

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance & Constitution Committee
Held on Monday, 9th June, 2008 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach

PRESENT

Councillor A Ranfield (Chairman)
Councillor D Topping (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors C Beard, Mrs S Bentley, D Cannon, R Cartlidge, Mrs S Jones, A Kolker,
Mrs G Merry, A Moran and R Walker

Apologies

Councillors B Moran and P Whiteley

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED – That Councillor T Ranfield be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED – That Councillor D Topping be appointed Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were reported.

4 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered the Terms of Reference of the Governance and Constitution Committee. Responsibilities included reviewing the constitution and overseeing and monitoring the Members Allowances budget. The Committee was informed that a review of outside bodies was being undertaken and a report would be submitted in due course.

RESOLVED – That the Terms of Reference of the Governance and Constitution Committee be received.

5 MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

Note:- In accordance with the Shadow Council Procedure Councillor Mrs L Smetham attended the meeting and spoke on the following item of business.

The Committee considered a report of the Governance Lead Officer regarding a members allowance scheme for the shadow period. In accordance with the Cheshire (Structural Changes) Order 2008 Cheshire County Council's members' allowance scheme was applied to Cheshire East Council. However, the order included the power to amend or revoke the scheme. Both the Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Joint Committees had requested that the County Council's Independent Remuneration Panel review the scheme. Cheshire County Council's current members allowances scheme, as well as the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel were attached to the report.

The recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel were based on the current political management scheme. However, there was scope for development of the members allowance scheme. The Council would need to consider a policy on the payment of one or more Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) to members. The Council would also have to consider whether the members allowance scheme should be applied retrospectively to the beginning of the financial year.

It was noted that Council would need to consider the appointment of its own Independent Remuneration Panel to consider and advise on the scheme of allowances to apply from Vesting Day for 2009-2010 and beyond.

The Committee discussed the perception of the public with regard to the payment of allowances to members and the workload and responsibilities of members during the shadow period.

- RESOLVED – 1. That the report be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee
2. That the Governance Lead Officer submit a report to the next meeting on the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel for Cheshire East Council.

6 CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Note:- In accordance with Shadow Council Procedure Councillor Mrs L Smetham attended the meeting and spoke on the following item of business.

The Committee considered a report of the Governance Group regarding the development of a constitution for Cheshire East Council. On 13 May 2008 Council adopted its constitution which formed an adequate basis for governance of its business for the period up to 1 April 2009. During the coming months Council would have to adopt a more developed constitution which would address issues such as schemes of delegation and area working arrangements. Attached to the report were the proposed stages of development for a draft Cheshire East Unitary Authority constitution. It was suggested that a work plan be submitted to the Committee which included target dates and key milestones for the development of the constitution.

At a meeting of the Cheshire East Joint Committee various issues had been raised for consideration by the Governance and Constitution Committee. Such issues included the development of an Officer Code of Conduct and the time limit which applied to Member speaking.

- RESOLVED:- 1. That the report be received.
2. That the Governance Group submit a workplan for the development of the Cheshire East Unitary Authority constitution to the next meeting on 14 July 2008.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.20 pm

TONY RANFIELD
CHAIRMAN