



Minutes of the MEMBERS' SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE of the POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2000 at 6.15 pm

Present : Councillor Miles (Chair)
Councillors Barton (substitute for Councillor Edwards), I Henderson, Hopkins, Long, Tallack and Turnbull (substitute for Councillor Day)

Officers : J Moffoot (Head of Corporate Administration), S Heap (Members' Services Manager) and E Richardson (Members' Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Day and Edwards

MS8/00 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Members' Services Sub-Committee held on 9 September 1999, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

MS9/00 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Long declared a pecuniary interest in the training aspects of Item 8 (Members' Support Services) as an employee of the Local Government Information Unit.

Councillor Hopkins declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 8 (Members' Support Services) by virtue of his employment and work with Information Technology.

MS10/00 MEMBERS' SUPPORT SERVICES

The Sub-Committee considered a suggested package for support services, including IT for Members undertaking their potential roles under any new democratic management structures.

The Sub-Committee also considered a report on training for Members and noted that this had also been received by the Democratic Structures Working Group, which had identified the need for both equalities and subject specific skills training.

It was recognised that an important element of the services necessary, was to ensure that services to support the scrutiny function were sufficient to balance the power of the Executive.

It was also recognised that resources to provide the level of services envisaged were not currently available and it was, therefore, suggested that the full package of services could be phased in.

It was suggested that while a basic package of services would be applicable to all Members, other elements of support services should be personalised to meet individual needs.

It was reported that personal computers would hopefully be installed in each of the Group Rooms by the end of the week, with the first training session being held for Members on Friday 21 January 2000.

RESOLVED -

1. That officers be requested to develop a programme of Members' Support Services for implementation over a three year period.
2. That a survey of Members be undertaken to identify which Members currently have access to IT, the usage made and packages available.
3. That the possible provision of IT equipment to all Members, either provided by the Council or leased from the Council by Members, be further developed and a report be submitted to the Sub-Committee on a programme to provide access for every Member to a personal computer at home, together with training and support, including:
 - (a) the issue of personal use; and
 - (b) the provision of dedicated telephone lines.

MS11/00

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - INDEPENDENT PANEL

The Sub-Committee considered draft Terms of Reference for the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances.

The relationship between the work being undertaken by the Democratic Structures Working Group on Rights, Roles and Responsibilities of Members, and the work of the Panel, was recognised.

It was also recognised that it would not now be possible for a Panel to report in time for the new Council year. Therefore, some form of interim scheme would be necessary.

The Sub-Committee considered the constitution of the Independent Panel and indicated a preference for the membership to include an experienced local government figure leading a Panel of local persons.

RESOLVED -

That the selection and Terms of Reference for an Independent Panel be deferred, pending the consideration of the Rights, Roles and Responsibilities of Members by the Democratic Structures Working Group.

MS12/00

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MEMBERS' SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE AND THE DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES WORKING GROUP

The Sub-Committee considered the following motion moved by the Chair, and seconded by Councillor Long:

“That recognising the fact that this Sub-Committee cannot properly fulfil its Terms of Reference without being fully aware of the parallel work of the Democratic Structures Working Group, this Sub-Committee agrees to the principle of a joint meeting with the Working Group at the earliest practical opportunity, to explore areas of common interest.”

On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED -

That the motion, as set out above, be confirmed.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.16 PM