



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – TUESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2011

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **General Purposes Committee** held on Tuesday 22 February at Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP

Members Present: Councillors Melvyn Caplan (Chairman), David Boothroyd, Robert Davis, Tony Devenish, Alastair Moss and Tim Mitchell.

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 There were no changes.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 Councillor Ian Adams declared that he was employed by the NHS in London which had properties within the proposed zone to which the byelaw in Item 4 was proposed. Councillor Tony Devenish declared that he lived nearby in a location used by the soup kitchen.

In respect of the Members Allowances item Members noted that they were not, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, deemed to have a prejudicial interest.

3. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010 be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

4. AUTHORITY TO MAKE BYELAWS TO CONSIDER ROUGH SLEEPING AND SOUP RUNS IN THE AREA AROUND WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL PIAZZA (see report of the Director of Housing and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

- 4.1 Rosemary Westbrook, Director of Housing, introduced the report. She circulated a slightly revised plan indicating the increased area to which Officers were seeking the Committee's approval to include as part of the consultation. She outlined the long history of rough sleeping and soup runs associated with the area. The report outlined this and the effects this had on the local community. She confirmed that the Cabinet Member for Society,

Families and Adult Services and the local Ward Councillors had been consulted and supported the approach being recommended.

- 4.2 In response to questions from Members of the Committee, Barry Panto, Legal Adviser, gave details of the enforcement powers available and the scale of fines which could be expected. He added that in discussion with the providers it was hoped that they would refrain from providing the soup runs rather than face prosecution proceedings..
- 4.3 Janet Haddington, Rough Sleeping Project Manager, advised that groups providing soup to rough sleepers had been coming to the area for many years. Some of the users of these services were not rough sleepers but came to the area just to use the service. Some rough sleepers in the area did not actually use the soup run services.
- 4.4 Members commented on the wording of draft byelaw 4 (2) and if it could be used to enforce against charitable groups. Barry Panto undertook to consider this and report back as part of the next part of the process. He also advised that the draft byelaws would require support by the DCLG and also commented that currently legal services had the necessary resources to defend any challenge that might be made to the Byelaws.
- 4.5 **Resolved:**
- (i) That the Committee authorises the Director of Housing and the Head of Legal Services to carry out the necessary procedures with a view to making new Byelaws for Good Rule and Government to ban rough sleeping and the distribution of free refreshment within a designated area centred on Westminster Cathedral Piazza, as shown on the revised map tabled at the meeting.
 - (ii) That the Committee authorises the Director of Housing to consult with residents, businesses, the police, the Cathedral, local day centres and hostels, third sector organisations and other persons who may have an interest in the Byelaws and thereafter to seek provisional approval from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to the making of those Byelaws.

5. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2011/12 (see report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

- 5.1 Members were advised that the Members Allowances scheme was only able to be agreed on an annual basis.
- 5.2 Councillor David Boothroyd tabled the following amendment:

Line 2, after “2011/12”, insert:

“with the following amendments:

1. The Basic Allowance shall be £8,100 pa.
2. The amount of each Special Responsibility Allowance in Annex A shall be reduced by 10 per cent.
3. No Special Responsibility Allowance shall be payable to Deputy Cabinet Members.

The new scheme is to commence”.

The effect of the amendment is self-explanatory. If the amendment is accepted, the total provision for Members’ Allowances would be reduced by £141,070 to £793,630.

In the absence of a seconder further discussion on the amendment fell.

Resolved: That the Council be recommended to approve the Members’ Allowances Scheme attached to the report for 2011/12 with effect from 1 April 2011.

6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (see report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

6.1 Resolved:

- (i) That the Council be recommended to appoint the Independent Members to the Standards Committee, as follows:
- (ii) Mrs Elizabeth Peace to the Annual Council Meeting in May 2012.
Lord Dennis Stevenson to the Annual Council Meeting in May 2012.

7. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 7.05pm.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____