

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Place: Group Room, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 5.00 - 8.15 pm

Members Present: D Jackman and S A Lye

Other Councillors:

Apologies:

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

1. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That S Lye be elected Chairman for the meeting.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel noted that at its meeting on 12 November 2007, the Cabinet had requested the Panel to undertake a comprehensive review of the current Members' Remuneration Scheme and to make recommendations for changes to be implemented at the commencement of the 2008-09 municipal year.

3. INFORMAL MEETINGS

The Panel considered the notes of informal meetings of Panel Members, Group Leaders and Officers on 19 December 2007. Members were advised that since that time Councillor Mrs D Collins had advised that she was no longer in favour of withholding an element of the basic allowance if a percentage attendance had not been achieved in relation to meetings/training.

Members also took account of the issues raised at another informal meeting held with Councillor Mrs A Cooper on 7 February 2008.

The Panel noted that the Chief Executive had advised that he had no particular issues to raise but was happy to attend a meeting of the Panel if it was considered it would be beneficial.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the views expressed by Councillors Mrs D Collins, P House, J M Whitehouse and Mrs A Cooper be taken into account in reviewing the Council's Remuneration Scheme; and

- (2) That the Chief Executive be invited to a future meeting if issues arise on which it is considered his views would be helpful.

4. MEMBER REMUNERATION SCHEME 2008/09 - REVIEW

The Panel considered a report:

- (a) summarising the Government's guidance on local authority allowances;
- (b) setting out the Council's existing Remuneration Scheme and details of its implementation;
- (c) summarising a survey undertaken by the Local Government Analysis and Research on behalf of the Local Government Association in relation to allowances; and
- (d) summarising recommendations of "Representing the Future" - The Councillor's Commission in relation to incentives and barriers to becoming a member of a local authority.

The Panel discussed the additional £30,000 which had been put in the Council's draft budget for 2008/09 for members' allowances and decided that they could not be bound by financial restraints in formulating their proposals. The Panel concluded that their role was to recommend levels of remuneration and that it was for the Council to decide how to utilise its available budget having regard to those recommendations.

The Panel discussed the existing allowances and options for changes.

RESOLVED:

Basic Allowance

- (1) That the Basic Allowance be increased to £4,300 per member per annum;
- (2) That the supplement to the Basic Allowance of £500 per member per annum in respect of Member Connectivity be amended to accord with the decision made by the Council to reduce that amount to £500 for the first year in office and £250 for all subsequent years;
- (3) That, subject to the views of the Director of Finance, the officers be requested to work up proposals providing for the quarterly payments of Basic Allowance currently paid at a rate of 25% per quarter to be paid instead at the rate of 20% for the first, second and third quarters and 40% for the last quarter with the final payment being withheld if a member has not achieved at least a 60% attendance record at appropriate meetings/training sessions as at the end of February each year;

Leader of the Council

- (4) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Council be £10,750 per annum;

Deputy Leader of the Council

(5) That no provision be made for a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council;

Cabinet Members

(6) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for Cabinet members be £6,450 per annum per Portfolio Holder;

(7) That when the Remuneration Scheme is next reviewed by the Panel, consideration be given to recommending different tiers of Portfolio Holder Special Responsibility Allowances having regard to workload and responsibilities;

Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panels - Chairmen

(8) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be £4,300 per annum;

(9) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for each Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Standing Panels be £2,150 per annum;

(10) That no provision be made for Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panels;

Chairmen of Area Plans Sub-Committees

(11) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for each Chairman of an Area Plans Sub-Committee be £3,225 per annum, subject to being re-assessed at the next meeting of the Panel by which time the Council will have decided whether to introduce a three week cycle for meetings of Area Plans Sub-Committees or to continue with the current four week cycle;

Chairman of District Development Control Committee

(12) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the District Development Control Committee be £3,225 per annum;

Licensing Committee and Sub-Committees - Chairmen

(13) That no provision be made for a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Licensing Committee as it is not considered a Committee meeting only twice a year justifies an allowance;

