

Councillor Guy Jackson

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Here are my observations and suggestions for consideration by the Remuneration Panel.

Any system must be equitable and, as far as possible, take in to account the responsibilities, workload and attendance of each Councillor. The current system goes part way towards that ideal but there are a few anomalies. I believe that my suggestions will go some way to correcting this.

a) By allowing a member to claim more than one responsibility allowance, payment is greatly enhanced in two cases which allows them to receive more than a Cabinet member but without a similar responsibility. The Constitution requires that the political leaders of the opposition parties are the Chairman and Vice-chairman of Scrutiny and therefore it is unreasonable to make a political leadership payment as well. Therefore I suggest

1 That no member may claim more than one responsibility allowance.

2 That the political leadership payment be removed from the schedule.

3 That the Chairman of Scrutiny be at an identical level to that of a Cabinet Member.

4 That the Vice-chairman of Scrutiny be at the same level as the Chairman of the Development Control committee.

5 That the third Commissioner be at a reasonable level but below that of the Vice-chairman of Scrutiny.

This would produce a more equitable level of remuneration and, while I see no logic to a political deputy receiving payment, I would not suggest that it be removed.

b) In a couple of instances there are committees that only meet once or twice a year. To pay the Chairman around £750 hardly reflects the level of responsibility or work involved. **A re-examination of those positions would be reasonable.**

c) Attendance allowances. Last year, in order to acknowledge the desirability of Development Control committee members to attend site visits, an attendance payment was agreed. Unfortunately, observation has determined that not all members leave the bus to examine the site details which rather defeats the object of them going.

Nevertheless I believe that there are sound reasons for extending the scheme. Through Cabinet and/or Council resolution, a number of Councillors represent the Council on outside bodies. The time spent at these meetings ranges from about 30 minutes to 6 or more hours plus total travelling time from a few minutes to in excess of two hours.

Currently no attendance payments are made and I would request the panel to consider rectifying this anomaly in the light of their decision on Development Control.

d) The Deputy Leader of the Council is a responsible position. **It would seem logical to delete the allowance which is made on top of a Cabinet allowance and incorporate it into a stand alone position in the table of allowances.**

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e) Cabinet Member responsibility and workload. I am not arguing for an increase in the remuneration levels but I thought it might be useful to the panel to provide information in my case. Details of the responsibilities of my colleagues are readily available elsewhere.

My Portfolio covers the Natural and Built Environment. This requires frequent liaison with officers covering a number of disciplines and requires attendance in the council offices two or three times a week for periods from about half an hour to more than four hours. A wide knowledge base is required to approve technical documentation and certain press releases, understand the complications of such diverse areas as Government policies in regard to planning, methods involved in waste collection services, and all the wide ranging environmental matters etc. There is also the requirement in my case to attend seminars and site visits as a necessary part of keeping my knowledge base up to date or putting the views of the Council. These may be for just a few hours or up to three days.

In addition I am the Climate Change Champion (no allowance) and lead the Climate Change group, Chair the Blaby Town Centre Partnership and represent the Council on such bodies as the Narborough Quarry Liaison Committee (currently Chairman), the Huncote Quarry Liaison Committee and the Leicestershire Waste Strategy Partnership to mention just a few. Without the suggestion concerning attendance allowances it should be obvious that the hourly rate is pitiful. I'm not complaining too much as I did not become a Councillor for the money but the anomalies described above have given rise to concerns on what should be expected from a Councillor in this day and age.

I trust you will find the above useful in your deliberations and look forward to your final recommendations.

Yours

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for the Natural and Built Environment (etc)