

Minutes of a meeting of the Constitution Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 3 March 2008.

PRESENT

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

Mr. S. J. Galton CC
Dr. M. O'Callaghan CC

Prof. M. E. Preston CC
Mr. N. J. Rushton CC

16. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2007 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

17. Question Time.

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

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

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

19. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

20. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

All members of the Committee declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the report on Members' Allowances (minute 21 below).

21. 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 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Chief Executive drew attention to the Panel's view that it was not appropriate at this time to make substantial changes to the scheme of Allowances. In regard to scrutiny allowances, the Panel had expressed disappointment that the external review of scrutiny had not concluded. The Panel had also drawn attention to previous recommendations on performance and accountability of members.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee should receive a report at its next

meeting on the possibility of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission being elected, as is the Leader, at the Annual Meeting of the County Council, with voting perhaps restricted to non-Executive members. The Constitution currently requires the post to be held by the Leader of the largest opposition group.

The Committee considered the external review of scrutiny which was presently being undertaken by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and the Leadership Centre for Local Government. It was suggested by Mr. Galton and Dr. O'Callaghan that the Independent Remuneration Panel should meet again on completion of the review and to recommend changes to Members' Allowances if appropriate. The Chief Executive explained that it was not possible to delay a decision on the overall scheme of Allowances beyond the Council meeting on 19 March; it was a matter for the Panel if it wished to report further on certain Allowances, but it was known the Panel had already begun work on the operation of the scrutiny process in order to inform its next report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the County Council be recommended to approve the recommendations as set out in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances;
- (b) That Mrs Judith Handford be thanked for her work with the Review Panel;
- (c) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on the possibility of the post of Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission being elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council;
- (d) That it be noted that the Chief Executive, in exercising his delegated powers to appoint and maintain the Independent Remuneration Panel, would advertise the vacancy created by Mrs Handford's resignation in the Leicester Mercury and Leicestershire Matters and would seek to appoint someone with experience in the voluntary sector.