

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/070/2007-08.
Date of meeting: 12 November 2007.



Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Member Remuneration Scheme – 2008-09.

Officer contact for further information: Graham Lunnun (01992–564244).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992–564470).

Recommendations:

(1) That the Independent Remuneration Panel be asked to undertake a comprehensive review of the current Members' Remuneration Scheme and make recommendations for changes to be implemented at the commencement of the 2008/09 municipal year; and

(2) That consideration be given to making a bid for CSB growth in the 2008/09 budget for a contingency sum of £30,000 in order to cover any recommendations by the Panel for revised amounts of Basic, Special Responsibility or Co-optee's Allowances.

Report:

1. The Council has an approved remuneration scheme for members. This consists of the following elements:

(a) Basic Allowance (BA) currently paid at 90% of the full amount of £3,150 per member per year;

(b) Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) - currently paid at 50% of the full scheme to Cabinet members, Chairmen, Group Leaders etc;

(c) Co-optee's Allowance (CA) - payable to independent members of the Standards Committee, the Audit and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (if any); and

(d) Travelling/Subsistence - paid in respect of approved duties at rates set out in the Remuneration Scheme.

2. A schedule showing the current individual payments is attached at Appendix 1, whilst Appendix 2 (also attached) shows the effect on the budget for the various levels of implementation.

3. In winter 2006, Local Government Analysis and Research on behalf of the Local Government Association conducted a survey of all 388 local authorities in England. A total of 257 authorities, including this Council, responded (66.2%). The survey collected information on basic allowance, special responsibility allowances and other allowances paid to members.

4. The survey revealed the following:

(a) overall, basic allowance for 2006 averaged £5,648 per annum, ranging from £3,991 in shire districts to £9,512 in metropolitan districts;

- (b) the average Leader's allowance was £16,356, ranging from £11,065 in shire districts to £31,784 in London boroughs;
- (c) Cabinet members received an average allowance of £9,243, ranging from £5,994 in shire districts to £17,634 in London boroughs;
- (d) overall, the average number of Cabinet members per authority was 6.9;
- (e) the overall average allowance for Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen was £5,686 ranging from £3,721 in shire districts to £10,738 in London boroughs;
- (f) overall, the average number of Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny per authority was 2.6;
- (g) Chairmen of Planning Committees received an average allowance of £5,172 ranging from £3,824 in shire districts to £9,978 in London boroughs;
- (h) Chairman of Licensing Committees received an average allowance of £4,064 ranging from £3,034 in shire districts to £8,066 in London boroughs.

5. It is now several years since the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel proposed the current scheme and it is considered to be time for the Panel to undertake a review during the current municipal year with implementation of their recommendations as adopted by the Council at the commencement of the 2008-09 municipal year. In undertaking a review, the Panel will be able to take account of the results of the Local Government Analysis and Research survey.

6. There is currently a vacancy on the Panel, which will shortly be advertised. When this vacancy has been filled the Panel will be able to commence a review. It is anticipated this will be undertaken either towards the end of the current calendar year or early in 2008.

7. Whilst the recommendations of the Panel cannot be influenced or anticipated it is considered prudent for budget making purposes in the light of the recent survey, to make a bid for CSB growth for 2008-09.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

8. The current Remuneration Scheme requires amendment and the Independent Remuneration Panel should be asked to undertake a review.

Other Options for Action:

9. It is possible to increase allowances up to the 100% figures for the current scheme without reference to the Independent Remuneration Panel and to make an appropriate bid for CSB growth for 2008/09. Such implementation could cover some or all of the post holders receiving SRA but implementation in respect of BA must be applied to all Councillors.

Consultation Undertaken:

10. None.

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: Present budget for 2007/08 - BA - £164,430; SRA - £55,600; Travelling £11,600. Bid for CSB growth of £30,000.

Personnel: Nil.

Land: Nil.

Council Plan 2006-2010/BVPP references: BVPP – Section 7 – Our Resource Management Priorities and Performance – Leader’s Portfolio.

Relevant statutory powers: Local Government Act 2000.

Background Papers: Local Government Analysis and Research survey.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Nil.

Key Decision Reference (if required): N/A.