

CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE22 November 2006
(7.00pm- 8.20pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Boyce (Chair), Bradnack, Hart, C Rosenstiel (vice-chair), Stebbings and Ward.

Also present Councillor Durrant for 06/CIV/38

FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL**06/CIV/38 AREA COMMITTEES – ADDITIONAL MEETINGS**

Councillor Durrant in his capacity as Chair of East Area Committee attended and spoke on this item which he had raised in March 2006.

The Chair introduced the report which intended to formalise what had been practiced over recent months with East Area Committee. It was noted that the Executive Councillor for Planning & Transport was considering whether to report to a future Environment Scrutiny Committee on the issues raised by the statistical analysis of planning applications. The analysis undertaken by the Chair showed that the East Area Committee was handling more planning applications than expected.

Councillor Durrant requested that the Committee support a move towards set dates for a second Area Committee meeting in the following week (with one of the meetings dealing with the planning applications). This would provide certainty for applicants and objectors to planning applications. He stated that Area Committees should be given the freedom to run its business.

The Chair stated he believed that additional meetings should be an infrequent occurrence. Councillor Bradnack proposed the removal of the word 'exceptional' from recommendation 2.1. Councillor Ward raised no objection as the recommendation made it clear that an additional meeting would only be held if the business warranted it. The amendment was agreed by 2 votes to 1. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised the Committee that the additional meetings of Area Committees could only be resourced if on an exceptional basis.

Councillor Ward stated that members and officers needed to continue to work on effective Chairing and careful agenda management as there were other considerations for Area Committees e.g has the Area Committee been the most appropriate forum for some presentations, Neighbourhood Policing which is due to roll out to all at some point.

The Committee agreed that officers should make sure that before an agenda is issued, the business has been split so the public know at the time of publication what each meeting is considering. Officers were asked to include on the provisional planning application list the target date for determination.

Action by Committee Services

Council is recommended –

That the changes below be incorporated into the Area Committee procedure rules: Council Constitution part 4EE - Meetings of Area Committees.

- 1) That the Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Chair of the Area Committee, be authorised to call an additional meeting of an Area Committee if the business for that cycle warrants it.
- 2) That in the interests of better community involvement, additional Area Committees should, as far as possible, be held in the local area.
- 3) That the Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Chair of the Area Committee agree what time the additional meeting commences.

06/CIV/39 **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2007/08**

The Committee considered the report of the Panel, which highlighted the changes to the current year's scheme in paragraph 5. The Chair highlighted the main changes proposed by the Panel: the introduction of an SRA to members of the Employment Appeals Sub Committee - (he stated that he was a member); an SRA for Area Committee members and no increase in the basic allowance.

The Chair stated that how councillors should complete diaries would be discussed amongst those who had volunteered at a later date. Councillor Ward requested that the diary also collect information on costs incurred/loss of earnings.

Councillor Ward proposed that Vice Chairs of Area Committees continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) as from his experience the Vice Chair did have to Chair at least one Area Committee per year – the revised ratio being Chair 0.45 SRA, Vice Chair 0.2 SRA, member 0.15). This was supported by 6 votes to 0.

Councillor Hart proposed that the SRA for Licensing Committee members should not be reduced as in paragraph 5.3 (lost by 4 votes to 2) nor should the SRA for Area Committee Chairs be reduced from 0.8 SRA (lost by 3 votes to 2). She supported the proposal of the Panel to introduce an SRA for Area Committee members.

The Committee noted that as the proposed scheme was above the budget allocation in the Medium Term Strategy (by £4k?) there would need to be a budget bid. If the bid was not supported the Chair was of the view that the obvious saving would be reducing the level of Basic Allowance figure.

Council is recommended –

To adopt the Allowances Scheme for the Municipal Year May 2007-08 as set out in the appendix.

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FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

06/CIV/40 **MINUTES**

Subject to the request of the Chair to insert of the word 'apparent' before contradiction on the first line of the second paragraph, the Committee confirmed the minutes of 27 September 2006 as a correct record and these were signed by the Chair.

06/CIV/41 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

06/CIV/42 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

06/CIV/43 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

06/CIV/44 **DATES OF MEETINGS 2007/08**

The Committee agreed that officers should consult further on the date for Council in September 2007.

Resolved –

To agree the dates for 2007/08 subject to further consultation on the date for Council in September 2007.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm

CHAIR