

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of General Purposes Committee

27 June 2006 at 8.00p.m.

Present:

Councillor R D Burrett (Chair)

Councillor D English (Vice-Chair)

Councillors B K Blake, M T Head, R A Lanzer, J Mortimer, J G Smith and
L A Walker

Officers Present:

P Tinsley
J M Green

Head of Democratic Services
Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors C A Cheshire, D G Crow and D J Shreeves

1. Minutes

Subject to substitution of the words 'Vice Chair' for the word 'Chair' in the first line of the second paragraph on page 53, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 March 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. Members' Disclosure of Interests

No disclosures of interest were made by Members.

3. Members' Allowances Scheme 2006/07 – Supplementary Report of Independent Review Panel and Appointment of New Panel Members for 2006/07

The Committee considered report DS/63 of the Head of Democratic Services on the Supplementary Report of the Independent Review Panel on Members' Allowances.

Allowances

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12 April, 2006, the Council had asked the Panel to reconvene to reconsider its recommendations, after having invited further comments from all Members of the Council. The Supplementary Report of the Panel was now before the Committee for consideration.

The Panel's report recommended increases to Members' Allowances (including the basic allowance, the special responsibility allowances and the dependant care allowance) in line with inflation.

The report also proposed a special responsibility allowance for the Vice Chair of the Development Control Committee. The Panel had concluded that the demands of the roles of the Vice Chairs of the Licensing Committee and of the Development Control Committee were similar, and being mindful of the likely frequency of meetings of the two committees, the Panel had agreed to adhere to its original recommendation to pay an allowance of £2,226 to the Vice-Chair of Development Control Committee. In doing so, the Panel had decided to review the need to pay an allowance both to the Vice-Chair of Development Control Committee and to the Vice-Chair of Licensing Committee when it reconvened in November to discuss the allowances for 2007/08

The Panel had not originally recommended paying an allowance to the Chair of the Service Priority Working Group. However, having considered new written representations from a Member (who had not personally held the position), the Panel had looked at the workload of the post and had considered that it was at least equivalent in time commitment to that normally required of the Chairs of General Purposes and Standards Committees. The Panel had considered how this role differed from that of the Chairs of other standing Working Groups not currently in receipt of an allowance and had noted that this was the only Working Group that was not chaired by an Executive Member. The Panel had, therefore, decided to recommend that the position of Chair of the Service Priority Working Group should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of £2,226 per annum, provided that the position was not held by a Member of the Executive.

The Panel had reconsidered its recommendation in relation to Shadow Portfolio Holders and had concluded that, in principle, there was a case for providing an allowance to Shadow Executive Members. However, as the role of Shadow Portfolio Holders was a new role within the Council, the Panel had decided, on balance, that rather than adhere to its original recommendation, it would not recommend payment of an allowance to Shadow Portfolio Holders at this stage but would reconsider the issue when it reconvened in November. (The Committee was advised that, at this point in time, the minority group had not appointed Shadow Portfolio Holders).

The Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Appendix A to report DS/63, would give effect to the recommendations contained in the supplementary report of the Independent Review Panel.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that, at its meeting on 14 June, 2006, the Executive had approved a supplementary estimate of £5,020 for increased allowances, subject to the Panel's recommendations being agreed by the Council.

Composition of Panel

In the light of recent difficulties experienced with ensuring a quorum at Panel meetings, it was proposed that the panel be enlarged and that, in addition to the three existing members, two additional members be appointed to the Panel, each for a four year term of office. It was noted that Alison Skinner, one of the three existing panel members, whose term of office was due to expire this year, had agreed to serve for another four years.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council be recommended

- (1) to approve the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2006/07 as recommended by the Independent Review Panel in its Supplementary Report and as set out in Appendix A to report DS/63 of the Head of Democratic Services;
- (2) that the implementation of the scheme be backdated to 1 April 2006;
- (3) that the membership of the Members' Allowances Independent Review Panel be increased to five members and that Roy Rose (nominated by CADIA) and Nick Whitley (nominated by Crawley College) be appointed to the Panel, each for a four year term of office.

RESOLVED

That the Panel be thanked for their work in carrying out the Review

4. Constitutional Changes

(a) Procurement Code – Delegation for Repair Contracts

The Committee was asked to consider the amendment of Rule 14 of the Procurement Code to provide for increased delegation to officers in connection with the award of contracts relating to building repairs.

Under the previous Standing Orders with respect to Contracts an additional delegation relating to the award of such contracts had been introduced because Members did not consider that they could add value to the decision as the recommendation for the award of the contract followed a market testing tendering exercise. However, this delegation had been omitted when the Procurement Code had replaced the Standing Orders in the Constitution.

It was now proposed that, subject to the criteria described in Rule 14,

- the acceptance of tenders up to £500,000 for building repairs be delegated to the relevant Head of Service;
- the acceptance of tenders between £500,000 and £1m for building repairs be delegated to the Head of Service/Director in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder (subject to the call in procedure under the Procurement Code paragraph 14.2);
- contracts for building repairs valued at £1 m plus be awarded by the Executive

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council be recommended to agree to the increased delegation as described in this minute and to its implementation by the substitution of the wording set out in Enclosure C to the agenda for the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 27 June 2006 for paragraph 14 of the Procurement Code in the Council's Constitution.

(b) Changes to the delegation scheme

The Committee considered proposals to amend the Council's Constitution to reflect the requirements of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council be recommended to make the following amendments to the Council's Constitution:-

- (a) Add the following to the functions of the full Council:-
'Power to resolve not to issue any casino premises licences within the Borough under Section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005';
- (b) Add the following delegation through the functions of the General Purposes Committee:-
'This function is delegated to the Head of Legal Services
The enforcement of byelaws.'

5. Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

R D BURRETT
Chair