

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL held in Meeting Rooms 0.1A and B, Ground Floor, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 2 November 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor E R Butler – Chairman.
Councillors M G Baker, R S Farrer, J A Gray, A R Jennings and P G Mitchell.

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor K J Churchill.

18. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 27th September 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

20. REVIEW OF COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

By reference to a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel undertook a review of the Council's Constitution. Members were advised that the biennial review was due to be undertaken in March but that a decision had been reached by Chief Officers Management Team to delay the review until envisaged changes to the Senior Management re-organisation could be incorporated in the any changes required.

The Panel considered a proposal to authorise Officers, following consultation with the Chairman of the Panel, to make the necessary amendments to the Scheme of Delegations given that this was largely a purely administrative exercise. In doing so, the Panel wished to stipulate that such changes would not be of a substantive nature and would solely relate to the structure and post titles of individuals within the organisation and to amendments to, or re-enactments of legislation referred to in the existing scheme.

With regard to the training of Members who sit on regulatory and other Committees and Panels of a quasi-judicial nature, the Panel wished to make minor changes to the proposed recommendation to make it clear that specialised training would be mandatory for Members wishing to serve on those Committees and Panels.

In respect of the proposal to delegate the approval of the Council Tax Base from the Panel to Officers, Members have formed the view that

approval should be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, following consultation with the Chairman of the Panel and published as a Key Decision.

Finally, Members of the Panel were invited to express their views on a proposal to appoint substitute Members to Panels, Committees and Advisory Groups. In doing so, the consensus amongst the Panel was that the scheme should not be implemented within the Council.

Having considered other issues raised during the review process which related to the terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Codes of Financial Management and Procurement, the Panel agreed to

RECOMMEND

- (a) that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel, to make any necessary amendments to the Scheme of Delegations relating solely to the structure and post titles and not to substantive change, following the current review of the Scheme by the Council's Heads of Service and, for expediency, to make any further adjustments when these are considered to be necessary in the future;
- (b) that the proposed terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Panels as set out in Appendix A hereto be approved;
- (c) that the following paragraph be inserted after paragraph 2 in Article 8 of the Constitution –
 - “3. No Member shall be eligible to serve on a regulatory committee – the Development Management and Licensing and Protection Panels and Licensing Committee unless or until they have undertaken relevant training. The Democratic Services Manager shall maintain a record of attendance at training events to ensure the requirement has been met”;
- (d) that the Members' Planning Code of Good Practice and the Licensing Code of Good Practice be amended as follows:-
 - (i) In the Members' Planning Code of Good Practice – delete existing paragraph 11 and insert the following:-
 - “11. Training on planning matters will be provided and updated as necessary. All Members should endeavour to receive

training to enable them to carry out their role properly and effectively. Specialised training is mandatory for Members who wish to serve on the Development Management Panel. A record of training undertaken by Members of the Panel will be maintained by the Democratic Services Manager.”

- (ii) In the Licensing Code of Good Practice – delete existing paragraph 11 and insert the following:-

“11. Training on licensing matters will be provided and updated as necessary. All Members should endeavour to receive training to enable them to carry out their role properly and effectively. Specialised training is mandatory for Members who wish to serve on the Licensing and Protection Panel/Licensing Committee. A record of training undertaken by Members of the Panel/Committee will be maintained by the Democratic Services Manager.”
- (e) that approval of the Council Tax Base be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, following consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel, and published as a Key Decision; and
- (f) to note that the Head of Financial Services would be undertaking a review of the Codes of Financial Management and Procurement with the outcome of the review being reported to the Panel in March 2012.

Chairman