to be lawful and effective it must be carried out when the proposals are still at an informative stage. Can you confirm this has been done and if so where is the data.

### **2. Questions from Councillor Rob Molloy – Report 'Change of Governance Arrangements'**

I have several questions on the report into Change of Governance Arrangements that is in the Council papers for the meeting on October 12th.

- (i) The report states in Section 10 that there are "major implications" in terms of resources in any change to governance arrangements. In section 10.2 the report says that they are likely to be £50k to £100k in one off costs but there is no breakdown of how this is made up.

Has a financial impact assessment been taken to validate this £50k to £100k range?

Is there a detailed breakdown that members can see to assure themselves and our residents that all one-off costs both internally and externally have been accurately considered in arriving at this figure?

- (ii) Paragraph 10.4 calls for a comprehensive training programme for members and officers.

Has this programme been designed and what are the costs arising from it for both external training costs and officer time?

What will the time commitment for "comprehensive training" be for officers and members?

- (iii) Paragraph 10.6 states that the Council is looking into whether additional financial support is available.

Has this been progressed and if so how much funding has been made available? If not how much is being requested and when will the council know if support is available?

### **3. Question from Councillor Kate Mitchell – JMO Sports Park**

Having been contacted by concerned residents whose children or grandchildren have had their junior football cancelled at the Council's Blaguegate pitches on Sunday 9th October as a result of dangerous and inconsiderate parking arising from a dispute between the council and JMO Sports Park about the previous parking provision at JMO Sports Park, to respectfully ask the Council Leader what action she proposes to take to ensure that the situation is resolved; the dangerous parking eliminated; and the interests of local junior footballers is not relegated below those of footballers at JMO, some of whom are from outside the area?

### **4. Questions from Councillor Julian Finch – Report 'Change in Governance Arrangements'**

These questions are not about legal compliance, but whether or not we have complied with "accepted good practice" as defined by the LGA's Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Guidelines and in good practice in any other type of organisation.

It was made clear to the cross-party working group, in the first meetings, that there is a clear process for Council's to review their governance arrangements and its effectiveness. Based on their extensive research and the experience of Councils who have changed governance arrangements, their guidance is promoting "good practice" rather than legal advice. They also make it abundantly clear that "introducing a structural solution will not resolve issues which may have underlying political causes."

The first stage of the LGA's recommended process is planning your approach, scoping your review, and assessing the current position.

- (i) Can the Council provide evidence clearly demonstrating these first stages of governance review were carried out properly (diligently)?
- (ii) Are you satisfied that a proper assessment of the current position has been carried out?

- (iii) What evidence have we established that the current governance arrangements as per current constitution, are inadequate?

The second stage on the LGA's recommended review process is to consider and agree the principles on which the new governance arrangements could be designed. Quote: "From the initial assessment (Stage 1) you have identified some strengths, practices and ways of working that you want to keep, and weaknesses, ways of working that you want to stop or change substantially." These principles should be tangible, so that in future you can judge whether or not.

- (iv) Is the Leader / Council confident that we have identified clear and tangible/measurable objectives? If so, what are they?

It is imperative when budgets are going to be tight that you are clear on the financial implications, but you can't put a cost to operating a new structure before you have agreed what that structure is going to be.

- (v) Is the leader on behalf of the Council, convinced that WLBC has a clear rationale for the proposed formal change in governance arrangements? (If not, could this be challenged legally?)
- (vi) What will be done to mitigate the various risks involved in this proposed change, including those which have been identified in the review process?
- (vii) What evidence do we have that this proposed change will strengthen our governance in a way that cannot be achieved by other means, e.g evidence that:
- under a committee system decision making will be more consensual
  - partnership decision making will be more effective
  - engagement with Councillors in policy making will be more inclusive than it is now?
- (viii) Is the Leader of the Council satisfied that sufficient consideration has been given to the option of a "Hybrid system of governance which would require cultural change in the organisation rather than major constitutional /structural change, and possibly some more minor changes to the constitution? If so what evidence do we have to substantiate that?