

## **COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 30 JULY 2014**

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**Late Item**

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**AGENDA ITEM NO.8d – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL  
REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23<sup>rd</sup> JULY 2014 – NOW ENCLOSED**

- (d) Corporate Governance Panel (Pages 1 - 10)

Report of the meeting to be held on 23rd July 2014 – To Follow.

**FOR INFORMATION REPORTS**

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## **Corporate Governance Panel**

**Report of the meeting held on 23rd July 2014**

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### **Matters for Decision**

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#### **1. PROGRESS REPORT – EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

In receiving a progress report on recent discussions and decisions, attention was drawn to the Employee Handbook which had replaced the formal Employees' Code of Conduct. It was reported that the Handbook had been considered by the Employment Panel (Item No.6 of their Report refers) and the final version reviewed and approved by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel.

It is the intention that the Handbook will continue to evolve and will be more readily accessible to staff in its new format. Given its change in nature, it is no longer necessary to include the document in the Constitution. With this in mind, the Panel

#### **RECOMMEND**

**that the Employee Handbook be removed from the Constitution.**

#### **2. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME – VARIATION TO SUPPORT GUIDELINES**

By way of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is reproduced as an Appendix), the Panel has considered an amendment to paragraph 10 of the Members Allowances Scheme and minor changes to the Members' IT and Telephone Support Guidelines appended to the scheme to reflect a move towards electronic delivery of agenda for Council meetings.

Members were advised that the changes have arisen as a result of the Cabinet's decision to withdraw IT equipment and broadband connections for Members and offer, as an alternative, the opportunity to purchase iPads from Member Allowances.

Following the Panel's discussions and clarification outside the meeting, the Guidelines have subsequently been updated – a copy of the updated version is attached to this report.

## **RECOMMEND**

**that the Council approve the appropriate adjustments to paragraph 10 of the Members Allowances Scheme and the Members' IT and Telephone Support Guidelines appended to the Scheme be updated to reflect the changes to the level of IT support etc to be provided to Councillors by the Council.**

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### **Matters for Information**

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#### **3. IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREED AUDIT ACTIONS**

The Panel was provided with reassurances from the Managing Director that a culture of compliance was being promoted throughout the authority. Members were informed that the implementation of agreed audit recommendations will be routinely overseen by Management Team. Furthermore, the Managing Director reported that the new Management Team would be in place by the end of September and would be charged with the delivery of these key actions.

At the same time, the Panel were updated on progress of the new Governance Boards. The Panel was assured that they and the Overview and Scrutiny Panels would be kept informed of their development.

#### **4. INTERNAL AUDIT & RISK MANAGER'S JOB DESCRIPTION**

Under the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Panel was provided with a copy of the job description and grade of the post of the Internal Audit & Risk Manager.

#### **5. OFFICE OF THE SURVEILLANCE COMMISSIONER – RIPA INSPECTION**

The outcome of an inspection by the Office of Surveillance Commissioner was reported to the Corporate Governance Panel. The inspection was undertaken on 4th June 2014 and endorses the favourable conclusions of the 2011 report that the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act is of a satisfactory level. Members' attention was drawn to areas identified for improvement. The Panel has noted the actions taken in response to the proposed recommendations.

#### **6. FRAUD WORKING GROUP**

Councillors M G Baker, E R Butler, K J Churchill, G J Harlock and P G Mitchell have been appointed by the Panel to the Fraud Working Group.

## **7. PREPARING THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

The Panel was provided with an opportunity to comment upon the action taken to review the Code of Corporate Governance. Having had their attention drawn to the Annual Governance Statement, the Panel has endorsed the recording of the following governance issues as being significant:

- to develop the themes and aims in the Corporate Plan through service plans and performance measures;
- to review partnership working including benefits/outcomes and the contribution partnerships make to the Corporate Plan;
- to publicise the vision statement and strategic themes and outcomes; and
- continued compliance with the Code of Procurement.

The Panel has queried whether the issues identified in last year's review have been dealt with and raised concerns that the Internal Audit & Risk Manager had not expressed any opinions following the review of the Code of Procurement and staff recruitment. It was explained that this was due to the limited volume of testing undertaken. Concerns were also expressed about the outcome of the debtors review and the possibility that this may also be deemed a significant issue for the Annual Governance Statement.

## **8. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE – INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

The Panel has approved the Internal Audit Service – Internal Audit and Assurance Plan which sets out key features of the internal audit plan process for the period 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015. The Plan has been developed to provide adequate coverage and scope across the Council's systems. Any future significant changes will be reported to the Panel for information.

