

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL\* held on Tuesday 29 September 2020 at 2.30pm via the Microsoft Teams application.

\* Reporting to Council

PRESENT: R Atterton  
K Cole  
P Legood  
P.Raynsford  
D.Tabraham-Palmer

OFFICIALS Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance)  
(N.Long)

PRESENT: Governance Services Manager (A. Marston)  
Principal Governance Officer (J.Anthony)

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**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN:**

The Panel continued with the previously agreed arrangement not to appoint a Chairman. However the Panel agreed to keep this under review given that the size of the Panel had increased to 5 members.

**2. PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME TO REVIEW MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME:**

The Panel noted the intention to convene earlier in the year and undertake a more comprehensive review of the Members' Allowances Scheme. However given the need to prioritise more urgent activities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, there had been a delay in recruiting and convening this Panel. The Panel therefore agreed to make recommendations for Members' Allowances in 2020/21 in time for the November 2020 Council meeting. In parallel the Panel will carry out a full review of all special responsibility allowances (SRAs) for a period covering four years from 1 July 2021 with the intention to submit recommendations to the March 2021 Council meeting.

**2.1. Review of the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2020/21**

**(a) Members. Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances**

In line with the national agreement for staff, the report proposed the level of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances be increased by 2.75%.

As in previous years, there are some members who hold more than one office and the scheme provides that they only receive the highest of the allowances due. The Panel noted that the cost impact of any increase would need to be within budget.

**(b) Chair of the Audit Committee**

The Panel noted an anomaly with the allowance provided to the Chair of the Audit Committee, which had been out of sync with comparable allowances for other Committees Chairs since 2015/16. The Panel recommended that this allowance be increased by more than the proposed 2.75% in order to bring it in line with the allowance for other comparable Committee Chairs.

**(c) Care Allowance**

No claims have been submitted by Members for the payment of a Care Allowance since this was introduced. It was agreed that this scheme should continue and the same 2.75% increase as the Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances be applied.

**(d) Opposition Group Leaders**

The Panel noted the changes to how allowances to each opposition leader was calculated for 2019/20. Each opposition leader allowance is calculated on the basis of 50% of basic allowance, plus a per capita payment of £225 for each group member (with an additional 10% of the basic allowance added as a supplement to reflect the additional work currently undertaken by the opposition leaders during the period of no overall control). The Panel recommended that the same calculation be made to determine allowances for each of the opposition leaders for 2020/21, which would incorporate the 2.75% increase made to the basic allowance.

The Panel's recommendations would be submitted to the Council meeting on 23 November 2020 for consideration. A summary table is attached at Appendix A.

**2.2. Comprehensive Review of the Members' Allowance Scheme**

The Panel noted the objective to establish a four year, index linked, scheme from 1 July 2021, having undertaken a comprehensive review of the Members' Allowance Scheme.

The Panel noted that in order to undertake a comprehensive review of the Members' Allowance Scheme it would need:

- Detailed information on the roles, responsibilities and workloads of each of the Committee Chairs
- To receive the views of the Members and Group Leaders
- Information on any additional regional and local government role which may be relevant for consideration
- Comparable data and appropriate benchmarking for a Council the size and located as Welwyn Hatfield is

Following the review the Panel's recommendations would be submitted to the Council meeting on 22 March 2021 for consideration.

Independent Remuneration Panel  
4 November 2019

### **Recommendations**

- (1) That the Panel recommends to the Council that the proposed level of Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances to be paid with effect from 1 July 2020 be as set out in the Appendix attached and that no other changes be made.
- (2) That a full review of all SRAs is carried out with the intention to submit recommendations to the March 2021 Council for a four year index linked scheme to commence from 1 July 2021.

Meeting ended 3.13pm  
JA