

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee held in the Swale 2, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 14 March 2012.

PRESENT: Mr P J Homewood (Chairman), Mr P B Carter, Mr G Cowan, Mrs T Dean, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr K G Lynes, Mr B J Sweetland, Mr M J Whiting and Mrs J Whittle

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law), Ms N Major (Head of Internal Audit), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services), Mr P D Wickenden (Democratic Services Transition Manager) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings held on 18 November 2011 and 1 December 2011 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Report by Kent Audit on Members' Expenses

(Item 4)

(1) The Committee agreed to the Leader of the Council's suggestion that a special meeting of the Committee should be arranged in April 2012 in order that the issue of Members' expenses (including County Cars and the External Auditor's reports on the objection to the accounts in 2010/11) could be considered in its entirety. It was noted by the Committee, however, that based on the findings of the Internal Audit review, substantial assurance had been given that the current system for review, approval and monitoring of Members' Expenses and related expenditure was adequate to ensure that all payments made were accurate and bona fide.

(2) The Head of Internal Audit responded to questions from Members of the Committee and offered to write separately on those which remained outstanding.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the report from Kent Audit be noted; and

(b) consideration of its recommended actions be postponed pending a separate meeting of the Committee in April 2012, in order that the issue of Members' expenses can be considered in its entirety.

3. New Governance Arrangements for Kent County Council

(Item 5)

- (1) A report by the Leader of the Council and the Director of Governance and Law had been circulated to all Members of the Committee shortly before the meeting.
- (2) The Committee agreed that the report was too voluminous for it to be given full and mature consideration. The Leader of the Council therefore offered the Leaders of the two Opposition Groups (and any other Member) the facility to give their detailed views for consideration by Cabinet prior to publication of the County Council agenda on Tuesday, 20 March 2012. The Committee also requested that the Appendix containing the proposed changes to the Constitution should show exactly where those changes had been made, i.e. text inserted and deleted.
- (3) RESOLVED that receipt of the report be noted and that the Leaders of the Opposition Groups be offered the facility to give their detailed views for consideration by Cabinet prior to publication of the County Council agenda on Tuesday, 20 March 2012.

4. Use of County Cars by Members

(Item 6)

- (1) In response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, the Head of Democratic Services informed the Committee that there was a system for the calculation of reimbursement for the occasional private use of County Cars by the Leader of the Council and he agreed to provide her with its details.
- (2) The Committee agreed that the report on Members' expenses to the special meeting in April 2012 would contain a detailed proposal for the calculation of the reimbursement for the occasional private use of County Cars by Members.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the current position be noted; and
 - (b) the report on Members' expenses to the special meeting in April 2012 will include a detailed proposal for the calculation of the reimbursement for the occasional private use of County Cars by Members.

5. Use of Social Media: Streaming of Questions into Committees

(Item 7)

- (1) The Committee agreed to request the Head of Democratic Services to report to the special meeting of the Committee in April 2012 on potential technological methods for interacting with the people of Kent. This should include consideration of Mr Lynes' suggestion of trialing the technology during local Democracy Week in the Autumn of 2012.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the current position be noted; and

- (b) the Head of Democratic Services be requested to report to the April 2012 meeting of the Committee on potential technological methods for interacting with the people of Kent through the democratic process.