

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

2 July 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Mrs Erskine (Chairman), Mrs Haywood (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Bicknell, Brooks, Clayden, Dendle and Tilbrook

Councillors Bower and Oliver-Redgate were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

[Note: The following Councillor was absent from the meeting during the following items of business – Councillor Bicknell Minute 51 to Minute 53 (Part).]

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Madeley who is being substituted by Councillor Chapman and Councillor Mrs Thurston.

65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In view of the nature of the issues to be discussed in respect of Agenda Item 6 (The Independent Remuneration Panel's Eighth Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme) it was recognised that all Members of the Committee had a personal interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct. This did not preclude them from considering the proposals.

66. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2019 were approved by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

67. START TIMES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That its start times for meetings during 2019/2020 be 6.00 pm.

68. THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANELS EIGHTH REVIEW OF THE MEMBER'S ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Chairman welcomed the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to the meeting and invited the Chairman of the Panel, John Thompson, to present the Panel's Eighth Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

The Committee Services Manager provided an introduction to her covering report, explaining that the IRP review was originally brought before the Committee at its meeting held on 14 February 19. However, at that meeting the Panel was asked to complete further work on recommendations 8 9 & 20. The covering report highlighted

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the concerns raised at that meeting and provided an overview of the associated financial implications.

Mr Thompson highlighted the main points of change since the 14 February 2019 and that the review had been updated following the District Council Elections.

The main points highlighted were;

- The report was evidenced based following interviews with Councillors, direct comparisons with other Local Authorities (LA's) and comparative data provided by South East Employers.
- Recommendations were broadly cost neutral.
- The annual increase in Basic Allowance had been linked to Officer's pay increases
- The proposal to remove the I.T Allowance in view of the introduction of ModernGov and the supply of iPads to Members.
- The Panel believed the Leader's SRA needed to be set at a level that would attract good candidates to apply for consideration in the future, regardless of any private income
- All SRA's had been calculated based on the post and not the person and the Committee was reminded that they could renounce all or part of any allowance.

The Chairman proposed to take each recommendation in turn to allow full debate. This approach was agreed by the Committee.

Recommendation (1) – The Basic Allowance remain unchanged at £5,481 per year taking into account the April 2019 increase:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee.

Recommendation (2) – The Basic Allowance continues to be increased inline with Officer's pay increases:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee.

Recommendation (3) – The Special Responsibility Allowance Payable to the Leader of the Council be increased by £1,804 from £14,196 to £16,122 and there is no change in the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Deputy Leader of the Council at £10,400:

The Committee considered this recommendation in two parts, firstly in respect of the SRA to be paid to the Leader of the Council and the Panels proposals to increase this by £1,804 from £14,196 to £16,122 views were presented for and against this proposal. Some members of the Committee argued that it was not an appropriate time to be considering any increases to

allowances others spoke in support of the increase in view of the full-time nature of the Leader of the Council's role.

Having taken a vote on the recommendation the Panels proposal to increase the SRA for the Leader of the Council was rejected and so the SRA to be paid to the Leader of the Council would remain at £14,196.

Turning the SRA to be paid to the Deputy Leader of the Council the Committee were in agreement that the Panel's recommendation was justified in remaining at £10,400.

Recommendation (4) – The Special Responsibility Allowance payable to Cabinet Members (Portfolio Holders) remain unchanged at £8,320:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee.

Recommendation (5) – The Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chairman of the Council and the Vice Chairman of the Council remain unchanged at £8,320 and £2,745 respectively:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee.

Recommendation (6) – The Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chairman of Development Control Committee be increased by £1,500 from £6,000 to £7,500; that of the Vice Chairman be increased by £520 from £1,980 to £2,500 and there be no change to the Special Responsibility Allowance £750 payable to Members of Development Control:

The Committee considered this recommendation in two parts, firstly in respect of the Panels proposal to increase the SRA's to be paid to the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Members were quickly in agreement to reject this part of the recommendation. It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman for the Development Control Committee's SRA's would remain at £6,000 and £1,980.

Turning to the SRA of £750 to be paid to Members of Development Control, the Committee were in agreement that based on the workload of this Committee that the Panel's recommendation was justified in remaining at £750.

Recommendation (7) – A Special Responsibility Allowance of £300 a year be payable to Members who are Named Substitutes for Members of the Development Control Committee:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (8) – The Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Licensing and Enforcement Committee be decreased by £2,500 from £4,000 to £1,500 and by £600 from £1,200 to £600 respectively:

Initial views put forward by the Committee was that this recommendation could not be accepted, and the Panel were questioned on the evidence that sat behind its recommendation. It was felt that in view of the complexity of some meetings/decisions and the level of training required for this role the existing SRA was seen to be adequate, An alternative proposal was put forward to the Committee that the level of SRA for the Chairman be reduced by £1,500 to £2,500 however this was not seconded. Following further discussion, the recommendation from the Panel was accepted by the Committee.

