

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Member Remuneration Panel **Date:** Wednesday, 30 September 2015

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 6.30 - 7.30 pm

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

Officers Present: S. Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)) and S. Tautz (Democratic Services Manager)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That S. Lye be elected as Chairman of the Remuneration Panel for the duration of the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by members of the Panel pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (9.3.15)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 9 March 2015 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. MEMBER REMUNERATION SCHEME - ANNUAL REVIEW

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the annual review of the Council's Member Remuneration Scheme had traditionally commenced in September each year, to ensure that any proposed revisions to the Scheme were considered by the time that the Council's budget was approved for the following financial year.

The Panel was advised that, to commence the review process for 2016/17, a general invitation has been extended to all members of the Council to express any suggestions or concerns with regard to the current remuneration scheme. The Panel considered representations received from Councillor K. Angold-Stephens, expressing support for a progressive increase in the Basic Allowance made to all members of the Council from 2016/17, to achieve the recommendations for the payment of the full amount of Basic Allowance favoured by the Panel. Members also considered suggestions made by Councillor Angold-Stephens in connection with the award of Special Responsibility Allowance to the position of the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, which was currently made at the same rate of allowance as the SRA paid to the Chairman of the six Licensing Sub-Committees. The Democratic Services Manager advised the Panel that no other matters had been submitted for consideration by the Panel by other members of the Council, and introduced the

findings of a benchmarking exercise in respect of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, that had been undertaken amongst the Council's 'family group' of local authorities.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that, as part of the review of the Remuneration Scheme for 2015/16, the Council had adopted the recommendations of the Panel that a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) be applied to the position of the Chairman of the Constitution Working Group, to reflect the importance and complexity of the ongoing review of the Council's constitution being undertaken by the Working Group. The Panel noted that it was still anticipated that the Working Group would complete its review of the constitution in March 2016 and would then only need to meet as occasionally necessary to consider specific constitutional issues, as a further full review of the constitution will not be required for several years.

The Panel was reminded that the Council had agreed that the Member Remuneration Scheme had recently been amended to include provision for the payment of mileage and public transport costs for approved civic duties carried out by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, in relation to their attendance at civic events for which Council funded transport was not provided. The Assistant Director of Governance (Governance and Performance Management) reported that the payment of such claims was to be met from the existing members allowances budget and that the existing budget provision for the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council was to be reviewed by the Governance Select Committee in the near future. The Panel, was reminded that this was not a matter within the terms of reference of the Remuneration Panel.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That an analysis be made of activities undertaken in relation to the position of the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, beyond that of charring meetings of the Committee, in comparison with activities undertaken by the Chairman of the Licensing Sub-Committees;
- (2) That an analysis be made of the frequency with which the six members appointed by the Council as chairmen of the Licensing Sub-Committees, have actually chaired meetings of the sub-committees over the last two-year period;
- (3) That, subject to the outcome of (2) above, the Director of Governance bring forward proposals for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowance for the positions of the chairmen of the Licensing Committee and Licensing Sub-Committees, on a 'per-meeting basis';
- (4) That additional benchmarking be undertaken in respect of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances amongst other local authorities in Essex, not forming part of the Council's 'family group';
- (5) That, subject to further consideration at the next meeting:
 - (a) the Panel are minded to recommend to the Council once again that the payment of the full Basic Allowance amount should be implemented for all members as soon as possible, as it remains of the view that there is a danger of undervaluing the role of councillors, which could make it more difficult to attract potential candidates to stand for election in future; and

- (b) the level of Special Responsibility Allowance applied to the position of the Chairman of the Constitution Working Group be reduced to £500.00 per annum with effect from the commencement of the 2016/17 municipal year, to reflect the completion of the review of the Council's constitution;
- (6) That the Director of Governance review the accuracy of Section 13 (Pensionable Status) of the Member Remuneration Scheme, to ensure that this reflects the current legal position;
- (7) That the Director of Governance review Section 6 (Child Care and Dependent Carers Allowances) of the Member Remuneration Scheme, to ensure that application of the allowance at a rate equivalent to the national Minimum Wage reflects current best practice; and
- (8) That the Director of Governance be authorised to implement drafting changes to the Member Remuneration Scheme to reflect the Council's current operational and management structure.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel agreed that a further meeting be held on a date to be agreed during November 2015, to continue its review of the Member Remuneration Scheme for 2016/17.

CHAIRMAN

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