

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

TUESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2025

Present:-

Luke Pulford (Chairman)

Anne Senior

Louise Spiers

Officers present:-

Katie Shevas	- Elections and Governance Manager
Sandeep Tiensa	- Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer

110. TO CONSIDER ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Members considered representations from:

- Cllr. Nigel Grundy (Conservative Group)
- Cllr. Antony Moseley (Liberal Democrat Group)
- Cllr. Nick Brown (Labour Group)
- Cllr. Neil Wright (Conservative Group)
- Cllr. Tony Deakin (Green Group)
- Cllr. Maggie Wright (Independent Member)

The Panel also considered a written representation from Cllr. Roy Denney.

111. **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - SCOPE OF WORK**

Scope of Work for the Panel:

The Panel, in considering the Members' Allowance Scheme, considered the following:

1. At a full Council meeting on Tuesday 30 January 2024, Members considered a report by the IRP. The recommendations as detailed in the report were approved, apart from one recommendation which Council asked the IRP to reconsider.

The following recommendation: *'That Opposition Group Leaders be paid a SRA if Group consists of 5 or more Members. (Note - this will remove the SRA for the Green Group Leader)'* was referred back to the Panel to enable Opposition Group Leaders and other Members to make representations on the proposal.

2. A request had been received for the Panel to reconsider the amount payable to Planning Committee Members, in respect of duties held with attending the Committee (excluding the Chairman and Vice Chairman), currently £20 per meeting.

An invitation was sent to all Councillors inviting them to provide any representations for the Panel to consider. Six verbal representations were provided to the Panel as well as one written representation.

Representations given on Special Responsibility Allowances:

- Consensus that Councillors should be compensated appropriately for the work they do.
- Difficulty finding balance between work/family and Council commitments.
- Employers can allow Councillors to take time off work to attend meetings, however this can be unpaid.

Representations given on Leader of the Opposition (Minority) Group Allowance:

- There was general agreement that the Opposition Leaders allowance be retained.
- It was important that all groups were represented fairly and equally no matter their size.
- The Group Leader is still required to attend briefings with the Chief Executive, consult their group on policies, present and speak at Council and Committee's on Council policies and strategies, attend external events to represent the Council e.g. A Place to Grow, Youth Council, Planning Appeals, etc. The Group Leader needs to be seen and heard and must get involved. They will be penalised if the allowance is removed. The allowance isn't a significant amount, rather an acknowledgement of position and the extra responsibility placed on them.
- When considering the data provided to the Panel, only one other local

authority had removed the allowance from the Opposition Leader.

- There was also a suggestion that a tiered approach be considered dependant on the number of members in the group.

Representations given on Audit and Corporate Governance Chairman:

- That the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chair of Audit and Corporate Governance Committee (ACG) be reviewed as the data presented to the Panel showed that the current allowance was lower when compared to other local authorities.
- The agenda's for ACG Committee were long and contained fairly complex information including financial data. Several briefings were required with the Council's finance officers.
- The ACG Committee Chair is responsible for signing-off the Council's accounts and will be imperative in upcoming local government reorganisation work.

Representations given on Planning Committee Allowance:

- High expectations of Members on this committee:
 - attending annual mandatory training
 - attending additional training in the form of masterclasses
 - the agendas can be quite long and technical and refer to key planning policies which members must be aware of.
- It is a long day for members of the committee; site visit starts after lunch and then rolls into Committee which can last a few hours.
- The committee deals with contentious planning applications, leading to an increase in communication from the public. As it is a public-facing committee – it has the highest number of public attending.
- That Councillors ought to receive food/subsistence as part of their duties.
- There has been no review of the current allowance since it was introduced.
- It is difficult to find Councillors to substitute on this Committee – they must have attended the mandatory training and be available for half a day.
- There should be a level of competency applied when considering who can be appointed to this committee as it requires significant training.

Other comments:

- Member Champions allowances should be reviewed depending on their work. Regular updates should be provided to Council on their work – how is their allowance determined? Does it provide value for money?

The Panel would like to place on record their thanks to the officers and Members who attended the meeting to provide their advice and representations.

The Panel considered the Special Responsibility Allowances and the views of Councillors and determined that changes should be made to the Allowances and the Scheme.

DECISIONS

That the following amendments to the Members' Allowances Scheme be recommended to Council:

Special Responsibility Allowance – Leader of Opposition (Minority) Groups

1. That the previous recommendation from the Panel 'That Opposition Group Leaders be paid a SRA if Group consists of 5 or more Members. (Note - this will remove the SRA for the Green Group Leader)' be withdrawn. The Leader of Opposition (Minority) Group allowance will be paid to all Groups.

Reason:

The Panel were sympathetic to the representations put forward by Members and acknowledged that if the allowance was withdrawn, the Leader of a smaller minority group would still be required to carry out duties similar to other larger Group Leaders.

Special Responsibility Allowance – Chairman of Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

2. That the SRA for the Chairman of Audit and Corporate Governance Committee be increased to £2,500. Reason: The Panel considered the benchmarking data presented to them and the duties placed on the Chairman in the work they undertook. They also took into account the representations made from Members in support of increasing the allowance.

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Allowances for Members and Substitute Members of Planning Committee

3. That the allowance for Members and Substitute Members of Planning Committee be increased to £60 (excluding the Chairman and Vice-Chairman)

Reason:

The Panel recognised the intense duties and pressure placed on Planning Committee Members in attending site visits, understanding complex information, responding to numerous calls/emails from the public

and considered that as no review of the allowance had taken place since its introduction, it was comfortable in increasing it. The Panel also recommends that the allowance be index-linked, allowing gradual increases.

The Panel also took into account representations made by Members that the Committee can be a long day without any subsistence provided and considered that by increasing it to £60, this would allow Committee Members to make provision for food.

National Joint Council Staff Pay Award (NJC)

4. That the allowance for all roles be increased annually from 1st April each year thereafter to the national average pay award in line with the National Joint Council Staff Pay Award. The pay award is subject to formal approval and as such it will be applied retrospectively and back dated once agreed.

Reason:

The Panel, in considering all representations and the benchmarking data felt that linking all the roles to the NJC would be fair and equal in ensuring that all roles would receive an annual increase.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 8.00 P.M.