

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Committee:** Member Remuneration Panel **Date:** Thursday, 3 February 2011

**Place:** Group Room, Room 1.19, First Floor, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 5.30 - 6.50 pm

**Members Present:** D Jackman, Ms R Kelly and S A Lye

**Other Councillors:**

**Apologies:**

**Officers Present:** I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), G Lunnun (Assistant Director Democratic Services)

---

### **1. CHAIRMAN**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Ms R Kelly be elected Chairman for the meeting.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2009 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **3. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Panel noted that it had been established to advise on the payment of allowances and expenses to District Councillors.

### **4. MEMBER REMUNERATION SCHEME - REVIEW**

The Panel considered a report:

- (a) summarising the Government's Guidance on Local Authority Allowances;
- (b) setting out details of the Council's existing Remuneration Scheme, details of its implementation and comparison with payments made by other shire/districts/boroughs in the same region; and
- (c) highlighting issues to be addressed.

The Panel discussed the existing allowances and options for changes.

**RESOLVED:**

**Basic Allowance**

(1) That, having regard to the difference between the current amount in the adopted scheme (£4,300 per annum) and (a) the average amount paid to similar Councils in the same region (£4,500); (b) the amount (£4,625) achieved by applying the current Minimum Adult Weekly Wage of £5.93 per hour to a 15 hour week; and (c) the lack of any increase in staff salaries since 2009/10, no change be made to the amount of basic allowance;

(2) That the Council again be encouraged to review its level of implementation of the Basic Allowance, currently £3,150 per annum, as it is clear that this is considerably less than the amount paid to Councillors in similar authorities in the same region and it is considered there is a danger of undervaluing the role which may make it more difficult to attract potential candidates to stand for election in the future;

(3) That at this time no steps be taken to introduce a supplement to the Basic Allowance to be paid to Councillors attending a specified number of meetings/training sessions in view of:

(a) the difficulty of drawing up a workable scheme which complies with statutory requirements and can be monitored efficiently; and

(b) the review being undertaken of member training including the possible introduction of e-learning;

**Special Responsibility Allowances**

(4) That no special responsibility allowance be paid to Deputy Portfolio Holders at the current time as they were only appointed in December 2010 and there has been little time to assess the roles being undertaken;

(5) That, based on consultations to date and attendance by members of the Panel at a Sub-Committee training session and as observers at two Sub-Committee meetings, it is considered there are grounds for granting a Special Responsibility Allowance for the role of Licensing Sub-Committee Chairmen and that an informal meeting be arranged between members of the Panel and the current Chairmen in order to discuss the size and distribution of any Special Responsibility Allowance:

(6) That, subject to further consideration of a Special Responsibility Allowance for Licensing Sub-Committee Chairmen, no change be made to the amounts of Special Responsibility Allowances having regard to the similarities in amounts of Special Responsibility Allowances in the Council's current adopted scheme and those of similar authorities in the same region as the Council;

**Member Role Accountability Statements**

(7) That the steps being taken to revise Member Role Accountability Statements for the various member roles undertaken at the Council be noted;

**Co-optee Allowances**

(8) That, pending clarification of the timescale for the abolition of the current complaints regime and the future role, if any, agreed by the Council for a Standards Committee no further work be undertaken on a review of allowances to the independent members of the Standards Committee;

**Travelling Allowance**

(9) That the reference to first class rail return fare in the current scheme in relation to travel to meetings outside of the district or by members resident outside of the district be removed;

(10) That no change be made to the other aspects of travelling allowances.

**Subsistence Allowance**

(11) That in order to continue to mirror the rates paid to officers, subsistence payments be revised as follows:

Breakfast up to £3.00; lunch up to £5.00 (less the average meal cost of £3.50); evening meal – up to £11.77 (less the average meal cost of £3.50);

**Carers' and Childcare Allowances**

(12) That no change be made to the scheme in respect of carers' and childcare allowances;

**State Benefits**

(13) That the attention of Councillors be drawn to the availability of the booklet published by the Local Government Information Unit entitled "Councillors' Tax and Benefits".

**CHAIRMAN**