

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2015

Present:-

Dr B.W. Kiernan

Mr B. North

Mr S. Knott

Officers present:-

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| Mr Colin Jones | - Corporate Services Group Manager |
| Mrs Louisa Horton | - Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Governance
Manager |
| Mrs Sandeep Tiensa | - Senior Democratic Services Officer |

Also in attendance:-

Cllr. David Freer, Cllr. Geoff Welsh, Cllr. Deanne Woods

144. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Governance Manager invited nominations for the election of Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

DECISION

That Dr B W Kiernan be elected Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

145. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures were received.

146. COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIONS

The Panel heard verbal representations from Cllr Geoff Welsh and Cllr David Freer.

The Chairman asked all elected Members to leave the room once all representations had been heard to allow the Panel to consider its recommendations.

147. REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Considered – report of the Democratic Services, Scrutiny & Governance Manager.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

Basic Allowance:

1. That no change be made to the Basic Allowance.
2. That the Basic Allowance remain linked to the NJC (National Joint Council) Staff Pay Award.

Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

3. That the SRA for the Leader of the Council (and Cabinet Executive) be increased to £12,294.51
4. That the SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Council (and Cabinet Executive) be increased to £7,991.82
5. That the SRA for Members of the Cabinet (excluding the Leader & Deputy

Leader) be increased to £6,147.45

6. That the SRA for the Leader of the Opposition (Minority) Groups be increased to £3,490.87
7. That the SRA for the Chairman of Scrutiny Commission be increased to £4,654.37
8. That the SRA for Scrutiny Commissioners (excluding the Chairman of Scrutiny Commission) be increased to £3,490.87
9. That no change be made to the Special Responsibility Allowances of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee.
10. That a Special Responsibility Allowance of £1,098 be paid to the Youth Council Champion.
11. That the number of Special Responsibility Allowances claimed by a Member remain unchanged (currently 2).

Planning Committee Allowance

12. That the allowances for Members and Substitute Members of the Planning Committee remain between £20 - £25 (excluding the Chairman and Vice Chairman).

Dependent Carers Allowance

13. That no change be made to the Dependent Carers Allowance.

Travel Allowance

14. That no change be made to the Travel Allowance.

Subsistence Allowance

15. That no change be made to the Subsistence Allowance.

Pension Scheme

16. That all references to the Local Government Pension Scheme be removed from the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Registering under the Data Protection Act 1998

17. That the fee for registering all Members of the Council as Data Controllers under the Data Protection Act be paid by the Council on behalf of all Members and that this be included in the Members' Allowance Scheme.

Reasons:

1. The majority of feedback from Members in the questionnaire was positive about the amount of basic allowance paid and the link to the NJC, it was felt that rises should remain in line with staff pay.
2. The Panel considered the current challenges facing local government and noted the increase in workload in some roles and as such these roles should attract an increase in allowances.
3. The Panel took into consideration evidence of the verbal representations received as well as the written representation from the Conservative Group. The panel also used benchmarking information from other Councils.
4. The Youth Council Champion's role is to support the newly formed Youth Council and attend several meetings with young people interested in local democracy and should attract a Special Responsibility Allowance.
5. The Panel considered the Conservative Group's request to amend the number of SRA's any one Member can claim. It also took into consideration the verbal representation received at the meeting. The Panel felt the current scheme was fair and appropriate.
6. Following a review of the Planning Committee structure, the Panel had recommended allowances for Members and Substitute Members of the Committee in December 2014. Council agreed in February 2015 that Members be paid £20 for each meeting they attend. For this reason the Panel had no further recommendations in respect of the Planning Committee allowances, but were comfortable that the amount be increased to a maximum of £25.00 per meeting.
7. The Panel felt the Dependent Carers Allowance was fit for purpose and in order to enable parents or carers to attend evening meetings, the allowance was essential.
8. After considering the Conservative Group's request to withdraw the travel allowances, the Panel felt that the claim form was not onerous to complete and the processing of claims was minimal work for Officers. The Panel looked in detail at the cost saving and resolved that the allowance allows a choice for Members on whether to submit a claim form or not. The Panel felt that by removing this choice, some Members who regularly attend meetings at the Council would be penalised and the increase in basic allowance would not recompense this loss. In addition, enhancing the basic allowance to cover the travel allowances would not be equitable for all Members due to the difference in distances they travel.
9. Regulations laid by the Government mean that local Councillors are no

longer eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

10. The Data Protection Act 1998 requires every data controller (including elected Members) who may process personal information to register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which requires each Member to pay a £35 fee. The Panel felt that it was appropriate that the Council administer the process and pay the fee on behalf of all Members.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7.00 P.M.