

**CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 28 January 2004  
6.00pm – 8.00pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors C Rosenstiel (Chair), Boyce, Durrant, and Ward. The Mayor, Councillor White, an ex-officio member of the Committee, spoke on item 04/CIV/08. Councillor Howell spoke on item 04/CIV/02.

<b>FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL</b>
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**04/CIV/03 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 September, 29 October and 26 November 2003 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

**04/CIV/04 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Adey, Hart, R Smith and Stebbings.

**04/CIV/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**04/CIV/06 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

**04/CIV/07 THE COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S AUDIT LETTER TO MEMBERS 2003**

Mr Ricketts from the Council's External Auditor's introduced the Audit Letter and thanked the officers for their assistance during the Audit work. Mr Ricketts stated that the Audit letter was very positive. In response to a question from Councillor Durrant on the effectiveness of the scrutiny function (para 2.12), Mr Ricketts stated that his experience had been that all local authorities were looking to refine this element of the democratic process.

**04/CIV/08 THE MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ALLOWANCES**

During discussion on the report, the Mayor suggested that the office holder required the freedom to use the allowance as the office holder wished, a view supported by Councillor Durrant. An amendment to recommendation 3 was proposed by Councillor Durrant and agreed by the Committee, which required that the Mayor agree to the amounts of expenditure within the cost center. The Mayor supported the recommendations in the report as amended.

The Mayor advised the Committee that although not arranged before, he had arranged for tax relief on his allowance gaining approximately £500 in addition to the overall allowance for 2003/04. The Committee noted that the allowance

should mitigate as far as possible any adverse tax and benefit issues for the office holder.

Councillor Durrant supported the proposal to split the allowance as recommended but would have also welcomed an increase on the £5,100 figure to £7,500, making the overall allowance £10,000.

The Chair stated that the list in 5.3 deemed to be out of pocket expenses should be as flexible as possible and revised when appropriate.

**Resolved** (by 3 votes to 1) –

- 1) That the present level of mayoral allowances is appropriate.
- 2) That the holder of the office of Mayor be granted an allowance of £2,500 to be paid through payroll on a monthly basis to cover the cost of church offertories, expenditure at sales and bazaars, clothing, hairdressing and use of own car to drive to and from the Guildhall. This sum to be index-linked.
- 3) That the remainder of the present allowance (£5,100) be retained as a separate budget within the Civic Affairs and Twinning cost centre. That the distribution of amounts within the cost centre to be agreed by the Mayor and to pay for parlour hospitality, hospitality following civic church services, donations to charity, purchase of Christmas cards, gifts to visitors and hospitality to guests attending the Outgoing Mayor's Dinner. This figure also to be index-linked.
- 4) That the holder of the office of Deputy Mayor continue to be paid an allowance (currently £1,160) to cover out of pocket expenses, but that claims for mileage when using private car to attend official engagements be permitted.

04/CIV/09 **EAST AREA COMMITTEE – RE. CHANGE TO FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS AND BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED IN A COMMITTEE CYCLE.**

**Resolved** (by 3 votes to 1) –

To concur with the Leader's decision taken at Strategy Scrutiny Committee on 26 January, that the Area Committee Chairs may make provision for a second meeting if the business requires it, but that it should be determined cycle by cycle by the Chair and officers, rather than accepted as the usual practice.

The meeting ended at 8pm

CHAIR