

NORTH DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLITICAL MANAGEMENT PANEL

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 10 JULY 2008 AT 2.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT NORTH DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, NORDON, BLANDFORD FORUM

Present: Mike Oliver (Chairman)
Councillors: Audrey Burch
Angus Campbell
Steve Hitchings
Della Jones, MBE
David Milsted
Peter Webb

Apologies: Councillor Ian Stewart

Officers: Stuart Caundle (Solicitor to the Council)
Jo Williams (Democratic Services Manager)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 4 MARCH 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2008 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. PUBLIC SPEAKING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members considered the report of the Solicitor to the Council seeking a recommendation to Council of changes to the Constitution to permit public speaking at Council.

Recommended to Council

That the Council Procedure Rules be added to as set out at Annex A to these Minutes in order to permit public speaking at Council meetings.

4. REPORTING MECHANISMS FOR MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Panel received the report of the Democratic Services Manager recommending a process for Members to report to the Council on the activities of the outside bodies on which they represent the Council.

It was noted that the intention was that the reports on outside bodies would be made to Council in writing.

Members asked that reference be made in the process to reports being made other than at the times proposed where this was necessary.

Recommended to Council

The adoption of the process for reporting back from outside bodies outlined in paragraphs 5 to 12 of the report, with the addition of the Cranborne Chase and West Wilts Downs AONB to the list of A* bodies.

5. RECORDING AND REPORTING OF MEMBERS' ATTENDANCES AT MEETINGS AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

Members received the report of the Democratic Services Manager outlining options for the reporting of Members' attendances at Meetings and at learning and development events.

Recommended to Council

The following options from those outlined in the report:

C. To ask officers to collect information on all meetings attended by Members for which they are entitled to claim travel expenses in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme.

E. To cease reporting attendance information to Annual Council but continue to report quarterly to the Standards Committee.

6. RECORDING OF MEMBERS LEAVING MEETINGS AND REASONS FOR LEAVING IN FORMAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Members received the report of the Democratic Services Manager setting out the options for the recording of Members leaving Council meetings before the end of the meeting.

It was noted that a Member could always ask for their leaving a meeting to be recorded.

Resolved

To cease the practice of recording Members leaving meetings.

7. MINOR VARIATIONS TO THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2008/09

Members received the report of the Democratic Services Manager outlining two potential minor changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme for consideration.

It was noted that the entitlement would be limited to attendance at parish and town council meetings within the electoral division of the Member concerned.

Recommended to Council

The following minor alterations to the Members' Allowances Scheme:

- A. to introduce an entitlement for Members to claim travel allowances for attending Parish and Town Council meetings in their capacity as a District Councillor i.e. where they are not a Member of that Town or Parish;
- B. to introduce an automatic entitlement to claim travel allowances for attendance at Cabinet meetings by non-Executive Members.

The meeting ended at 3.45pm

CHAIRMAN

Part 4 - Council Procedure Rules

Public Speaking at Council

39. In addition to the opportunity given to the public to ask questions at meetings of the Council, there may be items on the agenda for Council which are considered to be of particular interest to the public or may be the subject of some local controversy. Members of the public will therefore be welcome to speak on items on the Council agenda, subject to the following rules.
40. When items are considered at Council, members of the public will usually be asked to speak at the beginning of the debate on the item, although this may be varied at the Chairman's discretion. Speakers will normally be allowed no more than 3 minutes in total, although this may be varied at the absolute discretion of the Chairman. Any member of the public who has spoken may then be asked questions by Members, if allowed by the Chairman and may be invited to add further representations if the Chairman believes this will help the debate.
41. Members of the public will normally only be permitted to speak on an item if they have given notice of their wish to speak to the Democratic Services Manager 2 clear days before the meeting. The Chairman will, however, retain discretion to exclude members of the public from speaking, or to permit additional speakers as he/she sees fit.