

FOR PUBLICATION

REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES: ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

MEETING: 1) CABINET
 2) CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE

DATE: 1) 8 SEPTEMBER 2015
 2) 28 AUGUST 2015

REPORT BY: COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR

WARD: ALL

COMMUNITY
ASSEMBLY: ALL

KEY DECISION Non Key Decision 40
REFERENCE (IF
APPLICABLE):

FOR PUBLICATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR PUBLIC REPORTS: NONE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To enable Cabinet to consider issues to be raised with the Independent Remuneration Panel (IR Panel) on the forthcoming review of members allowances in accordance with the protocol on arrangements for consulting on the review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the arrangements for consulting members on the review of the members' allowances scheme in line with the agreed Protocol be noted.

2.2 That Cabinet consider whether it wishes to raise any further issues with the IR Panel.

3.0 MEMBERS' INTERESTS (CODE OF CONDUCT)

- 3.1 Under the Council's Members Code of Conduct introduced under the Localism Act 2011, the receipt of members' allowances is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. Members are free to debate and decide the allowance scheme despite it being a matter which affects their financial well-being.
- 3.2 This is because members' allowances are not a disclosable pecuniary interest under the legislation: Members are not employed by the council nor carry on their office, trade, profession or vocation for profit or gain. Legislation specifically provides for the Members Allowance Scheme to be adopted and amended by Full Council, having regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 3.3 Therefore Members do not need to disclose an interest nor are they prevented from taking part in the meeting.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require the Council each year to make a scheme of Members' allowances having regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel. The scheme must be approved before 1 April each year. A copy of the current scheme is attached at Appendix A.
- 4.2 The members of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IR Panel) for 2015-2019 were appointed by Standards and Audit Committee on 22 July 2015.

5.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE IR PANEL

- 5.1 Under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 an authority may pay the expenses incurred by an IR Panel in carrying out its functions and may pay the members of the panel such allowances or expenses as the authority decides.
- 5.2 It is proposed that existing arrangements for payment of a reasonable allowance to the IR Panel members for their time, as agreed in 2011, should continue. The allowance paid in respect of the most recent review was calculated on the basis of a daily rate of £525. During the

last review in 2011/12, a total of £3770.11 was paid in expenses to the IR Panel members.

6.0 PROTOCOL FOR CONSULTATION

6.1 At the meeting of Council on 28 September 2011 members approved a written protocol for the IR Panel to consider member representations to the Panel at times of future reviews of the Members Allowances Scheme. A copy of the Protocol is attached at Appendix B.

6.2 In summary the protocol provides that:

- Consultees can make written representations, and if appropriate oral representations, to the IR Panel about any aspects of the Council's members' allowances scheme;
- Any comments made to it will be considered by the IR Panel before finalising its report;
- The Chair of the IR Panel may discuss matters further with the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Minority Group and the Monitoring Officer if appropriate.

6.3 A meeting of the IR Panel has been arranged for 15 September 2015 and all consultees have been invited to submit written comments and indicate if they wish to make oral comments to the Panel. The deadline for them to do so is Tuesday 8 September 2015 by 5pm.

6.4 The protocol also provides that a report shall be submitted to Cabinet in advance of the Panel meeting to enable any relevant issues to be raised.

6.5 The following preliminary issues have been raised with the Panel by the Monitoring Officer:

- (i) Payment of Special responsibility allowances(SRA)
- (ii) Mayoral allowance
- (iii) Telephone allowances

6.6 Although items (ii) and (iii) are outside the scope of the members allowances scheme the IR Panel have been asked to comment on these.

7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Risk Management will be considered in the report to Full Council with the recommendations of the IR Panel.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There will be a small future financial expenditure in respect of a daily rate payable to each of the IR Panel members. This expenditure will depend on the detail of the scoping of the IR Panel review. It is anticipated that this cost can be met from within existing budgets.

8.2 Decisions on the review of the Members Allowances Scheme will be considered by Full Council after the final report and recommendations of the IR Panel are received.

9.0 EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 None arising from the contents of this report

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

10.1 This report is to advise Cabinet of a Protocol previously adopted and to provide an opportunity for Cabinet to consider raising any additional issues with the IR Panel.

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 That the arrangements for consulting members on the review of the members' allowances scheme in line with the agreed Protocol be noted.

11.2 That Cabinet consider whether it wishes to raise any further issues with the IR Panel.

12.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

12.1 To improve the quality and transparency of the Independent Remuneration Panel and its work.

You can get more information about this report from

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Committee and Scrutiny Co-ordinator

Officer recommendation supported.

S.L. Blank.

Signed

Cabinet Member

Date 26.8.2015

Consultee Cabinet Member/Support Member comments (if applicable)

N/A