
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 JULY 2000

1 MINUTE 232(5) – RELATING TO STRUCTURAL AND PROCEDURAL REVIEW WORKING GROUP MINUTE 55 – THE MODERNISING AGENDA – AN UPDATE ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

During debate on Working Group recommendations, some Members expressed concern that the public were being steered towards particular models rather than being provided with an opportunity to comment on other democratic possibilities. Other Members referred to the background to the current position which meant the Council was required by statute to give consideration to three specific models and to the value of momentum.

Responding to Member questions, Officers advised on the limited timescale available for undertaking the required consultation and confirmed that the external Auditors would be monitoring the Council's progress via the Management Letter.

A Motion was moved by Councillor D F Flack and seconded by Councillor D A Weir that, in consulting the public, the Council's documentation should indicate that, of the three models available one was least unacceptable but the Council still preferred a proper democratic model for Rochford. The Motion was lost on a show of hands and it was:-

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Leader with Cabinet option be adopted as the Council's preferred option of the three model structures, with appointment to the Cabinet to be agreed by Full Council.
- (2) That a suggested organisational structure, excluding a partnership Committee, be as shown at the Appendix to the Minutes.
- (3) That public consultation on the three options be undertaken by means of "Rochford District Matters".
- (4) That the Chief Executive be delegated authority to establish an independent panel to review Members remuneration once further guidance is available. (CE)

NOTE: Councillor D F Flack wished it to be recorded that he had voted against the above decision.

The Appendix referred to under recommendation (2) above is attached to this report.

2 MINUTE 233 – ELECTORAL REVIEW WORKING GROUP

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Administrative and Member Services on the outcome of the Working Group's review of Local Government Commission Draft Recommendations.

During debate it was noted that Rayleigh Town Council would be communicating with the Commission on the basis that the original options contained in the District Council's original submission to the Commission should be maintained. A number of Members referred to their desire to see the Commission change its draft recommendation for Deepdene Avenue so that the whole of that road might be represented within a single District Council Ward.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the following form the basis of the Council's response to the Local Government Commissions' draft recommendations for the future electoral arrangements in Rochford: -
 - (a) That this Council concurs with the recommendation that Rochford District Council should be represented by 40 Councillors in 20 Wards and that elections should take place by thirds.
 - (b) That whilst this Council is broadly happy with the boundaries which have been set for the Rayleigh wards, with the exception of the area surrounding Deepdene Avenue, it is extremely concerned that in other areas the recommendations have been based on a desire to achieve electoral quality alone and unlike the District Council's proposals had not given adequate account to the other statutory criteria of community identity, and effective and convenient local government.
 - (c) That it be re-iterated to the Commission that the consequential changes in the Parish Council election arrangements should not take effect until the date of the first next ordinary date of election after 2002. (HAMS)

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- (2) That a letter be sent to the Chairman and Clerk of every Parish/Town Council offering to give assistance in drafting a letter of response to the Local Government Commission. (HAMS)
 - (3) That the local press be invited to give publicity to the Local Government' Commissions recommendations. (HCPI)

Andrew Smith

Head of Administrative & Member Services

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