

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting8th January 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

Annual Meeting

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered recommendations from the Members' Advisory Panel relating to the format and protocol of future Annual Council meetings.

It was explained that following notification that, due to planned refurbishment, the Billingham Forum Theatre may not be available for the Annual meeting 2009, the Members' Advisory Panel began consideration of an alternative venue.

Subsequently the Panel learned that the Theatre would be available for 2009, but was unlikely to be available the following year. In view of this the Panel agreed that the venue for 2009 would remain at Billingham Forum Theatre, but further consideration would be given to a venue for 2010 at future Panel meetings.

It was explained that the Panel also took the opportunity to consider alternative formats for the meeting. The Panel recognised the two distinct aspects of the Annual Meeting, the Business aspect and the Ceremonial aspect.

The Panel considered that, whilst appropriate for the ceremonial aspect of the meeting, and subsequent reception, the Billingham Forum Theatre's physical characteristics did not allow a set up conducive to dealing with Council business. The positioning of the Mayor, on the stage, meant he or she was quite remote from the body of the meeting and vision from the stage into the auditorium was poor. This would hamper the management of the meeting, particularly when unexpected situations arise. It was noted that the Annual Meeting presented the possibility of a substantial number of complicated voting situations meaning there was considerable potential for confusion and/or a protracted/problematic meeting. This could create a negative impression of the day for the Mayor, his family and civic guests.

The view was taken that the format of the meeting could be organised

such that it would reduce the chances of the potential problems detailed above occurring, and the Panel identified and considered 4 options.

The Panel discussed the options and supported a version of option 3: -

- Council to meet and elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (no ceremony) and undertake all other necessary business required. Guests would receive an invitation, directing them to an alternative room, for refreshments, at a time estimated for the conclusion of that business. Clearly this would be a public meeting and as such guests would still have the option of attending the meeting if they wished.
- At the conclusion of the business part of the Annual Meeting there would be a short break, during which, guests would be invited into the meeting room and a ceremony would take place, to mark the election and installation of the new Mayor.
- At the conclusion of the ceremony the Mayor would invite guests and members to attend the post meeting civic lunch.

It was considered that this new format would assist the smooth running of the Annual Meeting and it was suggested that it be adopted for future Meetings.

RECOMMENDED that Council:-

1. agrees the adoption of the following format for future Annual Meetings:-

- Council to meet and elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (no ceremony) and undertake all other necessary business required. Guests would receive an invitation, directing them to an alternative room, for refreshments, at a time estimated for the conclusion of that business.
- At the conclusion of the business part of the Annual Meeting a short Break would be taken, during which, guests would be invited into the meeting room and a ceremony would take place, to mark the election and installation of the new Mayor.
- At the conclusion of the ceremony the Mayor would invite guests and members to attend the post meeting civic lunch; and that

2. the Members' Advisory Panel receives a further report regarding the outcome of using the new format at the 2009 Annual Meeting.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Following notification that there was uncertainty surrounding the availability of the Billingham Forum Theatre for 2009, the Members Advisory Panel began consideration of alternative venues. As part of those considerations the Panel also looked at the format of the meeting and identified an alternative. It was felt that the current format had the potential for creating a negative impression of the day, which the proposed new format would minimise.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Option 1 - Current format - Election of Mayor and ceremony immediately followed by all other business.

Option 2 - Mayoral Installation; followed by a break for hospitality (guests invited). Business aspects of meeting to continue (same day) with no guests invited.

Option 4 - Mayoral Installation; followed by a break for hospitality (guests invited). Business aspects of meeting continue next day (no guests invited).

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not applicable

Proper Officer
12 January 2009