

AT A MEETING of the INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL of the County Council held at The Castle, Winchester on 19 September 2012.

**PRESENT:**

R. Farrall (Chairman); J. Abbott; D. B. Heck; R. Kinch

The following officers were in attendance:

B. Beardwell - Head of Governance

J. Weeks - Business Advice and Member Support

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

Members of the Panel had attended a number of meetings and briefings over the past year and expressed thanks to Members, Officers and support staff for their constructive responses to the Panel's questions and observations. This assistance had enabled the Panel to get a fuller understanding of Members roles, responsibilities, workloads and Terms of Reference. The Panel had requested meetings with the Executive Member leading the Review of Governance Models and with the Chairman of the Member Development Group. The meetings had been most helpful in understanding potential changes to the governance structure of the County Council and the arrangements for member development.

The Head of Governance briefed the Panel on the latest position regarding the review of governance models. The Panel felt that if a new system of governance was recommended, it would present an opportunity for a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Head of Governance undertook to brief the Panel on any potential changes to the governance model at the appropriate stage of the process. The Head of Governance also confirmed that should there be any changes to the County Council's governance arrangements in 2013/14, then the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) would be asked to make its recommendations on any consequential changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

**4. COUNTY COUNCILLORS, CO-OPTED AND INDEPENDENT MEMBER COMMENTS**

The Panel was advised that County Councillors, Co-opted and Independent Members had been invited to either attend or make any comments to the Panel at this meeting. As a result there had been a written communication from Councillor C. Leversha (Appendix 1 to the Minutes).

Panel Members indicated that they had attended the most recent meeting of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and a post-meeting discussion with the HOSC Chairman, Vice-Chairman and support officers. The Panel noted the difference between the HOSC and other Select Committees and could therefore endorse the higher level of Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the HOSC.

The Panel requested again that Members be asked to make comments and requests to it earlier in the year to allow more time for full consideration.

## 5. **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2013/14**

The Panel considered the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2013/14 in accordance with Regulation 21 of the Members' Allowances Regulations.

### Basic Allowance and SRAs

The Panel recognises the overall public sensitivity to the issue of Members' Allowances at a time of public spending restraint and has worked to the principle that, wherever possible, arrangements for Members should be harmonised with the conditions applying to Hampshire County Council employees.

The Panel noted that the basic allowance had been frozen for the past two years. The Panel had received information from the Director of Corporate Resources stating that a 1% increase for staff salaries would be included in the County Council's budget for 2013/14 and therefore, the Panel felt that should a staff pay award be agreed the basic allowance for Members and SRAs should be increased in line with the nationally agreed pay award for staff.

### Special Responsibility Allowance – Chairman of the Pension Fund Panel and Chairman of the Audit Committee

The Panel acknowledged the increase in the size of the Pension Fund Panel and the pension fund itself. However, the Panel felt that this was a workload quantity increase rather than any substantial increase in responsibility for the Chairman, and on that basis did not believe that the SRA should be changed. The Panel also compared the role of the Chairman of the Pension Fund Panel with the role of the Chairman of the Audit Committee and felt that although both the Panel and Committee had changed due to external factors with increased workloads, the responsibilities of the Chairman had not changed significantly. It concluded that both roles had similar responsibilities and did not believe that one deserved a higher SRA than the other.

### Special Responsibility Allowance – Vice-Chairmen of Committees

The Panel agreed that the role of Vice-Chairman was potentially significant and valuable as a member of the team managing a Committee. The Panel had attended and observed several committee meetings and concluded

that the amount of work undertaken by Vice-Chairmen during meetings varied across committees. Therefore, the Panel suggested that greater clarity was required around the role of Vice-Chairman to support the reasons for a SRA.

In discussing the role of Vice-Chairman generally, the IRP considered that the payment of an SRA should be conditional on it being a development role; to be responsible in the absence of the Chairman, along with other responsibilities to be defined to enhance the role.

#### Special Responsibility Allowances generally

The Panel went on to discuss the clarity of responsibilities generally and suggested that role profiles/terms of reference should be further developed to inform all parties of what was expected. This would also allow comparisons for setting of SRAs in the future.

#### Members Pensions

The Panel noted the different Regulations governing pensions for Officers and Members and therefore having reviewed the arrangements recommended no changes.

#### Special Responsibility Allowance – Police and Crime Panel Independent Co-opted Members

The Panel was disappointed at the short timescale it was given to consider an appropriate allowance for independent co-opted members of the Police and Crime Panel and following a lengthy discussion concluded that there was insufficient information to fully understand the role of the co-opted members. However, the Panel was of the view that the independent co-opted members must be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable expenses and should also receive an allowance. The Panel agreed that once terms of reference for the co-opted members were established, the Panel would review the responsibilities and recommend an appropriate SRA, and suggested that a nominal figure of £200 be applied in the interim.

#### Recommendations

Accordingly, the Independent Remuneration Panel **RECOMMEND** the following for the Members' Allowances Scheme 2013/14:

- (a) That the Basic Allowance and SRA's be increased in line with any Hampshire County Council agreed pay award for staff (if any) from 1 April 2013;
- (b) That no change be made to the existing SRA paid to the Chairman of the Pension Fund Panel and Chairman of Audit Committee;
- (c) That no change be made to the existing SRAs paid to Vice-Chairmen of Committees;

- (d) That no change be made to arrangements for Members' pensions;
- (e) That a Special Responsibility Allowance at a nominal sum of £200, plus expenses, be paid to the Police and Crime Panel Independent Co-opted Members and that it be reviewed within the year; and
- (f) With regard to special responsibilities allowances generally that role profiles/terms of reference be further developed as part of the preparation for the new Administration following the County Council's elections in 2013.

**Note to the Independent Remuneration Panel on 19 September 2012**

**From Councillor Carol Leversha**

Would you please be kind enough to bring to the attention of the Panel the huge responsibility and amount of work undertaken by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), which I do not believe is adequately remunerated.

I am not 100% sure whether the Panel Members interview the HOSC Chairman as they do the Select Committee Chairmen; if they do then they will be aware of the workload, but just in case I am making sure it is highlighted.