

## London Borough of Sutton

## THE EXECUTIVE – 16 FEBRUARY 2009

## ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ADVISORY GROUP

*Extract from the Minutes of the meeting held on 3/2/09*

## 14. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

<b>Ward Location:</b> N/A	<b>Executive Councillor:</b> Sean Brennan
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“The Advisory Group considered a report on the changes to the Council’s constitution, following the annual review of the document.

Generally speaking, the changes being recommended were straightforward, but attention was drawn to the changes required to the role of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer, introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Details of these new powers were set out in the Interim Executive Head of Legal & Democratic Services’ (EHLDS) briefing note, elsewhere on the agenda.

The Advisory Group also discussed the role and functions of the Council & Employees’ Joint Committee, the Sutton Joint Health Committee and the Council & Teachers Joint Committee. A Member had suggested that at least 2 of these committees could be merged, on grounds of efficiency, as they did not usually deal with a lot of business.

There was all-Party, strong support for merging the Council & Employees Joint Committee and the Sutton Joint Health & Safety Committee. It was noted that this issue had been raised at the last meeting of the Council & Employees Joint Committee, and the Trades Union representatives had opposed such a merger. Nevertheless, Members felt very strongly that such a merger would be workable and improve efficiency.

Members also questioned the need for a separate Council & Teachers Joint Committee, given the plethora of other forums that teachers had to discuss or raise issues with elected members and staff in the Children, Young People & Learning Services Group. There was strong support for abolishing this Committee. However, it was acknowledged that more background work needed to be done on the implications of this, including looking at how other local authorities managed their staff joint committees, before such a decision could be taken.

**Resolved: (i) That The Executive be recommended to recommend full Council to agree the changes to the Constitution as set out in the report;**

(ii) To agree that the Interim Executive Head of Legal & Democratic Services do some more background work, including consulting the relevant parties, on

- a. Whether it is possible to abolish the Council & Teachers Joint Committee; and
- b. Merging the Council & Employees’ Joint Committee and the Sutton Joint Health and Safety Committee.”

The Executive is **RECOMMENDED** to recommend full Council to agree the changes to the Constitution set out in the report.



**15. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2009**

<b>Ward Location:</b> N/A	<b>Executive Councillor:</b> John Drage
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All councils were required to have a Scheme for the payment of Allowances to Councillors, reviewed every year after taking into account recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel. No changes had been proposed to the scheme last year, when this matter was considered.

Since then, members of local authority Standards Committees had become responsible for carrying out investigations into complaints against councillors. Standards Committees were required by law to have Independent members on them. An Independent Member was required to chair meetings of the Standards Committee and its Sub-Committees.

The Standards Board for England (SBE) had recently suggested that local authorities, if they had not already done so, should consider allowing Independent Members to claim financial loss, travel and subsistence allowances.

Sutton had previously decided not to pay a co-optee’s allowance, but to allow co-opted members, including independent members of the Standards Committee, to claim travel expenses for travel both within and outside the borough. The current Regulations concerning the payment of allowances to Councillors did not mention the payment of a financial loss allowance. Members discussed the options available and the implications of the SBE’s recommendations.

**Resolved: To recommend, unanimously, that the existing Members Allowances Scheme should be confirmed for the 2009/10 municipal year.**

The Executive is **RECOMMENDED** to concur.