

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Constitution Committee held on Monday 14 January 2019 at the Members' Room - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

PRESENT

Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE (Chairman)	Cllr Lynden Stowe
Cllr Colin Hay	Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Cllr Lesley Williams MBE
Cllr Nigel Moor	Cllr Will Windsor-Clive

Apologies: Cllr John Payne

75. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2018 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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76. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

77. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

No questions from members had been received.

78. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Chair of the Constitution Committee, welcomed Richard Blamey, Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to present the IRP's 2018 report to Committee.

Mr Blamey opened by outlining that the IRP had met several times throughout 2018, interviewing newly appointed Cabinet members and all group leaders about their role at the council and their view of member's allowances.

The Panel then used information gathered, alongside allowances data from other county councils, to make the recommendations outlined in the report. It was highlighted that the last time the IRP presented their report in January 2018; the

Committee requested that if the IRP were to again recommend an increase in the Leader's allowance, they must provide a figure.

He explained that the figure recommended for the Leader's allowance in the report was an average taken from all 27 comparative county councils, again reinforcing that the current Leader's Allowance was significantly lower than average.

During member's discussion, a number of options for the Committee going forward were expressed. The Chair outlined these as follows:

- No recommendation made from this Committee and the report to be voted on at Full Council;
- a recommendation made to support the report but that the report be voted on at Full Council;
- a recommendation made for a free vote on the report at Full Council; or
- a recommendation that the Committee approves the basic allowance recommendation but the other recommendations to be voted on at Full Council.

Members were clear that the increase of the Leader's allowance must be viewed as linked to the position not the person. It was highlighted that if any Councillor did not want to take their allowance, including the Leader, arrangements could be made for individuals to donate the money to a charitable organisation.

It was noted that the level of responsibility and budget under the Leader at Gloucestershire County Council was significantly higher than local authority comparative roles and yet the allowance given to the position did not reflect that.

In response to a query, it was explained that through their evidence gathering the Panel were of an understanding that the level of allowance often deterred younger council candidates.

The Committee thanked the IRP for their report but due to the controversial nature of the subject, members felt the issue best lay at full council. Members requested that the comparative data from other county councils be appended to the report for full Council.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL that, the report be noted, and as agreed by the three main political parties, a free vote be taken on whether to adopt the recommendations in the IRP's report for Member allowances in 2019/20.

79. FRIENDLY AMENDMENTS

In presenting the agenda item, Cllr Hawthorne highlighted that he had met with the group leaders of the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups to discuss the best way forward.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

The Monitoring Officer explained that Democratic Services had carried out research to produce this report and it was interesting to note that the phrase 'friendly amendment' whilst widely used, was not written in other council's constitutions.

Cllr Hawthorne summarised the group leaders' position on 'friendly amendments' as follows:

- They agreed that, in principle, the motion is owned by the proposer and seconder and therefore for an amendment to be friendly it needs agreement from both.
- Therefore the Constitution should include an adviser note to the effect that only the proposer and seconder have to agree on the proposed amendment for it to become part of the substantive motion.

RESOLVED that the Monitoring Officer be requested to amend the Constitution to include reference to 'friendly amendments' where the proposer and seconder agree that a proposal from another member be incorporated within their motion.

The meeting ended at 1.40pm

CHAIRMAN