

Members Advisory Panel-New Constitution

A meeting of Members Advisory Panel-New Constitution was held on Wednesday, 28th October, 2009.

Present: Cllr Terry Laing (Chairman), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Dick Cains (vice Cllr Mrs Cains), Cllr Aidan Cockerill (vice Cllr Mrs Beaumont), Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr John Fletcher (vice Cllr Mrs Fletcher), Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Maurice Perry (vice Cllr Lupton)

Officers: D.E.Bond, N.Hart (LD), Ms J.Spittle (R).

Also in attendance: Cllr Broughton

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Apedaile, Mrs Beaumont, Mrs Cains, Mrs Fletcher and Lupton.

MAP Declarations of Interest

16/09

There were no Declarations of Interest recorded.

MAP Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 14th September 2009

17/09

AGREED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th September 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

MAP Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 6th October 2009

18/09

AGREED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

MAP Review of Workplace Travel and Travel Allowance

19/09

Members views were invited on proposed changes to the current arrangements for reimbursing elected members who used their vehicle for Council business; as well as other proposed changes to members allowances which had been suggested within a proposed report to Cabinet on the 5th November 2009 reviewing workplace travel arrangements and travel allowances for employees.

It was noted that under the Single Status Agreement, although a number of changes were agreed to terms and conditions of employment, the issue of travelling allowances and expenses had been deferred due to the complexity of the issue and the need to introduce single status without delay. However, the current system of reimbursement was both costly and due to the difficulty of interpreting national conditions of service, had not always been applied consistently across the Council. There was therefore a need to change and to introduce a scheme which was transparent, equitable, sustainable and reduces costs. In addition, the Corporate Travel Plan introduced a target to reduce car mileage by 5% by April 2011. The proposed changes therefore contributed to assisting the Council in reaching its target and would provide a significant financial saving, simplify the current administrative arrangements and ensure that all allowances were paid in an equitable and consistent manner.

As part of the proposed changes it was proposed that a single mileage rate would be paid irrespective of the engine size of the car with lower rates paid for

journeys in excess of 4000 miles and 8,500 miles. Transitional arrangements were also proposed for a phased three year programme of implementation.

In view of the current financial climate it was considered opportune to review those subsistence and travelling allowances whose removal would impose only a limited financial burden on recipients. Accordingly it was proposed that:-

- Lunch and Tea allowances should cease to be paid
- Breakfast will only be paid when the journey has commenced before 6.00am
- Employees travelling by train will be reimbursed the standard second class or lowest cost option fare available only.

It was proposed to implement these changes with effect from 1.4.2010. It was noted that a decision had been made in 2008 to have one scheme of mileage rates for both officers and members, and it was noted that the proposed rates to be introduced would be subject to any future national changes introduced.

Members referred to the ongoing consultation regards workplace travel arrangements and travel allowances for employees and indicated a preference for the matter to be discussed firstly at group level, prior to views being fed to Cabinet and then Council.

AGREED that the report be noted and each political group be offered the opportunity to comment on the proposals as part of the formal consultation process.