(14) That no provision be made for Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairmen of Licensing Sub-Committees as it is not possible to identify which members should receive this allowance as Chairmen are not known in advance of meetings;

(15) That the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances for Chairmen of Licensing Sub-Committees be reviewed if the Council changes the arrangements for the election of Chairmen by electing an appropriate number of named Councillors at its Annual Meeting;

Group Leaders

(16) That no provision be made for Special Responsibility Allowances for Group Leaders but that payment of these allowances be reviewed in the future if and when the Council becomes balanced again;

Other Committees/Panels

(17) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee be £2,150 per annum;

(18) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for each Chairman of the Complaints Panel, the Staff Appeals Panel and the Housing Appeals and Review Panel be £1,075 per annum;

(19) That no provision be made for a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Joint Consultative Committee;

Co-optee Allowances

(20) That the officers research the background to determining the current level of Co-optee Allowances and that further consideration be given to the level of these allowances at the next meeting;

Travelling Allowance

(21) That the rates of Travel Allowance continue to be the same as the higher rates paid to officers classed as casual users and that these rates continue to be adjusted annually in accordance with the national review undertaken by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services;

(22) That the Bicycle Allowance be set at the highest casual rate paid to officers classed as casual users and that this rate be adjusted annually in accordance with the review undertaken by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services;

(23) That the definition of "approved duties" in the Scheme be amended to include payment for attendance at the following:

"a meeting of the Authority, the Cabinet, a Cabinet Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Panels, the Standards Committee and its Sub-Committees, or as a member of any other Committee or Sub-Committee, Panel, Working Group, Special Committee or Board of the Authority;

(24) That the definition of approved duties be further amended to:

(a) reflect the up-to-date list of conferences attended by members;

(b) acknowledge attendance at seminars and training sessions arranged by the Council;

(c) acknowledge attendance at consultation meetings arranged by the Council where the member's attendance is required or where business directly affects the member's ward;

(d) acknowledges attendance at site visits arranged by Area Plans Sub-Committees or the District Development Control Committee;

(e) acknowledge attendance at informal ("lone") site visits by members of Area Plans Sub-Committees;

(25) That the officers revise Schedule 2 of the Remuneration Scheme and the Guidance Note on Allowances and submit the revised documents to a future meeting of the Panel;

Subsistence Allowance

(26) That Subsistence Allowances be paid at the same rates as those paid to officers and be revised annually in accordance with the review undertaken by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services;

Carer's Allowance

(27) That a Child Care/Dependant Carer's Allowance be paid at a rate equivalent to the current Adult National Minimum Wage with all the existing conditions in relation to payments being continued;

Member Roles, Member Development and Performance Management

(28) That the Member Role Accountability Statements be reviewed in due course to reflect the changing role of members, the increased expectations of the public and of bodies such as the Audit Commission;

"Representing the Future" - The Councillors Commission

(29) That any recommendations of the Commission adopted by the Government be considered when the Scheme is next reviewed.

5. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - ALLOWANCES

The Assistant to the Chief Executive advised that for completeness he would be preparing an addendum to the Panel's report proposing the payment of allowances to members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

6. TIMETABLE

The Panel noted that in order for the Council to implement revisions to the current Scheme at the commencement of the 2008-09 municipal year, it would be necessary for the Panel to report to the Council meeting on 22 April 2008.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel complete its considerations by 28 March 2008 leaving the period from that date until 10 April 2008 (the agenda dispatch date for the Council meeting) to finalise its report.

7. VACANCY

The Assistant to the Chief Executive reported on further steps which would be taken in an attempt to fill the vacancy on the Panel including approaches to the Local Government Association, the IDeA, the Local Government Information Unit,

neighbouring authorities, local businessmen and the Essex Branch of the Association of Local Councils.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That a further meeting be held when officers have prepared a draft report of the Panel.

CHAIRMAN