Recommendation (9) – The Special Responsibility Allowance payable to Members of the Licensing and Enforcement Committee be abolished:

It was felt that it was relevant for Members of the Licensing Committee to receive an SRA as it was felt their work, especially when sitting on Sub-Committees was over and above what fell within the basic allowance remit and therefore the recommendation to abolish this allowance was rejected. As no alternative proposal was put forward, it was agreed that the level of SRA for being a Member of the Licensing Committee remain at £250 per annum.

Recommendation (10) – The Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Overview Select Committee remain unchanged at £4,870 and £1,607 respectively:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (11) – The allowance for Co-Opted Witnesses, etc. be increased from £50 to £60 per meeting (up to half a day's duration) they are required to attend:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (12) – The Special Responsibility Allowances payable to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee remain unchanged at £3,750 and £1,238:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (13) – The Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chairman of Standards Committee be reduced by £500 from £1,500 to £1,000. Payments to Members sitting on Assessment Panels be increased from £50 to £60 per half day meeting:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (14) – The meeting allowance paid to Independent Persons on the Standards Committee be replaced with a payment of £1,440 a year shared equally between the Independent Persons:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (15) – The Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Leader of the largest Opposition Group remain unchanged at £3,917:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (16) – The leaders of smaller Minority Groups of three or more Members receive an SRA of £100 per Member:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (17) – The Allowance paid to minority groups be reviewed after each change in composition in the Council:

After discussion the Committee agreed to amend the wording of this recommendation to ensure clarity:

Recommendation (17) – The Allowance paid to Leaders' of smaller minority groups be reviewed after each change in composition in the Council:

Amended recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (18) – The I.T Allowance be discontinued when ModernGov and the I.T Strategy for Members is fully available to all Members:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (19) – The meeting allowance paid to Co-Opted Members and Witnesses to Committee and Panels should be increased from £50 to £60:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation Number 20 - The Carers Allowance of £10 per hour up to a maximum of 20 hours a month be replaced by;

A) a Child Care allowance of £10 an hour, limited to £4,000 a year;

B) a Dependent Adult allowance up to a maximum of the Home Care rate paid by West Sussex County Council, limited to a maximum of £6,000. And that the Head of Paid Service has the discretion to exceed these limits:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

The Chairman suggested to the Committee that recommendations **21** to **24** be consider en bloc. The Committee were in agreement with this approach.

Recommendation (21) - The list of duties specified in the Regulations be added to the Members Allowance Scheme at Part 9 of the Constitution:

Recommendation (22) - Consideration is given as to whether any other duties should be approved for receipt of the Dependent Carer's allowance:

Recommendation (23) - The availability of this Allowance and the procedure for claiming it be more visible:

Recommendation (24) - Councillors will be entitled to request maternity, paternity and adoption arrangements:

Recommendation's (21), (22), (23) and (24) accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (25) - No change in the arrangements that allow Town and Parish Councils to pay up to 10% of the Arun DC Basic Allowance to their Members:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (26) - Special Responsibility One-off payments be increased from £50 to £60 a half day for one-off activities, for example, intensive projects subject to the approval of the Head of Paid Service on the advice of the Group Head of Advice and Monitoring Officer:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (27) - All remunerations received by Members, Co-Opted Members, Independent Persons and so on to be linked annually to Officers' pay and allowances with effect from 1 April 2020:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (28) - The arrangements for Travel and Subsistence remain unchanged and the rates and list of approved duties be published in Section 9 of the Arun DC Constitution:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (29) - The arrangements for the payment of more than one SRA remain unchanged:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (30) - If the Chairman of the Council is absent for a continuous period of two months or more their SRA can be paid instead to the Vice-Chairman if they take on the responsibilities during that period of absence.

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (31) - Include in Arun DC's Members' Allowance Scheme provision for the Suspension of Allowances of the Local Authority Members' Allowances (England) Regulations 2003, in that allowances be withheld if a Member is suspended or partially suspended:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (32) - Move the next review to after the municipal elections in 2023 or sooner if there is a change in municipal governance arrangements:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

Recommendation (33) - The new Allowances Scheme is effective from 7th May 2019:

Recommendation accepted by the Committee

The Committee gave their thanks to the Panel for their hard work on this report, in particular for going away and re-looking at the recommendations after the meeting on 14 February 2019. The Panel also extended their thanks to Officers and Members who helped and supported the Panel to ensure that they completed their report within the time constraints requested.

The Committee then

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

That the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on its eighth review of the Member's Allowances Scheme be approved subject to the amendments made at the meeting.

69. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL 2018/19

The Committee received the Chairman's Annual Report to the Council for 2018/19 and having supported its contents,

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

That the Chairman's Annual Report for 2018/19 be approved.

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Councillor Brooks gave his thanks on behalf of the previous Committee Members to Councillor Chapman and Mrs Oakley the previous Chairman and Vice Chairman for their hard work and commitment to the Committee over the last year.

70. ANNUAL UPDATE ON THE USE OF RIPA POWERS

As required by the Council's Constitution, the Committee noted that no activity had been authorised under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2010 in the 2018/19 financial year.

71. FUTURE WORK PLAN 2019/20

The Committee received a draft work plan for 2019/2020 from the Internal Manager which Members were asked to approve.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Committee's future work plan for 2019/2020 be approved.

(The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm)