

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Councillors Commission** held virtually on Teams on Thursday, 7 April 2022 at 5.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor R Blaney (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs R Crowe, Councillor Mrs L Dales, Councillor P Harris,
Councillor L Hurst and Councillor J Kellas

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor P Peacock

58 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2022

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

60 REPORT OF THE MEMBERS INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL/TRAVEL EXPENSES

The Councillors Commission considered the final report of the Members Independent Remuneration Panel, and also considered if there were any further circumstances in which Members can claim travel expenses in light of the pending new governance arrangements.

Given the concerns raised by the Commission at their last meeting about various anomalies and inconsistencies in their report, the Independent Remuneration Panel had reconsidered the content of their report which was now presented to the Commission for further consideration.

The Chief Executive reported that the Panel had reacted positively to the points which had been put back to them, and the Commission felt that this should now be recommended to the Full Council for approval. The Commission noted that there was no reference to the £8 subsistence allowance currently payable to Members of the Planning Committee in the final report, and that continuation of this allowance should be recommended to Full Council.

The Commission also considered the allowance for childcare and dependent carers which was up to £10 per hour to cover any costs incurred. The Commission discussed, if in practice, whether full reimbursement should be made upon the production of valid receipts.

In respect of travel expenses, the Commission considered whether it was appropriate to pay travel expenses for Members travelling to Castle House for various reasons such as to see ICT; attending training and meeting with officers etc. It was considered that such activities and attendance on 'Council business', should be defined as an approved duty for the purposes of claiming travel expenses. However, there was to be

a presumption that one to one meetings with officers were to be held in a remote manner and that Members may need to be able to justify their claim for such attendances what should amount to 'Council business', for which expenses should be payable under the definition of 'approved duty'. Examples discussed included having to resolve a problem with an IT device, attending training and other appropriate meetings. Members were in agreement that where appropriate meetings are held in a remote manner to minimise travel to Castle House, and claims for expenses.

AGREED (with 5 votes for and 1 against) that:

- (a) the revised final report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, be recommended to the Full Council on 17 May 2022 for approval; and
- (b) Full Council be recommended to retain the existing allowance of £8 payable to all Members of the Planning Committee for attending site visits.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

the Full Council be recommended to define attending Castle House on Council business, as an approved duty for the purposes of Members travel expenses, subject to the proviso that Members should be able to justify their attendance, and as far as possible, all one to one meetings with officers are held in a remote manner.

61 PROPOSALS FOR NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS – PLANNING MATTERS

The Assistant Director – Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, and the Business Manager – Planning Development presented a report which sought Members' endorsement of the Officer Scheme of Delegation in relation to Planning Development, the Protocol for Members dealing with Planning Matters, and Development Consultation Forum arrangements which would be the responsibility of Planning Committee when the Council adopts the revised governance arrangements in May 2022.

The report highlighted that at its last meeting on 23 February 2022 the Councillors Commission had been presented with draft terms of reference for Planning Committee from May 2022 as part of the report on proposed new governance arrangements.

Appendices to the report were the draft Scheme of Delegation, a Protocol for Members on dealing with Planning Matters and a Development Consultation Forum, noting that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Planning Committee had expressed support for adoption of these arrangements.

The Commission discussed the appendices and welcomed the proposals for the Consultation Forum. Specific comments on the documents would be incorporated into the final versions prior to presentation to the Planning Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) to endorse the draft documents as attached to the report (subject to the specific amendments as agreed by the Commission), which

were to be presented in final form to Planning Committee for adoption at its first meeting after the Council's governance arrangements are adopted by Full Council on 17 May 2022.

62 PUBLICATION OF THE GOVERNMENTS RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE OF STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS

The Assistant Director – Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer provided a report to update the Councillors' Commission on the Government response to the Committee of Standards in Public Life (CPSL) review of local government ethical standards.

The report advised that the Government had issued its response to the CPSL's review on 18 March 2022 and a copy was provided to the Commission as an appendix to the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

Meeting closed at 6.30 pm.

Chairman