

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee held in the Swale 1, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 11 May 2012.

PRESENT: Mr P J Homewood (Chairman), Mr P B Carter, Mr G Cowan, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr T Prater (Substitute for Mrs T Dean), Mr B J Sweetland, Mr M J Whiting, Mrs J Whittle and Mr M A Wickham (Substitute for Mr M C Dance)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law), Mr A Wood (Corporate Director of Finance and Procurement) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

6. Membership

(Item 1)

The Committee noted the appointment of Mr M C Dance.

7. Minutes - 14 March 2012

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2012 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

8. Members' Expenses management action plan

(Item 5)

(1) In the light of recently published reports in local newspapers, the Committee noted that the Council had suspended use of county cars for private purposes and not for all County Council business.

(2) The Committee noted the Internal Auditor's recommendations set out in the Management Action Plan contained in Appendix 1 to the report. These were agreed with the exception of Recommendation 3, as it was considered that utilising automated processes to create expense claims automatically from Members' diary entries would run the risk of creating inaccuracies in the claims, especially when meetings were re-arranged or cancelled at short notice.

(3) The Committee agreed in respect of Recommendation 11 that details of Members' expenses should be published monthly.

(4) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) with the exception of Recommendation 3 the management action plan on Members' expenses and travelling costs be endorsed as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and

- (b) Details of Members' expenses be published on a monthly basis.

9. Transport for Members

(Item 6)

(1) The Committee noted the following recommendations set out in paragraph 22 of the report:-

- (i) Travel by taxi or County Car between a Member's home and County Hall should be regarded as an exception to normal travelling arrangements for all Members and only authorised in the following specific circumstances:
 - a. To drive the Chairman of the County Council or their spouse/partner or other guest from home and back for the purposes of attending any formal meetings or engagements that the Chairman is required to attend on behalf of Kent County Council as part of their official duties;
 - b. Where a Member is ill or incapacitated; and
 - c. On limited occasions where, on a short-term basis, the Member's own vehicle or normal mode of travel is unavailable for any reason, including the non-availability of public transport;
- (ii) All taxi fares for official journeys should be paid by the Member concerned and claimed back via the expenses system on the production of a valid receipt except where the County Council is able to secure a cheaper alternative by booking direct;
- (iii) Occasional and incidental private use of the County Cars be permitted in order to support the effective undertaking of official duties by Members based on a formula to be provided by the Section 151 Officer;
- (iv) The renewal of the existing cars at the appropriate time (2015 at the earliest) by way of leasing an appropriate number of vehicles depending on usage, as described in paragraphs 20 and 21 of the report; and
- (v) The County Council works through the Local Government Association to resolve the outstanding issues with HMRC.

(2) Mr P B Carter suggested that Recommendation (iii) should be withdrawn in favour of permitting Members who would otherwise use the County Car to use their own personal vehicles with a driver and to claim reimbursement from the County Council for those elements of the journey that were for County Council business purposes.

(3) In the light of questions raised by Members over Mr Carter's proposed amendment to recommendation (iii) and also over Recommendation (iv), the Director of Law and Governance and the Corporate Finance Director agreed to provide a draft protocol for Recommendation (iii) and to consider amending or withdrawing Recommendation (iv) in time for the next meeting of the Committee.

(4) RESOLVED that a further report on this matter be provided to the next meeting of the Committee, incorporating Mr Carter's proposed amendment to

Recommendation (iii) and further consideration of Recommendation (iv), with the aim of producing a definitive policy for approval.