

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 27th March, 2006, at 6.00pm
in Committee Room 1 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

The Bishop of Dudley (Independent Chairman)
Councillors Burston, Hart, Male, Ms Partridge and Tyler; Mrs Jabeen

OFFICERS

The Director of Law and Property and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law and Property)

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Fraser-Macnamara and J Woodall.

20 APPOINTMENT OF SUSBSTITUTE MEMBER

It was noted that Councillor Burston had been appointed a substitute member for Councillor J Woodall for this meeting of the Committee only.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Bishop of Dudley declared a prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct in that part of agenda item number 5 – Member's Allowances Scheme – relating to consideration of payment to co-opted members in particular those 'statutory co-optees' to Scrutiny Committees dealing with Education matters, who serve on a voluntary basis, as he is a director of the Worcester Diocesan Board of Finance and the Diocese appoint to the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning.

Councillor Hart declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Member's Code of Conduct in that part of agenda item number 5 – Member's Allowances Scheme – relating to the consideration of an additional special responsibility allowance for Liquor Licensing work as she is a member of the Licensing and Safety Committee and serves on Licensing Sub-Committees.

22 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2nd February, 2006, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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MEMBER'S ALLOWANCES SCHEME

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Hart left the meeting during consideration of that part of the report relating to an additional special responsibility allowance for Liquor Licensing work).

A joint report of the Director of Finance and the Director of Law and Property was submitted on a report from the Member's Allowances Independent Panel, attached as appendix 1 to the report submitted, and on the Member's Allowances Scheme for 2006/07.

Initial consideration was given to the recommendation of the Independent Panel regarding an ongoing additional special responsibility allowance for Liquor Licensing work and following consideration of this aspect of the report Councillor Hart returned to the meeting.

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest, the Bishop of Dudley then vacated the chair during consideration of that aspect of the report relating to payment to co-opted members, in particular those serving on Scrutiny Committees dealing with Education matters).

(Mrs Jabeen – in the chair)

Consideration was then given to the recommendation of the Independent Panel regarding the payment to co-opted members, in particular those serving on Scrutiny Committees dealing with Education matters.

At the conclusion of consideration of this issue the Bishop of Dudley returned to the meeting and assumed the chair.

(The Bishop of Dudley – in the Chair)

Consideration was then given to paragraph 6 of the joint report submitted regarding an annual percentage increase to the Member's Allowances Scheme in line with the agreed pay award for National Joint Council Local Government Services.

Arising from the consideration given to the matters discussed it was considered that the Member's Allowances Independent Panel should be requested to look at the allowance for telephone charges given the change in the way in which persons communicated with Members and the ways in which Members responded with particular reference to the use of mobile telephones.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, arising from consideration of the recommendations of the Member's Allowances Independent Panel, the Cabinet be recommended to recommend the Council that;-
 - (a) The recommendation that there was no case for an ongoing additional special responsibility allowance for Liquor Licensing work be endorsed; and
 - (b) The view expressed that there was no compelling argument for the making of payments to co-opted members with particular reference to those 'statutory co-optees' serving on Scrutiny Committees dealing with Education matters be endorsed and that accordingly no such payment be made.
 - (2) That, in accordance with the annual percentage increase in line with the agreed pay award for National Joint Council Local Government Services allowed for in respect of the existing Member's Allowances Scheme, approval be given to an annual increase of 2.95% on payments to be made in accordance with the Scheme with effect from 1st April, 2006.
 - (3) That consideration be given by the Cabinet to the suggestion made that the Member's Allowances Independent Panel consider possible alternative arrangements for the payment made to Members in respect of telephone charges given the change in which such communication is now entered into particularly with regard to the use of mobile telephones and recommend the Council accordingly.
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MRS JABEEN

As Mrs Jabeen had decided that she did not wish to be considered for a further term of office as an Independent Member of the Committee this would be her last meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman paid tribute to her involvement, support and participation in the matters considered by the Committee and in response she indicated that she had been pleased to serve and had found the experience worthwhile.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm

CHAIRMAN