

REPORT OF CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Special Meeting held 30 October 2000)

1. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME (MINUTE NO. 37) (AGENDA REPORT A).

The Committee has considered a comprehensive report on recommendations for amendments to the Scheme of Members' Allowances, tailored to the Leader/Cabinet political structure being introduced by the Council on a pilot basis on 31 October 2000. Recommendations for revised allowances had been made by an Independent Review Panel, chaired by Dr. Declan Hall of INLOGOV, University of Birmingham, appointed by the Council to review the Scheme of Members' Allowances. The full report of the Panel has been circulated to all members of the Council.

Prior to the meeting of the Committee, Dr Hall presented the Panel's findings and recommendations to a meeting to which all members of the Council had been invited. All members had an opportunity of questioning Dr. Hall on the Panel's findings and recommendations.

Following a thorough discussion of the issues,

RECOMMENDED:

That the adoption of a Members Allowances Scheme be deferred for further discussion between the Political Group Leaders.

2. LAND AT ASHLEY HEATH, RINGWOOD (MINUTE NO. 38) (AGENDA REPORT B).

The Committee has given further consideration to the conditions to be attached to the sale of land at Ashley Heath, Ringwood, to the Ringwood Town Council. This further consideration has been given in the light of an expectation from the St Leonards and St Ives Parish Council that it will receive two-fifths of the sale price of the land if the Ringwood Town Council ever disposes of the land.

The land in question is owned by New Forest District Council, but is situated in East Dorset District Council's area, in St. Leonards and St Ives Parish. An informal tender process had taken place and the Committee on 14 March had agreed to dispose of the land, subject to conditions, on terms no less favourable than the highest bid submitted as part of the informal tender process.

The Committee subsequently, on 13 June 2000, agreed to dispose of the land to the Ringwood Town Council for a nominal sum. The Town Council has given an undertaking that the land will be maintained as open space for use by the public. The conditions attaching to the sale were –

- (a) The Town Council meeting the District Council's legal costs; and
- (b) The transfer being subject to a 90% clawback should the land subsequently be sold by the Town Council.

There was no mention of the payment of a portion of any future sale proceeds to the Parish Council, and the Parish Council do not have a legal entitlement to a proportion of the sale proceeds.

The St Leonards and St Ives Parish Council has now made representations to be paid two-fifths of any future sale proceeds of the land, should the Town Council ever sell the land.

The Committee has recognised that, however unlikely such a sale might be, the future sale price of the land in decades to come for development purposes could result in a significant sale price. With this in mind the Committee has decided that no part of the sale proceeds be payable to the Parish Council if the Ringwood Town Council sells the land at Ashley Heath.

3. CAR FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL (MINUTE NO. 39) (AGENDA REPORT C).

The Committee reports having considered a recommendation that provision be made in the expenditure plans for the lease purchase of a car for use by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Council in undertaking their formal duties. Nearly all local authorities in the region have an official car for their Chairman or Mayor. It is understood that this District is one of only two in Hampshire not to provide an official vehicle for the Chairman.

Some members felt that provision of a vehicle was not essential, and would represent unnecessary expenditure at a time when financial prudence was required. Other members considered that it would be in keeping with the Chairman's status if a car were provided on appropriate occasions, and that security factors were also a consideration.

The principle of providing a car and chauffeur for use by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for appropriate official duties was approved, and Officers were requested to investigate ways of providing this facility in the most cost effective way.

4. LOCAL INFORMATION OFFICE AT FORDINGBRIDGE (MINUTE NO. 41) (AGENDA REPORT D)

The Committee has considered a confidential report recommending that the Council's local information office at Fordingbridge move to alternative, more suitable premises in the town centre.

The Council's existing premises at the School House in Provost Street are not ideally located from the point of view of service to the public. The Committee therefore wishes to acquire alternative accommodation in a more suitable location. The following additional costs will be involved -

2000/01

Supplementary Capital Estimate

£15,000 for lease assignment

£8,000 fitting out costs

Revenue Estimates

£7,730 additional running costs

2001/02 onwards

Expenditure Plans

Amount for inclusion in 2001/02 and 2002/03 onwards Revenue Expenditure Plans to be calculated by Officers in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

The Policy & Resources Committee has been requested to agree the supplementary capital and revenue estimates. That Committee is reporting separately to the Council.

**Councillor P C Greenfield
CHAIRMAN**