

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Committee:** Parish Remuneration Panel                      **Date:** Monday, 11 February 2008

**Place:** Group Room, Room 1.19, First Floor, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping                      **Time:** 8.15 - 8.30 pm

**Members Present:** D Jackman and S A Lye

**Other Councillors:**

**Apologies:**

**Officers Present:** G Lunnun (Democratic Services Manager) and I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive)

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### **1. CHAIRMAN**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That S Lye be elected Chairman of the meeting.

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

D Jackman reported a personal interest in agenda items 4 (Review of Current Parish Remuneration Schemes) and 5 (Parish and Town Council Proposals) by virtue of his mother being a member of the Ongar Town Council. He determined that his interest was prejudicial and that he would not take part in any discussion or decision in relation to the Ongar Town Council Scheme.

#### **RESOLVED:**

(1) That, as the Panel would not be quorate for consideration of the proposals of Ongar Town Council, the Assistant to the Chief Executive be authorised to advise that Council on the basis of the Panel's current policy on Parish Basic Allowance; and

(2) That the Assistant to the Chief Executive consult with the Chairman of this meeting on the written advice to be given to the Ongar Town Council.

### **3. REVIEW OF CURRENT PARISH REMUNERATION SCHEMES**

The Panel reviewed the advice which it had given to Parish and Town Councils in 2004. At that time Parish and Town Councils had been advised that the percentage of the District Council's precept allocated to Member Remuneration should be applied at a maximum for spending on their schemes and that no individual payment should exceed the rate for a District Councillor. In 2003/04 the percentage advised had been 4.68% but this had subsequently been found to be incorrect with the true figure being 2.04%. However, none of the Parish or Town Councils was spending at or near that level. The relevant percentage for 2007/08 was 3.09%.

In relation to Parish Travelling and Subsistence Allowance, local councils had been advised to set the District Council's rates as the maximum level for their schemes. Some Parish Councils had stated that they had been following the guidance issued by the Essex Association of Local Councils but, these rates were the same as those applied by the District Council.

Parish and Town Councils had previously been advised that schemes should run for four years before further review unless significant changes were sought in the meantime.

Attention was drawn to the Panel's previous discussions about the Civic Allowances paid to the Chairman of Waltham Abbey Town Council. This has been deemed to be a payment of Parish Basic Allowance but the Hospitality Allowance had been deemed to be outside of the scope of the Remuneration Scheme. The same issue regarding Civic Hospitality had arisen with Epping Town and Buckhurst Hill Parish Councils where Local Government Act 1972 Act powers had been quoted for the Civic Hospitality payments.

**RESOLVED:**

That no change be made to the policy on (a) the maximum level for Parish Basic Allowance; and (b) Travel and Subsistence.

**4. PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL PROPOSALS**

The Assistant to the Chief Executive reported that only three Town and Parish Councils had submitted proposals in response to his invitation to all local councils to submit proposals for changes to their schemes.

The Panel noted that the Epping Town Council Scheme currently provided for the payment of travel and subsistence outside of the Parish only as a representative of the Council. The Town Council now wished to amend its scheme to reimburse for journeys inside the Parish. Also the Town Council's current scheme provided for travel and subsistence at Town Council meetings (including Committees or Working Groups) if agreed by resolution of the Council according to the personal circumstances of the councillor concerned. The Town Council now proposed to change this provision by discontinuing the requirement for specific resolution with all attendances qualifying.

Members were informed that the Loughton Town Council proposed to increase its basic allowance from £100.00 per annum per member to £104.00 per annum per member.

The Assistant to the Chief Executive advised that the Ongar Town Council proposed to introduce a Parish Basic Allowance for all Councillors at a rate of £300.00 per member per annum.

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That the proposals from Epping, Loughton and Ongar Town Councils be agreed;

(2) That in accordance with minute 3 above, the Assistant to the Chief Executive consult with the Chairman of this meeting and give advice to Ongar Town Council about its proposals; and

- (3) That the Assistant to the Chief Executive be authorised to compile and issue a report on the Parish Councils' proposals including the approvals and guidance agreed at this meeting.

**CHAIRMAN**