

Minutes of a meeting of the Constitution Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 8 September 2005.

PRESENT

Mr. D. R. Parsons CC (in the Chair)

Mr. S. J. Galton CC
Mr. I. D. Ould CC

Dr. M. O'Callaghan CC
Prof. M. E. Preston CC

By Invitation

Mr. Steve Valentine, Price Waterhouse Coopers (minute 20 refers).

13. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting of the Constitution Committee held on 30 June 2005, were taken as read, confirmed and signed as a correct record.

14. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been asked under Standing Order 35.

15. Questions asked under Standing Order 7(3) and (5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been asked under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

16. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent.

There were no other items of urgent business.

17. Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

18. Draft External Audit Plan 2005/2006.

The Committee considered a report of Price Waterhouse Coopers, the Council's new external auditors, presenting the County Council's draft External Audit Plan 2005/2006. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Steve Valentine of Price Waterhouse Coopers to the meeting and invited him to comment on the Plan.

The Audit Commission had issued a new Code of Audit Practice which came

into force in the 2005/06 financial year and resulted in major changes in the way in which the County Council was audited particularly in respect of the new 'Use of Resources' criteria. The County Council was working closely with Price Waterhouse Coopers to ensure that the transition to the new approach ran as smoothly as possible.

The new approach would be more challenging for local authorities and would feed into the CPA, this could have implications for the Authority in terms of maintaining its 'Excellent' status.

Members felt that the CPA should focus on the quality of services provided by an authority and value for money rather than internal controls. They also expressed the view that if the County Council maintained its current level of performance but lost its 'Excellent' status due to tougher tests, this could have a negative impact on staff morale and public perception of the Authority, which was not deserved.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

19. Review and Revision of the Constitution.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive recommending changes to the County Council's Constitution in the light of experience. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes. An addition to Appendix A was circulated at the meeting, concerning a proposed amendment to the schedule to Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, a copy of which is also filed with these minutes.

The following amendments to Appendix A were agreed.

- i) In Rule 9(a) the insertion of the word 'either' after the words 'for consideration by'.
- ii) In Rule 9(d) the substitution of the word 'from' for the word 'of' after the word 'recommendations'.

RESOLVED

That the County Council be recommended to approve the proposed changes to the Constitution as set out in Appendix A to the report, as now amended.

20. Members' Allowances 2004/2005.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive informing the Committee of action taken to publicise the level of payments on members' allowances for 2004/05. A copy of the report marked 'D' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED

That the action taken by the Chief Executive to publicise the level of payments on members' allowances in 2004/05 be noted and that the details be published

with the minutes of this meeting in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

21. Appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive seeking the Committee's approval of the proposed timetable for the appointment of independent members to the Standards Committee. A copy of the report marked 'E' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED

That the proposed timetable for the appointment of independent members to the Standards Committee, as set out in the report, be approved.

11.00 am – 11.50am
8 September 2005

CHAIRMAN

