

Minutes of a meeting of the Constitution Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 24 August 2004.

PRESENT

(none) (in the Chair)

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

Mr. Mike Jones CC
Mr. D. R. Parsons CC

40. Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That Mr Parsons CC be appointed Chairman of the Constitution Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2005.

Mr D R Parsons CC – in the Chair

41. Appointment of Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED

That Mr Miller CC be appointed Deputy Chairman of the Constitution Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2005.

42. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April, 2004, were agreed as read, confirmed and signed.

43. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 36.

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

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

45. Any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent.

There were no items for urgent consideration.

46. Declarations of Interest.

No declarations of interest were made.

47. Statement of Accounts for 2003/04.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Resources presenting the Statement of Accounts for 2003/04. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Resources reported that the accounts included an amount of £150,000 to cover a supplementary levy which had been sought by the Combined Fire Authority. In the event, the Combined Fire Authority, at its meeting on 18th August 2004, following representations from the finance officers of the constituent authorities had decided not to impose a supplementary levy following reconsideration of 2003/4 outturn. He indicated that he would discuss the position with the Council's Auditors and that he hoped that the Accounts would not have to be amended because the amount involved would not be regarded as material. The situation would be regularised by an adjustment to the 2004/5 accounts.

In response to questions regarding the underspendings on education the Director of Resources indicated that the position needed to be considered in the context of a mid year forecast of £1 million overspend on education and a £1.6 m overspend on social services. Action had been taken to remedy the situation by a variety of means including not recruiting to vacant posts until the situation had become clearer.

RESOLVED:

That the Statement of Accounts for 2003/04 be approved.

48. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive presenting the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman commented that he did not agree with the Panel's view regarding opposition Group Leaders. He indicated that he would be very willing to support any proposal which might be put forward to recognise appropriately the particular responsibilities of the opposition Group Leaders through the payment of specific Special Responsibility Allowances.

With regard to the level of the proposed Special Responsibility Allowance to the Chairman and Spokesmen of the Health Scrutiny Committee, members indicated that they were prepared to support the Panel's recommendation as an interim measure. The view was expressed that once health scrutiny was properly up and running a review of the position would show that a higher level of allowance could be justified.

It was moved and seconded:-

- (a) That the County Council be recommended to approve the recommendations of the Panel, as set out in the report, in relation to the payment of allowances to Cabinet Members and Cabinet Support Members and the Chairman and Spokesmen of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

- (b) That with regard to the Panel's recommendation regarding opposition Leaders, this Committee is of the opinion that specific payments should be available to recognise the particular responsibilities of opposition Group Leaders and, in the light of the comments now made, invites the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group to consult within his Group with a view to considering whether to put forward a recommendation on this matter directly to the Council, provided that the officers are satisfied that such action would not contravene the Members' Allowances Regulations.

The motion was put and carried, 4 members voting for the motion and one against.

(Mr Mike Jones CC asked that his name be recorded as voting against paragraph (b) of the motion above on the grounds that he believed that the recommendations of the Panel should be accepted in their entirety).

24 August 2004
2.00 p.m. – 2.35 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

