

DATE: 28 August 2008
MY REF:
YOUR REF:
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To Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Mr J.C. Dodd

Dr B.W. Kiernan

Mr B. North

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL** will be held in the Gloucester Room - Council Offices, Narborough at these offices on **THURSDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2008** at **4.30 p.m.** for the transaction of the following business and your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully

Kris Johnston
Head of Administration and Legal Services

AGENDA

4. Review of Members' Allowances Scheme (Pages 1 - 2)

To consider the report of the Democratic Services Manager (enclosed).



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Agenda Item 4

Cllr. Geoffrey Welsh
Leader of the Opposition
Blaby District Council
Desford Road
Narborough
Leicestershire
LE19 2EP

The Chairman
Independent Remuneration Panel
Blaby District Council

Ref 4/8/08 Panel Meeting

28th August 2008

Dear Sir,

I received from Mr Berry letter on 10th July asking on your behalf if I wished to make any submission to your panel. I declined this invitation as I felt that I had nothing of worth to bring to your attention.

However subsequent to this request I have seen the content of Cllr. Jackson's submission to your panel that specifically deals with my personnel remuneration. In light of this I would ask if you would consider this late submission. Unfortunately I cannot attend your panel meeting as I am out of the country until the 12th September.

Councillor Jackson raises again the issue of whether a member should receive two responsibility allowances and whether my remuneration should exceed that of a cabinet executive member. The members of your panel may remember that this is a well-ploughed furrow.

I feel that Cllr Jackson's logic is seriously flawed. The notation of responsibility allowances to is to reflect the responsibility and therefore work and effort expended by a member. The work of Leader of the Opposition at Blaby is quite separate to that of Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission. In fact it is vital to separate these two functions. The former is to ensure that political opposition is in place to challenge and invigorate the work of the lead group and to ensure that the democratic wishes of the population are carried out. The second function is to ensure that the scrutiny role as defined in the local government act of 2000 is fully delivered. This role is to support the work of the cabinet executive and ensure that Blaby is a high performance council offering best value. The two must be separate and clearly distinct.

The Leader of the Council and his deputy are remunerated at a level higher than that of other cabinet members. They carry out the normal role of a

cabinet member and on top of this carry out a political role in terms of delivering the manifesto of the lead group and managing the political process attached to this. In this case the roles can be combined, as there is no conflict.

The workload attached to my two roles is well known to the panel from previous meetings and discussions and I will not regurgitate again the details.

It may be useful for members of the panel to notice in the tables attached as appendix B in your panels report that in the 'Family Group' table Opposition Leader averages out at £6,082.77 and Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission at £6928.67 jointly a figure of £13011.44 plus an average basic allowance of £5,138.85. An average total of £18,150.29. Well above my own remuneration level of £10,994.64.

It is hard to understand why Cllr. Jackson sees fit not to want to recognise the work involved in my undertaking two tasks especially as he, in his submission, appears to argue that he should receive more for his attendance at outside bodies (Most appointments to these bodies are held by the lead group) and then that the Deputy Leader of the Council receives more pay for his role in political leadership.

I hope these comments are helpful to the panel and that in your deliberations as in previous years reject these arguments that only serve to direct more of the allowances towards the lead group.

Yours sincerely

Cllr. Geoff Welsh
Leader of the Opposition
Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission.