



Coventry City Council

Council Meeting

11 December 2007

Booklet 2

Recommendations

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CABINET

4th December, 2007

Cabinet Members
Present:-

Councillor Blundell
Councillor Mrs Johnson
Councillor Matchet
Councillor Noonan
Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Sawdon
Councillor Taylor (Chair)

Non-Voting Opposition

Representatives present:- Councillor Benefield
Councillor Duggins
Councillor Mutton
Councillor Nellist

Employees Present:-

R. Barreto (Finance and Legal Services Directorate)
R. Brankowski (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
L. Bull (Head of Adults and Older People's Social Care Group)
F. Collingham (Communications and Media Relations Manager)
J. Daly (Head of Special Projects Finance)
A. Duncan (City Development Directorate)
P. Fahy (Community Services Directorate)
M. Fenton (Programme Director, Building Schools for the Future)
C. Green (Director of Children, Learning and Young People)
J. Jardine (Chief Executive's Directorate)
J. McGuigan (Director of City Development)
J. McLellan (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
B. Messinger (Director of Customer and Workforce Services)
C. Pearson (Head of Regeneration Services)
S. Pickering (Director of City Services)
K. Rice (Head of Legal Services)
C. Steele (Chief Executive's Directorate)
D. Taylor (Interim Head of Democratic Services)
C. West (Director of Finance and Legal Services)

Apologies:-

Councillor Ahmed
Councillor Foster
Councillor Ridley
J. Bolton (Director of Community Services)
S. Manzie (Chief Executive)

RECOMMENDATIONS

142. Declaration of Interest

Councillor Sawdon declared a personal interest in the matter dealt with in Minute 151 below, headed "Response to "Have Your Say" Consultation on the Regulations for Local Involvement Networks", and he took part in the consideration thereof and the voting thereon.

143. Review of Members' Allowances

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services which outlined the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Review of Members' Allowances. The report prepared by the Panel was appended to the report submitted.

The Independent Remuneration Panel had been appointed by the City Council on the 18th May, 2006, to undertake a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, which came into effect in May 2003, required the Council to have regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel before a Members' Allowances Scheme was introduced or amendments made to a current scheme, although it was noted that the Council was not obliged to adopt any recommendation that the Panel might make. It was further noted that there was a legislative requirement for Members' Allowances to be reviewed every four years.

Members' Allowances are increased annually in line with national pay awards for all employees in local government. The 2007/08 settlement was agreed following negotiations with employers and unions at an increase of just under 2.5% for all local government employees and members.

Following the review of the current scheme of allowances, the Panel set out a series of recommendations in the Executive Summary and Appendix 1, which were appended to the report submitted. The recommendations related not only to the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance payable to elected members but also to Carers' Allowance and the allowances paid to non-elected member co-optees to Scrutiny Boards and members of the Standards Committee. In relation to its recommendations on the basic rate, the Panel used a formula recommended nationally by the Local Government Association and, in relation to the amount of time spent by councillors, they used the same formula as used by the previous Panel in 2003. There were some proposed changes in relation to the current payments for Deputy Chairs of Scrutiny Boards.

The Cabinet decided to thank the Independent Remuneration Panel for undertaking the Review and to note their recommendations. They took into account the indication in the report submitted that officers had had some informal discussion with Cabinet Members, who had indicated that, while having no dissatisfaction with the Panel's proposals, they were not prepared to implement the recommendations in the current financial climate. On that basis, the Cabinet decided to recommend the Council not to implement the Panel's recommendations at this point.

