



## **Report to Council**

**Date: 5 September 2007**

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**Subject: Independent Remuneration Panel**

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The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel has prepared a report to Members in response to the revised arrangements following the election.

The report of the Panel is attached at **Appendix 1**,

Council is **recommended** to consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and whether to accept the recommendations contained in the report.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

DATED 23 JULY 2007

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Following the local election in May 2007, the control of the administration of the Council now rests with one group.
- 1.2 There are now two opposition groups both with 9 members.
- 1.3 The existing scheme of allowances gives the Leader of the Second Group a Special Responsibility Allowance of £6,324 and The Leader of the Third Group a Special Responsibility Allowance of £3,156.
- 1.4 Prior to the election, the Cabinet consisted of the Leader and six Portfolio Holders. Since the election, the new Leader of the Council has appointed five Portfolio Holders to the Cabinet but, in addition, has appointed three members with particular responsibilities to act as Advisers to the Cabinet on specific issues.
- 1.5 The Panel has also been asked to consider a request from the Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee for consideration of a Special Responsibility Allowance for that position.

**2. The Process**

- 2.1 The Panel received a written submission from the Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee.
- 2.2 Councillor R Spencer attended the meeting of the Panel to explain the purpose and remit of his Cabinet Advisers.

**3. Proposals**

**3.1 Cabinet Advisers**

3.1.1 The Panel had the benefit of hearing from the Leader of the Council. The Leader has appointed three Cabinet Advisers to supplement the work of the Portfolio Holders. These Advisers will concentrate on:

- issues arising from the work of the Regional Assembly;
- community development;
- parish liaison.

These remits have been carved out of previous Portfolio Holder responsibilities and divided between the three Advisers to allow

a greater concentration and focus on particular issues to reflect current priorities.

- 3.2 The Panel considered that although there has been no change in the overall workload for the Cabinet, there has been a redistribution of responsibilities. The three Advisers were tasked to pick up matters formerly within Portfolio areas but clearly not to manage a function of the Council in the same way as the Portfolio Holders.

The Panel therefore considered it to be appropriate that the Special Responsibility Allowance which would have been paid to the sixth Portfolio Holder be divided equally amongst the Advisers.

- 3.3 The Advisers have been carrying out the duties required of them notwithstanding that no decision has been made by the Council as to an allowance the Panel therefore consider that the allowance should be backdated to 6 May 2007.

#### **Recommendation 1**

That the three Cabinet Advisers be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance of £2,108 and that this be backdated to 6 May 2007.

#### **4. Special Responsibility Allowances for Opposition Group Leaders**

- 4.1 The current scheme of allowances recognises the position of the Leader of a main opposition group. This group would be anticipated to have appreciably more members than the Third Group. In that case, there would be more party management issues for the Leader of the Second Group and this has been reflected in the allowances scheme.
- 4.2 In the current situation where there is an equality of seats amongst the Second and Third Groups on the Council, the Panel considered that it could find no reason to distinguish between the allowance paid to the Leaders of those Groups.
- 4.3 In the circumstances, the Panel considered that the current allowances allowed to the Leaders of the Second and Third Groups should be aggregated and divided equally between the two Group Leaders. This reflected the fact that the Council should be willing to support the same level of time commitment and work from the opposition groups albeit distributed differently.
- 4.4 The Panel considered that payment should reflect the fact that this situation had been in effect since the election and the allowance should be backdated.

## **Recommendation 2**

That a Special Responsibility Allowance of £4,735 be paid to the Leader of the Second and Third Groups and that this be backdated to 6 May 2007.

### **5. Allowance for Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee**

- 5.1 Committee Vice-Chairmen are not paid a Special Responsibility Allowance under the current Allowance Scheme. This reflects the fact that a Vice-Chair would only be required to chair a meeting in the absence of the Chairman and experience shows that this is a relatively uncommon circumstance. For most purposes, therefore, a Vice-Chair exercises the same responsibilities as an ordinary member of a committee.
- 5.2 Councillor Tanner, the Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee asks the Panel to consider that his position is materially different from other Vice-Chairs in that he is expected to carry out site visits so that he is fully acquainted with the details of applications before the Committee and he is required to attend the Planning Delegation Panel weekly. The attendance at the Planning Delegation Panel is not an approved duty and, therefore, no travelling costs are reclaimable.
- 5.3 The Panel considered that they could make no distinction between the role of the Vice-Chairman and an ordinary member of the Planning Committee in terms of site visits. The Panel recognise that membership of the Planning Committee is onerous and demanding but each member of the Committee is responsible for fully acquainting themselves with the detail of an application which comes before them and site visits would be an accepted adjunct to the duties of any member of that committee.
- 5.4 Attendance weekly at the Planning Delegation Panel is recognised by the Panel as unique to those members of the Panel, although all members are invited to attend and do so where applications arise in their Ward. The Panel is not however a decision-making body but serves as a sounding board for the Head of Service in the exercise of his delegated powers.
- 5.5 The Panel do not consider that the Planning Committee Vice-Chairman's position is so fundamentally different from other Vice-Chairman, or either members of the Planning Committee or Delegation Panel as to justifying a Special Responsibility Allowance. The Panel do not, therefore, recommend a Special Responsibility Allowance for this position.
- 5.6 The Panel does recognise that the frequency of meetings for the Delegation Panel imposes a particular burden in terms of travelling to the meeting for those six members of the Panel who are required to attend each week. Although not within the remit of the Remuneration Panel, the Panel suggests that the Council considers designating

attendance at the Planning Delegation Panel as an approved duty for those permanent members of that Panel, so that a travelling allowance can be claimed by members attending .

**Recommendation 3**

That the office of Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee not be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance.

The Council consider designating attendance at the Planning Delegation Panel as an approved duty for the permanent members of the Panel.