## **9. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LICENSING AND PROTECTION PANEL/COMMITTEE**

The outcome of a review of the effectiveness of the Licensing Panel/Committee was reported to the Panel. The review was undertaken at the request of the Panel by a Working Group made up of three members of the Licensing Committee.

The review had concluded that the Panel/Committee were generally acting effectively in discharging their responsibilities although a number of issues were raised by the Working Group relating to training, the potential out-sourcing/sharing of Legal Services, the composition of the Committee and attendance at Sub-Committees.

At the conclusion of their discussions, the Panel has agreed to review the effectiveness of the S106 Agreement Advisory Group next.

**10. WORK PROGRAMME AND TRAINING**

The Panel has noted details of their anticipated work programme in 2014/15. A formal training day is to be held in September for all Members involved in the Audit Process across Cambridgeshire.

G J Harlock  
Chairman

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Members' Allowances Scheme – Variation to Support Guidelines

**Meeting/Date:** Corporate Governance Panel – 23rd July 2014  
Council – 30th July 2014

**Executive Portfolio:** Strategic Economic Development and Legal  
Councillor T D Sanderson

**Report by:** Head of Legal & Democratic Services

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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**Executive Summary:**

The Members' Allowances Scheme is enclosed in Part 6 of the District Council's Constitution. It is reviewed every four years by an Independent Remuneration Panel. When the Scheme was last reviewed in 2011, the Panel considered that, for completeness, the Scheme also should reflect the type and levels of other support received by Councillors from the Council such as IT and telephone equipment.

At its meeting on 10th April 2014, the Cabinet reviewed the provision of IT support for Members and agreed to withdraw IT equipment and broadband connections for Members and offer, as an alternative, the opportunity to purchase iPads from Member Allowances in a move towards electronic delivery of agenda for Council meetings. As part of this decision, the Cabinet recommended that the Members' IT and Telephone Support Guidelines referred to in the Scheme be varied to reflect the new proposal. Although subject to call in by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), this decision was reaffirmed by the Cabinet.

As review of the Constitution and recommending any consequential changes to the Council forms part of the Panel's terms of reference, this report describes the minor changes that are required to be made to the Scheme, and principally, the Guidelines to reflect the Cabinet's decision.

**Recommendation(s):**

That paragraph 10 of the Members Allowances Scheme and the Members' IT and Telephone Support:Guidelines appended to the Scheme be updated to reflect the changes approved by the Cabinet to the level of IT support etc to be provided to Councillors by the Council and that the Council be recommended to approve the appropriate adjustments.

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## **1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?**

- 1.1 As the Panel is responsible for reviewing and recommending to Council proposed changes to the Constitution, this report describes the minor adjustment to be made to Part 6 - the Members' Allowance Scheme following the decision by the Cabinet to approve changes to Member' IT provision.
- 1.2 The Cabinet recommended that the Members IT and telephone support guidelines be varied accordingly to reflect the decision.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Paragraph 10 of the Scheme entitled 'Members IT Support' currently states –  
  
*'District Councillors shall be entitled to IT and telephone support to assist them in their roles as Members of the authority. Such support shall include ICT, telephone equipment and consumables which shall be issued in accordance with the guidelines appended to this scheme.'*
- 2.2 The proposed new arrangements have a minor impact on this wording. IT and telephone support will continue, although in terms of IT, perhaps in a more limited way. Under the 'Facing the Future' exercise it was proposed that the the provision of IT sundries and consumables should be discontinued. The use of iPads and withdrawal of individual home printers should, in any event, remove the need for Members to print documents so the demand for paper, toner and ink cartridges should also reduce. It is suggested therefore that the term 'consumables be deleted but that in its widest sense the remainder of the paragraph remains current.
- 2.3 It is the Guidelines which require the most radical change. These are included as an appendix to the Scheme for Members' convenience and ease of reference. Their inclusion is not a requirement of a modular Constitution. The Guidelines have been updated to reflect the new arrangements and a copy is enclosed as an Appendix.

## **3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

- 3.1 The 'Future of Members' IT' was considered on two occasions by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). The Panel recommended to the Cabinet that 'the current terms of the Constitution be reviewed and, if necessary, revisions (to it) be implemented in the normal way'.
- 3.2 This report addresses the conclusions of the Panel.

## **4. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 Should the Panel recommend to the Council that the the word 'consumables' be deleted from paragraph 10 of the Members' Allowances Scheme and that the changes made to the general guidelines for Members' IT and Telephone Support be endorsed, the amendments can be subsumed within the Constitution with immediate effect.

