

Members Advisory Panel-New Constitution

A meeting of Members Advisory Panel-New Constitution was held on Monday, 2nd July, 2007.

Present: Cllr Terry Laing (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher (vice Cllr Fletcher), Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Lee Narroway, Cllr Mrs Kath Nelson, Cllr Mrs Maureen Rigg, Cllr Roy Rix

Officers: D.E.Bond, M.Henderson (LD)

Also in attendance: N/A

Apologies: Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Beall, Mrs Beaumont, Mrs Cains, Coleman, Gibson and Fletcher.

MAP Appointment of Chairman-Municipal Year 2007/2008

1/07

AGREED that Councillor Laing be appointed Chairman of the Panel for the Municipal Year 2007/2008.

MAP Minutes of the Meeting held on 30th March 2007

2/07

AGREED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 30th March 2007 be confirmed as a correct record.

MAP Declarations of Interest

3/07

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

MAP A Revised Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members

4/07

The Panel considered a report that provided details of the new model code of conduct for members which was made by an Order on 2nd April 2007 and had come into force on 3rd May 2007.

The Panel was provided with a copy of the Order, a document detailing the major changes brought about by the code, together with guidance produced by the Standards Board for England.

Taking the above into account a suggested form of the new code of conduct for the Council had been prepared and was provided to the Panel

It was explained that the Council's Standards Committee had considered this issue at its meeting held on 26th April and had made the following recommendations to Council:-

1.At the earliest opportunity, and with immediate effect the Council adopts the code of conduct for members prescribed in the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 ("the 2007 Order"), in its entirety, in place of the Council's existing code of conduct for members together with the general principles of conduct as an unenforceable preamble;

2.A copy of the adopted code of conduct be provided to every member of the Council;

3.All Town/Parish Councils be advised to adopt as soon as reasonably possible, the code of conduct for members prescribed in the 2007 Order, but excluding those provisions which are not mandatory for parish council, save for paragraph 12(2) (in part), in place of their existing codes of conduct for members; and that

4.As soon as practicable, training for the Council's Members and for Town/Parish Council members is provided, and that such training is compulsory (with the approval of the relevant Town/Parish Councils in the case of Town/Parish members), with its take-up by each member being monitored and reported on by the Committee; and

Members considered the code, related information provided and the recommendations of the Standards Committee. The Panel supported recommendations 1 – 3 of the Standards Committee, but considered that, in relation to recommendation 4 there should be a strong recommendation to Members to take advantage of training on the new code, rather than treating such training as compulsory. The panel considered that this would be sufficient to emphasize that training on the new code was extremely important and that Members should undertake it.

With regard to the training days the Panel asked that alternatives be given to take account of members work or other commitments.

AGREED that the views of the Panel be forwarded to Cabinet and Council.

MAP Councillors' Commission-Incentives and Barriers to People Serving as Councillors 5/07

Members considered a letter and questionnaire received from the Councillors' Commission requesting views on the incentives and barriers to people serving as councillors.

It was explained that the Commission was preparing a report for submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government by the end of November 2007.

It was noted that many Members had been contacted individually for their views and Regional Seminars had been held by the Commission.

Members briefly discussed issues raised by the letter and questionnaire, these included:

- Time off from employment
- Reimbursement of employers
- proactively highlighting the role of Councillors to the community and encouraging involvement.

The Panel agreed that the letter and questionnaire should be circulated to all Members of the Council to allow each of them to express their personal views.

AGREED that the letter and questionnaire be circulated to all Members requesting their views, with a deadline which gives an opportunity to review responses prior to forwarding the Council response to the Commission.