

**Cllr E. F. White**  
**Leader of Blaby District Council.**

**20<sup>th</sup> October 2010.**

**Dear Ms Read**

**For the Attention of the Remuneration Panel.**

I would be grateful if the panel would consider the following.

First of all I wish to make it clear that the comments I make are not personal and do not refer to any individual who might for the time being hold any position that is mentioned below.

In the past two years the climate surrounding the payment of allowances to elected members has changed, and as we enter a period of austerity all of us have a duty to make certain that public money is well spent and all allowances are justified and well merited.

I have felt for some time that the relationship between the remuneration of the Leader of the Council and that of opposition leaders is not right. The Leader of the Council is also a group leader, a portfolio holder, and Chairman of the Cabinet Executive as well as being Leader of the Council. Each of these roles is separate and involves a distinct amount of work on behalf of the Council.

The Leader of the Opposition gets a Group Leaders allowance and an allowance for being Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission, and has a deputy group Leader who also gets an allowance. The Leader of the smaller opposition party receives an allowance as a group Leader and one as a Scrutiny Commissioner, and this small group is also allocated an allowance for a deputy group leader.

I am of the view that there is no case for public money to be spent on Deputy Leaders of political groups as there is no role that serves the Council

and no discernable workload for such posts. Paying an allowance for this role is most unusual.

This does not affect the position of the Deputy Leader of the Council, a post usually held by the deputy leader of the majority party. The post of deputy leader of the Council must be up to speed with all new developments, all policies and other national changes, as well as current issues going through Council and often acts on behalf of the Leader at meetings of other Leaders and in other high profile gatherings as and when necessary and of course should the Leader fall under the proverbial bus, act as Leader of the Council to maintain continuity of activity.

A different way of doing this would be to remunerate the Leader of the opposition with one allowance which would include the role of Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission. Some consideration should be given to whether the allowance system should recognise a principal minority group, the leader of which acts as the leader of the opposition, a recognisable role within the Council for which there is a workload, and a secondary minority group, the leader of which has no responsibility as leader of the opposition.

Some thought must also be given to the possibility of an election producing more than three groups on the council. In addition to the possibility of enough independent members to create an official independent group, there are other political parties hoping to gain seats on the council at the next election. We could have five group leaders, and five deputy leaders, all receiving an allowance and the public would neither understand nor accept such a state of affairs.

There is also the need to re visit the allowance paid to the Chairman of Development Control and the Vice Chairman. It appears to be high compared to our comparator local authorities. Is the allowance at the right level? Many consider it too high in relation say to the amount paid to a Cabinet Portfolio holder and that the allowance paid to the Vice Chairman may be too low.

I need to make it clear, very clear that I am not seeking an increase in the amount paid to the Leader of the Council, rather that the Leaders allowance remains as it is and so sets the benchmark for the other SRA's.

So, ask the question, if the Leader gets £10,000 for Leading the Council, leading the majority group, managing a Cabinet Portfolio, Chairing the Cabinet Executive and Chairing Committees eg the Senior Officer Appointments Committee, what is the appropriate sum for the Leader of the Opposition/Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission role, and a Leader of a third or smaller opposition group who is also a Scrutiny Commissioner.

Sincerely

E. F. White  
Leader of the Council  
20<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.