

CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

27 November 2006

Agenda Item 6 – Notice of Motion – additional Information

Since the agenda was despatched, Councillor Gordon Seekings has provided information on various systems operating in other local authorities. The Head of Democratic Services has also been in touch with the following authorities and confirmed / obtained the information set out below.

Cambridge City Council has a "voluntary" protocol which was effectively imposed on the then majority group, Labour, by the combined opposition parties. It is still in place now with a Lib Dem Council but it does not operate when the working majority is small (24/42). There is no guarantee that another party will honour it should they regain control although there is a tacit understanding from Labour that it will be. Council currently is 29 Lib Dem, 13 Lab with no Conservatives so they are not part of that understanding. A copy of the protocol is attached.

Epping Forest District Council After the Conservatives lost control in 1994, there was informal agreement that the Chairmanship rotated between the groups. Since then a points system has been introduced where each group acquires a point for each councillor in their group each year. The group with the most points in the Spring of each year gets the Chairmanship and then loses all their points. The current political balance is 22 Cons, 12 Lib/Dem, 6 BNP, 5 Residents' Association, 4 Ind and 1 Lab. A copy of the protocol is attached.

Councillor Seekings favours this model as it keeps a balance between a group's size and electoral strength over a period of years whilst not excluding small groups.

Chelmsford has had a points system similar to the above for some time. Their Political Balance is 35 Cons, 19 Lib/Dem, 2 Lab, 2 Ind.

Neath Port Talbot selects the Mayor purely on the basis of years served on the Council.

London Borough of Harrow have a system where, when the majority is small and the Mayor is from an opposition party, the incoming Mayor (before being elected) makes a commitment that they will not use their vote as a councillor. This is usually expressed by them saying that they will not be a political Mayor (from the feedback Councillor Seekings got on this, it is not clear whether this is a convention or a requirement) and that where a Mayor uses the casting vote, it is used to maintain the status quo. According to Councillor Seekings' information this has been done on two occasions in the last 4 years..

The current political balance is Cons 37, Lab 24, Lib/Dems 2.

Stockton on Tees has included the process for selecting the Mayor as part of its constitution, as follows:-

"Each year, the longest serving Councillor will be nominated to serve as Mayor. Where, in any year, more than one Councillor satisfies the criterion as longest serving Councillor, and no agreed nominee has been chosen, lots will be drawn to secure the nomination for Mayor for the forthcoming municipal year. If in any year the longest serving Councillor or chosen nominee decide not to agree to their name being put forward as nominee to the annual meeting of the Council, this will not give rise to a break in the particular Councillors length of service for nomination purposes or preclude that Councillor from being re-considered for nomination in future years."

The political balance is Lab 27, Cons 12, Lib Dem 7, Ingleby Barwick Ind Soc 8, Thornby Ind Assn 7, Ind 1.

Pendle District Council operates a method where the mayoralty is allocated in a way that is proportional to the size of the different groups over the years. A copy of the protocol is attached.

Pendle has operated this system for the past 30 years. The current political composition is 29 Lib Dem, 13 Con, 5 Lab, 1 BNP, 1 Ind, with a Labour Mayor.

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Council Convention on sharing the mayoralty

1. The Council will normally appoint the Deputy Mayor to be Mayor but may decide not to do so where a majority group holds fewer than 24 seats. (A group holding 50% of Council seats shall be deemed a “majority group” for this purpose.)
2. At the beginning of each new municipal year each political group on the Council shall be awarded one point (a “mayoralty point”) for each member of the group. This applies in all years regardless of the number of seats held by the majority group.
3. On appointment of its candidate for Deputy Mayor, 42 mayoralty points shall be deducted from the total points held by that group. This applies in all years regardless of the number of seats held by the majority group. If the political group with the greatest number of mayoralty points has fewer than 42, after deduction of mayoralty points it shall have a negative number of points.
4. If the majority group holds at least 24 seats, the Council will, as a matter of convention, appoint as Deputy Mayor the candidate nominated by and from the political group with the greatest number of mayoralty points.
5. If a group declines to nominate, the Council will, as a matter of convention, appoint as Deputy Mayor the candidate chosen by and from the group with the next greatest number of mayoralty points.
6. If the Deputy Mayor does not become Mayor in the following year by reason of Rule 4, 42 points shall be refunded to the nominating group and deducted from the group that does take the mayoralty. If the Deputy Mayor does not become Mayor in the following year by reason of retirement, loss of seat etc. the nominating group may select a replacement.
7. This scheme shall operate as a convention and shall not fetter the discretion of the Council or of individual councillors to disregard it.

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PROTOCOL FOR THE ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Purpose of Protocol

1. To regulate the procedure for the election of the Vice-Chairman of the Council.
2. To establish the entitlement of each political group to nominate to the position of Vice-Chairman.
3. To facilitate a system whereby each group shall be able to nominate to the position of Vice-Chairman on a regular basis.

Details of Protocol

4. The protocol shall operate by means of a points system. Each political group shall be allocated one point for each of its members. The total number of points to be allocated shall be the same as the number of Councillors overall.
5. In the first year of the operation of this protocol, the group with the highest points total (and hence number of Councillors) shall be entitled to nominate for the Vice-Chairmanship.
6. In subsequent years, the equivalent calculation shall be carried out but with the following variations:
 - (a) the number of points given in year one to each group shall be increased by the total number of members for year two;
 - (b) the group which last held the Vice-Chairmanship shall, in the following year have its points score reduced by the total number of members of the Council;
 - (c) after taking account of the calculations at (a) and (b), the political group with the highest total will be entitled to nominate for the Vice-Chairmanship.
7. In each year, the process outlined in 6(a) - (c) will be repeated. An example of the relevant calculations is attached as an Appendix.

Chairman of the Council

8. The person nominated under this protocol and appointed by the Council under the terms of this protocol as Vice-Chairman of the Council shall automatically become the Chairman of the following Council year.

Suspension of Protocol

9. It shall be open to the Council to suspend the operation of this protocol at any Annual Council meeting if this is in the best interests of the Council. Such suspension shall, however, only be agreed if 65% of the Council membership support a motion to that effect.

PENDLE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Extract from the Minutes of a Council meeting held on 26 April 1979

MAYORALTY

1. With reference to Minute 2004, the Council considered the Mayoralty and, in particular, the appointment of the Deputy Mayor who, if the present practice of the Council were continued, would be invited to be Mayor of the Borough after his or her year of office as Deputy Mayor.

- RESOLVED
- (1) That the Conservative Group on the Council be invited to nominate the Deputy Mayor who, if the present practice of the Council were continued, would be invited to be Mayor of the Borough after his or her year of office as Deputy Mayor.
 - (2) That the following system be adopted to determine which Group on the Council shall be invited to nominate the Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 1980/81 and thereafter:-
 - (a) After the Borough Council elections to be held on 3 May 1979, one point be allocated to each Member of the Council, and the Group which has the highest number of points, after making the deduction provided for in (b) below from the points credited to the Conservative Group, be invited to nominate the Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year, 1980/81.
 - (b) In 1980, and each year thereafter, after the ordinary Borough Council elections, or in May in those years when there are no Borough Council elections, further points be credited to the various Groups on the Council on the basis of one point for each Member of the Council, and points equal to the total number of Members of the Council, i.e. 51, be deducted from the cumulative total of the Group which last nominated the Deputy Mayor. The Group which then has the highest number of points be invited to nominate the next Deputy Mayor. The procedure of crediting and debiting points be continued each year to maintain running totals.

