

**Minutes of: STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:** 25 September 2003

**Present:** Councillor J Smith (in the Chair);  
Councillors K S Briggs, C M Fitzgerald, J Grimshaw,  
D M Higgin and B Theckston.  
Mrs A Brown, Mr A Loyns and Mr A Withington.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor W J Davison and Mr J Lodge

**Public Attendance:** There was one member of the public in attendance.

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**S.542 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members present wished to place on record their interest in Agenda Item 6, "Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel". Reference was made to the difficult position in to which Members were placed when having to make a decision about Members' Allowances on the basis of recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

**S.543 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Mr R D Calrow asked questions relating to Members' Allowances which incorporated the following issues:-

1. The cost of allowances for 2002/2003 and 2003/2004.
2. The basis upon which allowances for 2003/2004 were made.
3. The level of increase for Members' Allowances in 2003/2004 compared with increases in employees' salaries.
4. The role and membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
5. The degree to which Members regarded any part of their role as "voluntary".

In response, an undertaking was given to forward to Mr Calrow details of the cost of allowances for 2002/2003 and 2003/2004.

The Chief Executive explained the role of the Independent Remuneration Panel in making recommendations on Allowances for Members and explained that under Government Regulations, the final decision had to be taken by the Council.

Members indicated that any comparison between Members' Allowances and employees' salaries had to be set against existing levels. They also gave an outline of the nature and extent of duties undertaken by Elected Members.

#### **S.544 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted which presented to Members the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the issue of whether Pensions should be introduced for Elected Members of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council.

The Panel had recommended that the Council should adopt the principle of Pensions for Elected Members, which it considered would assist the Council in attracting and retaining Members from a wide range of backgrounds and age groups.

Members raised issues concerning the Independent Remuneration Panel in terms of its membership and composition and the Monitoring Officer indicated that she would look into the issues raised.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:**

- 1. That the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for their work on this issue.**
- 2. That at the present time, whilst welcoming the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, the recommendation to adopt the principle of Pensions for Elected Members be rejected on the grounds that there has been no desire expressed by Councillors for such a scheme and no evidence of members of the public being deterred from standing for Council.**
- 3. That consideration of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be made by Council at its meeting on 5 November 2003.**

#### **S.545 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 July 2003, were submitted.

With regard to Minute S.280, "Employee Car Loan Scheme", it was reported that the intention was to bring a report back to the Audit Sub Committee and to this Committee in the December cycle of meetings.

With regard to Minute S.286, "Draft Revised Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy", it was reported that the Strategy was still the subject of consultation with the Trade Union representatives and was not available for consideration at this meeting.

With regard to Minute S.287, "Interpretation of the Protocol for Planning Committee Site Visits", it was reported that Ward Councillors were notified of all site visits and were able to attend if they so wished.

**Delegated decision:**

That the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 8 July 2003, be approved and signed as a correct record.

**S.546 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Delegated decision:**

That the Summary of the deliberations of the Audit Sub Committee held on 23 September 2003, be noted.

**S.547 MEMBERSHIP OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

Further to Minute S.289 of the last meeting of the Committee, a report was submitted on the issue of whether Independent Members of the Standards Committee could also be Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

It was reported that the Local Authorities' (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 stated that the Members Allowance Scheme may provide for the payment of an allowance to co-opted members in respect of attendance at conferences and meetings. As the Independent Remuneration Panel was charged with the responsibility of considering the issue of allowances for co-opted members, it would be contrary to the Government's Guidance and not therefore appropriate to change the current policy whereby a member of the Panel could not also serve as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee.

**Delegated decision:**

That Members note the report and the fact that it would not be permissible for Independent Members of the Standards Committee to serve as Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

**S.548 PROCEDURE FOR LOCAL DETERMINATION OF ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE PERSONAL CONDUCT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS.**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report which set out a draft Local Adjudication Procedure in light of the new responsibilities attached to Standards Committees for dealing with misconduct allegations when they were made against Council Members.

Documents set out in the report included a proposed procedure for local hearings; a pre-hearing procedure/letter and a detailed "hearing procedure". Also attached to the report was a flow chart setting out the progress of complaints being dealt with in accordance with the proposed local adjudication procedure.

**Delegated decision:**

That the draft procedure for local determination of allegations about the personal conduct of Council Members be adopted subject to an amendment to indicate that the Hearing Panel should be chaired by an Independent Member determined by the Independent Members of the Committee.

**S.549 URGENT BUSINESS**

**Date for Special Meeting**

It was reported that a Special Meeting of the Committee would have to take place prior to the next Council meeting in order to consider further recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

**Delegated decision:**

That a meeting of this Committee take place on 22 October 2003 at 7.00 pm.

**J SMITH**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.30 pm)**