

CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate Affairs Committee was held on 20 April 2005.

PRESENT: Councillor Clark (Chair), Councillors J A Jones, Mrs H Pearson and Porley.

OFFICIALS: J Bennington, C Davies, R G Long, R Painter, J Pinning and A Weatherson.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

**** MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Affairs Committee held on 26 January 2005 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report regarding proposed election fees to be paid at Council and Parish elections in Middlesbrough.

The Appendix to the report submitted outlined a schedule of proposed fees, the aim of which was to continue the process started in 2003 whereby the fees for local elections were brought more into line with those paid at Parliamentary elections.

The Committee was advised of concerns regarding the trend in recent years of fewer people applying to work on elections which had caused certain problems at the last full Council elections held in May 2003.

ORDERED that the proposed increased election fees as outlined in the report submitted be approved.

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES - LEA SCHOOL GOVERNORS - APPOINTMENTS

The Assistant Head of Planning and Places submitted a report relating to vacancies for LEA appointed School Governors, which had arisen as a result of resignations; the expiry of terms of office; or the removal of School Governors owing to non-attendance, and any vacancies deferred from the previous meetings of the Committee.

Members were required to consider certain Governors whose terms of office were to expire on 28 May and 23 June 2005.

It was noted that there were currently 11 vacancies out of a total of 142 Governorships for LEA representatives, which equated to 4.9%

In view of the forthcoming changes to Governing Body constitutional arrangements whereby the number of LEA Governors on each Governing Body was likely to reduce it was suggested that consideration be given to ensuring that there was adequate LEA representation on all Governing Bodies.

ORDERED as follows:

1. That the following appointments be approved for a four-year term of office: -

School	Governors
Beechwood Primary	Mrs T Higgins
Breckon Hill Primary	Mrs J Hughes, Miss B M Suarez
North Ormesby Primary	Mrs J Hughes

2. That the following be re-appointed for a four-year term of office:

School	Governor
Archibald Primary	Reverend G Holland (w.e.f. 12.4.05)
Berwick Hills Primary	Mrs S Holland (w.e.f. 28.5.05)
Chandlers Ridge Primary	Councillor P Sanderson (w.e.f. 28.5.05), Mr C Morrish (w.e.f. 12.4.05)
Pennyman Primary	Mr A Illingworth (23.6.05)
Sacred Heart R C Primary	Councillor Mrs J Taylor (w.e.f. 23.6.05)
St. Edward's R C Primary	Councillor Wilson (w.e.f. 23.6.05)
Sunnyside Primary	Mrs B Illingworth (w.e.f. 23.6.05)
King's Manor Secondary	Mr G Jarrett (w.e.f. 28.5.05).

3. That appointments to the following vacancies be deferred pending the receipt of nominations in respect of:

Kader Primary	one vacancy
St Gerard's R C Primary	two vacancies
Newham Bridge Primary	one vacancy
Pennyman Primary	one vacancy

4. That the vacancies in respect of Viewley Hill Primary School and Hall Garth Secondary School Governing Bodies be not pursued until the outcome of the reconstitution is known.
5. That further consideration be given to ways of encouraging applications for appointment on LEA School Governors in respect of St. Gerard's R C Primary School.

PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY - ELECTED MEMBERS

The Members' Office Manager submitted a report which outlined suggested procedures and remedies where the safety of Councillors was at risk to ensure that perceived or actual threats, and lack of support did not undermine the ability or willingness of potential and existing Councillors to stand for office and undertake their duties as elected members of the community.

The Committee was advised that the Council had a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to provide for the safety of its employees and certain other people. One such element was that the Council must, so far as was reasonably practicable, protect the 'health, safety and welfare' of its employees; must carry out risk assessments where necessary; and make arrangements for implementing the health and safety measures identified; appoint competent people to implement the arrangements; and provide clear information and training to employees.

Whilst elected members were not employees as such, it was considered that the Council clearly had a duty toward Members who might face risks as a result of their duties as Councillors.

It was proposed that whenever a Member identified that he or she was at risk as a result of undertaking their duties as a Councillor, then there should be an objective assessment of the level of risk in order to identify appropriate levels of actions and support having considered the nature and level of the risk. It was intended that such actions should be undertaken in accordance with the proposed Policy Statement as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report submitted.

In addition to responses to individual situations reported by Members it was proposed that more general information and briefings be made available in the Members' Handbook and be means of training sessions in the Member Development Programme.

It was suggested that all incidents should be reported to the Members' Office and the appropriate levels of reporting should be as outlined in Table 1 of the Policy Statement (Appendix 1).

Where an incident had occurred that posed a threat to personal safety, the risk assessment would be offered by the Council's Risk Management Officer which would identify what action (s), if any, were necessary and appropriate. It was pointed out that in some circumstances, it might be appropriate to provide financial support to Members where the level and nature of the risk required such action. In such cases, it was confirmed that the financial support would be made available from the Members' Budget.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the policy statement regarding the personal safety for elected Members as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report submitted be approved.
2. That risk awareness sessions are built into the Member Development programme.
3. That a section on risk and personal safety guidance for Members is incorporated within the Members Handbook.
4. That the Members' Office establishes procedures for recording incidents that are reported.
5. That following a report of an incident, an objective appraisal is undertaken by the Council's Risk Management Officer to assess the threat to personal safety.
6. That appropriate advice and assistance, including financial assistance where necessary, is offered as identified by the risk assessment.