

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 25 April 2014.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen (Chairman), Mr M Baldock (Substitute for Mr R A Latchford, OBE), Mr P B Carter, CBE, Mr G Cooke, Mr M C Dance, Mrs T Dean, Ms A Harrison, Mr B E MacDowall and Mr R J Parry (Substitute for Mr B J Sweetland)

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms D Fitch (Democratic Services Manager (Council)), Mr R Lane (Senior Accountant - Taxation), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services), Mr M Thomas-Sam (Strategic Policy Adviser), Mr D Whittle (Head of Policy and Strategic Relationships) and Mr P D Wickenden (Democratic Services Manager (Members))

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes - 27 November 2013
(Item 3)

(1) In relation to minute no 31 the Chairman stated that she had been made aware by a Member that the LGA Rural Commission and the LGA Urban Commission may have been disbanded. Officers would seek formal confirmation of the situation.

(2) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of held on 27 November 2013 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(Post meeting note: It has been confirmed that the LGA abolished both its Urban and Rural Commissions with effect from February 2014. In essence, the two Commissions have been replaced by two Boards; the City Regions Board and the People and Places Board. Appointments to these Boards were made by the LGA political Groups and therefore no nominations were required from the County Council).

2. Members' Allowances and Expenses 2013/14
(Item 4)

(1) The Committee received a report on the annual return for Member's allowances and expenses for publication, together with details of the costs of the County Car service and taxis for Members for 2013/14.

(2) In response to a question the Head of Democratic Services explained that schedule of Member's allowance and expenses set out the information that the County Council was legally obliged to publish, the information on the cost of the County Car service and taxis for Members was non-statutory information that the

Committee had agreed would be reported to it on an annual basis and therefore did not form part of the published schedule.

(3) Mr Lane confirmed that public transport costs incurred by Members travelling from their home to County Hall was taxable unless the Member routinely saw constituents in their home.

(4) The Leader highlighted the advantages of using the county car for certain journeys; for example when it was cheaper than public transport and enabled the Member(s) to carry out county council business while they travelled.

(5) RESOLVED that the report be noted and the allowances and expenses for 2013/14 as detailed in Appendix A be published as required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

3. Amendments to County Car Policy

(Item 5)

(1) Mr Cooke introduced a report, which recommended a minor amendment to the County Car Policy agreed by the Committee on 13 June 2012 to reflect Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) guidance.

(2) Mr Lane explained the HMRC guidance which meant that the fleet of County Council cars could not be used by Members for a journey between their home and County Hall as this was classed as private mileage and would attract a tax liability.

(3) In response to a request for an update on the HMRC rules regarding Member's Home to County Hall mileage attracting a tax liability, the Leader stated that the Minister for Communities and Local Government was sympathetic especially when Members had to travel long distances to County Hall from their home. The Leader was aware of inconsistencies in the application of this rule in other local authority areas for example Cumbria and that information was being sought from Cumbria County Council.

(4) RESOLVED that the County Car policy be amended to take into account the guidance from HMRC regarding the use of County Cars for travel between a Member's home and County Hall as set out in the Appendix to the report.

4. Member Development Charter Plus

(Item 6)

(1) Mr Cooke introduced a report which invited Members to endorse the re-commitment to the Member Development Charter Plus Standard.

(2) The Chairman commended the work that the Democratic Services Manager (Members) had carried out on Member induction and development.

(3) Members discussed the added value to be gained by the County Council retaining the Member Development Charter Plus. Mr Wickenden confirmed that the cost of Charter Plus to the County Council was £2,500 plus VAT and he reminded the

Committee that they had established a Member Development Steering Group who would lead on this and report back to this Committee. Mr Sass stated that one of the biggest benefits to KCC of the Member Development Charter Plus process was the opportunity to find out best practise on Member Development from across the country for a very small cost.

(4) RESOLVED that the re-commitment to the Member Development Charter Plus Standard be endorsed.

(Mr Baldock and Mr McDowell asked for their votes against this decision to be recorded.)

5. Petition Scheme Review

(Item 7)

(1) Mr Cooke introduced a report, which reviewed the Petition scheme which had been agreed by County Council on 13 September 2012.

(2) In response to suggestions by Members, Mr Sass undertook to ensure that local Members were informed of paper petitions and e-petitions, hosted on Kent.gov, that related to their division and that the response e-petitions would be posted on the website.

(3) RESOLVED that the update on the Petitions received be noted and that a further review be undertaken in 18 months' time.

6. Revision to the Joint Accountability Protocol for the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services

(Item 8)

(1) Mr Whittle and Mr Thomas-Sam introduced the updated version of the report, which had been circulated to Members prior to the Meeting, the only amendment from the published report was to clarify that any amendment to the Accountability Protocol would need to be submitted to the County Council for approval. The report set out the revised Accountability Protocol for the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services, which formed part of the Constitution. Changes which were required to reflect the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education in April 2013, and in response to the new Directorate Structure approved by County Council in December 2013.

(2) A Member thanked the officers for responding positively to his request for a brief PowerPoint presentation to explain the context of this report.

(3) RESOLVED that the County Council be requested to consider adopting the revised Accountability Protocol for the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services attached as Appendix 1 to the report.