RESOLVED that the City Council be recommended:-

- (1) To thank the Independent Remuneration Panel for undertaking the Review.**
- (2) To note the Panel's recommendations.**
- (3) To take into account the Cabinet's views as summarised above.**
- (4) Not to implement the Panel's recommendations at this point.**

151. Response to "Have Your Say" Consultation on the Regulations for Local Involvement Networks.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive seeking approval of a response to the Department of Health "Have Your Say" consultation on the draft regulations for Local Involvement Networks. The Cabinet noted that Scrutiny Board 4 had previously considered the report submitted at their meeting held on the 14th November, 2007.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 included provisions to establish Local Involvement Networks (LINKs). A LINK was envisaged as a network of local people and organisations, funded by government and supported by an independent organisation, to hold commissioners and providers of health and social care services to account. There would be a LINK in each local authority area that had social services responsibility. The introduction of LINKs and their "hosts" would replace the existing Public and Patient Involvement Forums, Forum Support Organisations, and Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health.

It was intended that LINKs would be an improved mechanism by which the public could have a say in local health and social care services. Their role would be to promote and support involvement, obtain and present the public's view and make recommendations for service improvement.

The process of initiating a consultation on regulations before a Bill becomes an Act was unusual, but reflected the short timetable that the Government had in mind for the introduction of LINKs. It was anticipated that local authorities would be required to have commissioned a host for LINKs by the 1st April, 2008. The consultation, which closes on the 21st December, 2007, seeks views on proposed regulations relating to:-

- Requests for information
- Responding to reports and recommendations made by LINKs.
- The duty to allow entry to LINKs
- LINK referral to an overview and scrutiny committee.

A proposed response to those issues was appended to the report submitted.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) Noted that Scrutiny Board 4, at their above-mentioned meeting, had agreed the response contained in Appendix 1 of the report submitted.
- (b) Decided to approve that response.
- (c) Approved a recommendation to request full Council at their meeting on the 11th December, 2007, also to approve that response.

RESOLVED that the City Council be recommended to approve the response set out at Appendix 1 to the report submitted.

154. **Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Interim Head of Democratic Services which provided an update on the progress made on the statutory review of polling districts and polling places and sought approval for the revised polling scheme, recently agreed by the Cabinet Member (Customer, Workforce and Legal Services) Advisory Panel on Electoral Arrangements.

The report indicated that the City Council was required to divide its area into polling districts for the purposes of parliamentary elections and to designate polling places for each of those districts. In doing so, the authority had to ensure that all electors had such reasonable facilities for voting as were practicable in the circumstances and had regard to the needs of electors who were disabled.

In order to satisfy new legislative requirements, the Council was required to complete a review of all polling districts and polling places by the end of 2007. The review began on the 19th September, 2007, and the Cabinet noted that further reviews were required every four years.

By conducting the review, local authorities had to demonstrate that they had, as far as practicable, ensured that all electors in the constituency had such reasonable facilities for voting; and ensured that the polling places they were responsible for were accessible to all electors, including those who were disabled, and, when considering the designation of a polling place, had regard to the accessibility needs of disabled people.

Once a decision on the proposals was made, reasons had to be given for change or for maintaining the status quo. The proposal had to address the reasonable requirements of the electors in the area and accessibility for disabled people to polling stations.

The Cabinet noted that stages 1 to 4 of the review process (which included the official notice of the review, the production and publication of a proposed scheme on which to consult, the consultation, and consideration of the submissions by the Advisory Panel) had been completed. Following consideration of the matter by the Cabinet, it was anticipated that the City Council would consider the proposals at their meeting on the 11th December, 2007, and, upon the Council's approval, the final scheme would be published by the 31st December, 2007.

Appendices A to D to the report submitted comprised, respectively, a list of all polling stations used in 2007, a list of polling stations where problems had been identified and representations made for proposed changes or further review, responses to the consultation, and the proposed revised polling scheme.

RESOLVED that the City Council be recommended:-

- (1) To note the comments received during the consultation period required as part of the statutory review, as detailed in Appendix C of the report submitted.**
- (2) To approve the revised polling scheme agreed by the Cabinet Member (Customer, Workforce and Legal Services) Advisory Panel on Electoral Arrangements, as detailed in Appendix D of the report submitted.**

(NOTE: This matter was considered as urgent public business, the reason for urgency being to enable the publication of the approved polling scheme by the 31st December 2007.)