**5. APPENDIX INCLUDED**

Appendix – Members' IT and Telephone Support: Guidelines

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**District Council's Constitution**

**Minutes of the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well Being)**

**CONTACT OFFICER**

**Christine Deller**

**Democratic Services Manager – 01480 388007**

## **Members' IT and Telephone Support: Guidelines (Updated July 2014)**

### **1. General**

- 1.1 This note summarises the support provided for Members of the Council to assist them in their roles as Councillors. It prescribes Members entitlement to ICT, telephone equipment and printer consumables.
- 1.2 At a meeting on 10th April 2014, the Council's Cabinet reviewed the provision of IT support for Members and agreed to withdraw IT equipment and broadband connections and offer, as an alternative, the opportunity to purchase iPads from Member Allowances in a move towards electronic delivery of agenda and minutes for Council meetings. As part of this decision, the Cabinet recommended that the Members' IT and Telephone Support Guidelines referred to in the Scheme be varied to reflect this new proposal.

### **2. New Councillors**

- 2.1 After May 2014, all new Members will be required to use either their own IT equipment for Council business or take advantage of loan arrangements for purchase of a new mobile device. A few existing Members will retain HDC supplied computers during a transition period or until the end of their term as Councillor. All Members still will be required to comply with the Council's email and mobile phone protocols. Members also need to be mindful of the Council's Internet Usage Protocol and will be required to give written confirmation that any equipment loaned to them will be returned when the Member ceases to be a Councillor.
- 2.2 The Council will no longer supply computer equipment, a telephone landline or broadband services. The Council will continue to offer a loan mobile phone instead of a telephone allowance. The mobile phone offer will comprise a basic Nokia with calls, texts and a voicemail service on the EE network. (Note: although overtime there may be changes to the Nokia model offered, the basic service will remain unchanged.) One mobile phone per Member will be offered. Should this be lost or damaged, the Member will be responsible for its replacement.
- 2.3 Where a Member elects not to take a loan mobile phone, they are entitled to a telephone allowance, currently £8.92 per month for use of their own home/mobile telephone.
- 2.4 Each Member will be supplied with a corporate email address published on the Mod.Gov Committee Management System in the format of [firstname.lastname@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.lastname@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) and an Office365 email address of [firstname.lastname@huntingdonshireDC.org.uk](mailto:firstname.lastname@huntingdonshireDC.org.uk) which will be accessible on a computer, tablet or smartphone.

### **3. Printer Consumables**

- 3.1 The Council will no longer supply a printer to Members. However, those Members still in possession of a Council printer will remain entitled to two replacement cartridge sets per year for printing required in connection with their duties as a Councillor. A Member also will be entitled to be reimbursed for the cost of two replacement cartridge sets which they may have purchased externally for Council use. In order for Councillors to be reimbursed, receipts will need to be provided as proof of purchase.
- 3.2 Consumables can be obtained from Support Services 01480 388014 or Democratic Services 01480 388007 on request. A record of consumables supplied will be maintained.

3.3 Members are encouraged to reduce printing where they can and to request Democratic Services to arrange for the printing of large documents via the Document Centre at Eastfield House.

#### **4. Support**

4.1 Members have a dedicated Members IT Support Officer – Colin Chesterton 01480 388236. Colin is part of the IMD Help Desk Team 01480 388121. Colin will provide IT support to the Council Systems as well as giving general and specific IT training on the Council IT systems. He will also advise on accessing Council IT systems on Apple iPads. He can also advise on other IT matters relating to Council IT systems on personal computers and tablets on a best endeavour basis only – it is not possible for the council to provide support for the many difference makes and models of devices available.

4.2 The Council recommend that HDC supplied mobile phones be set up with a voicemail service, so callers can leave a message. Colin can advise on this and other phone functions.

#### **5. Other Issues**

Regulations provide that where a Member of an Authority is also a member of another authority, that Member may not receive allowances from more than one Authority in respect of the same duties i.e. allowances for broadband or phone cannot be claimed from both Authorities.

The Council will register each Councillor as a data controller with the Information Commissioner and pay the annual fee for that registration. This will cover the Councillors use of a PC for District Council work.

If a Mobile phone has been loaned to a Member, it should only be used for Huntingdonshire District Council or Ward business only. Members are urged not to use their personal email addresses for Council business.

In the case of mobile phones loaned by the Council, the Council will meet the cost of the outgoing calls and rental. In the case of Members taking the telephone allowance of £8.92, no additional remuneration is made available to meet the cost of calls.