

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee:	Parish Remuneration Panel	Date:	Wednesday, 28 September 2016
Place:	Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	Time:	6.30 - 7.15 pm
Members Present:	D Jackman, Ms R Kelly and S Lye		
Officers Present:	S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)) and S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager)		

7. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Ms. R. Kelly be elected as Chairman of the Remuneration Panel for the duration of the meeting.

8. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, D. Jackman declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (Remuneration Scheme – Waltham Abbey Town Council), by virtue of being engaged in a commercial capacity by Waltham Abbey Town Council. Mr. Jackman indicated that his interest was prejudicial and that he would leave the meeting for the consideration and voting on the item.

9. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (30.9.15)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 30 September 2015 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

10. REMUNERATION SCHEME - WALTHAM ABBEY TOWN COUNCIL

The Panel was reminded that, in April 2014, it had considered and agreed a proposal of Waltham Abbey Town Council for the introduction of a remuneration scheme. At the request of the Panel at its last meeting, the Mayor of Waltham Abbey (Councillor H. Kane) and the Clerk of Waltham Abbey Town Council (Ms. K. Richmond) attended the meeting to discuss the operation of the remuneration scheme and the level of Mayor's Allowance incorporated therein.

The Panel sought clarification of the provision of a Mayor's Allowance of £3,000 per annum as part of the remuneration scheme, which was felt to be considerably higher than similar allowances in comparable schemes. In response, Councillor Kane and Ms. Richmond emphasised that, whilst described as an 'allowance' in the scheme, the amount of £3,000 set aside by the Town Council each year actually constituted a working budget to support the civic role and responsibilities of the Mayor of Waltham Abbey. The Panel was advised that, although the current wording of the remuneration scheme suggested that the allowance could be paid to the Mayor at the commencement of their term of office, this arrangement was not implemented in

practice and that claims against the allowance were made to defray reasonable costs incurred by the Mayor (or the Deputy Mayor) in the performance of civic duties.

In recognising the concerns of the Panel, Councillor Kane and Ms. Richmond accepted that the current wording of the remuneration scheme might have caused some confusion, and that it might be appropriate to amend the scheme appropriately for the purposes of clarification. Ms. Richmond also suggested that it might be appropriate for the Town Council to develop a separate protocol for the budget that supported the civic role and responsibilities of the Mayor

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the explanation of Waltham Abbey Town Council in terms of the operation of the level of Mayor's Allowance within the Council's current remuneration scheme, be noted; and
- (2) That the Director of Governance be requested to offer any necessary advice and guidance to Waltham Abbey Town Council in connection with the review of the current wording of the remuneration scheme.

11. TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL REMUNERATION SCHEMES - REVIEW

The Democratic Services Manager reminded the Panel that the annual review of town and parish remuneration scheme commenced in September each year, in order to ensure that new schemes or changes to existing schemes were considered by the time that the District Council and local council precepts were approved for the following financial year.

The Panel was advised that, to commence the process for 2017/18, the clerks of all town and parish councils had been reminded of the options for member remuneration and requested to indicate whether their council wished to either introduce or amend an existing remuneration scheme. The Democratic Services Manager reported that no proposals for the introduction or amendment of local council remuneration schemes had been submitted for consideration by the Panel.

The Panel received details of those town and parish remuneration schemes known to be in operation, but noted that some local councils had yet to advise the Director of Governance whether schemes were currently in place. The Democratic Services Manager indicated that, whilst remuneration schemes should be reviewed by the Panel after four years of operation, it was unclear in a number of instances when this process had last been undertaken. The Panel therefore undertook a brief review of the current schemes circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That no comments be raised on the current operation of the town and parish remuneration schemes reviewed by the Panel; and
- (2) That the Director of Governance endeavour to ascertain the current position with regard to the intentions of those local councils that had yet to indicate whether remuneration schemes were to be introduced or changes to existing schemes implemented, and to circulate such updated information to the Panel in due course.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel agreed that its next meeting be held on a date to be arranged during September 2017, to undertake the annual review of town and parish remuneration schemes for 2018/19.

CHAIRMAN