

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES**

### **POLICY AND SERVICES – 12 JUNE 2001**

#### **76      DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT POLICY GUIDELINES (HOUSING BENEFIT "TOP UPS")**

The Director of Finance and Central Support reported that under new legislation, the Appeals Service, an Executive Agency of the Department of Social Security, would conduct appeals in respect of payments for housing benefit and Council Tax benefit. However, the Appeals Tribunals would not be able to consider issues that were subject to financial constraints and it was proposed that the Council appoint a new Board to consider awards under the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001. Policy Guidelines on the new procedures were submitted for Members consideration.

The Cabinet recommendation was approved and it was:-

RESOLVED: (a) That the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy Guidelines be adopted.

(b) That the Director of Finance and Central Support be granted delegated authority to operate the Policy Guidelines.

(c) That the actions taken to end the current discretionary housing benefit awards on 1 July 2001 be noted.

(d) TO RECOMMEND: (i) That the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Review Boards be abolished and a new Discretionary Housing Payments Board be appointed to hear the final appeals from 2 July 2001.

(ii) Standing Orders be amended accordingly.

(iii) That a training programme be implemented for those Members appointed to the new Discretionary Housing Payments Board.

### **STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 23 APRIL 2001**

#### **863      SECTION 55 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – PARISH COUNCILS**

The Head of Legal Services reminded the Committee that, under Section 55 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Standards Committee must discharge the same functions in relation to Parish Councils and their members as it discharges in relation to the District Council. Section 55 functions could either be discharged by the full Committee or by a Sub-Committee and at least one parish representative had to be

appointed to the Standards Committee. A parish representative must be present at a meeting of the Standards Committee and any Sub-Committee when Section 55 functions were being discharged and it was proposed by Regulations to provide that a parish representative could not be both a member of a Parish and District Council.

The Head of Legal Services had duly consulted all of the Parish and Town Councils regarding these matters and a schedule was submitted summarising the responses received together with six further responses which had been received, since the publication of the Agenda.

RESOLVED: (a) That Section 55 functions be discharged by the Standards Committee.

(b) TO RECOMMEND: (A) That the Standards Committee comprise the following membership:-

(i) Five District Councillors.

(ii) Two independent Members.

(iii) Two Parish representatives made up of:-

One Parish Council representative (with one named substitute)

One Town Council representative (with one named substitute).

(B) That the term of appointment for the parish representatives be two years.

(c) That the Head of Legal Services be requested to write to all Parish and Town Councils seeking nominations for representatives and substitutes and report on responses received to a future meeting of the Committee.