

Regulatory & Appeals Committee Minutes

Date: 2 November 2015

Time: 7.00 - 8.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor J A Savage (in the Chair)

Councillors K Ahmed, M C Appleyard, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, A D Collingwood, M Hussain JP and D Knights, Miss S Brown, R Farmer, A R Green, I L McEnnis and Ms J D Wassell

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ms A Baughan, S Broadbent, C Etholen, R Gaffney and B Pearce.

8 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Regulatory and Appeals Committee held on 8 July 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

The Presenting Officer clarified that no dispensations were required to take part and vote at this meeting. Under the terms of the Localism Act 2011, it was deemed that Members had a non disclosable pecuniary interest in the subject matter under consideration.

10 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES REVIEW

A report was submitted which requested that the recommendations from the independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) be considered and determined following the recent review having taken place with regard to Members Allowances. These recommendations were detailed in paragraph 8 of the report.

The report stated that the IRP had been appointed under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to consider and report upon its findings with regards to its views on the terms and conditions of the Allowances Scheme.

The report also stated that the Panel had met in July and September of this year to consider amendments to the scheme of Members' allowances and several other associated issues. Previous reviews had also taken place in 2008, 2010 and 2013. The subsequent report from the current review was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. This detailed the methodology and process adopted by the IRP together with the data and documentation considered as part of the review.

In accordance with regulations, notice of the IRP report had been made public, whilst simultaneously being circulated to all Members of the Council.

All Members had been invited to submit representations to the Panel, indicating whether they also wished to make any representations in person. All the representations received were documented in the IRP's report. The current temporary levels and amounts put in place by the Leader of the Council were attached at Appendix A to their report, whilst the formal scheme was attached at Appendix B.

Members were reminded that the recommendations from the IRP were of an advisory nature and as such could be accepted, rejected or amended as was felt to be appropriate. The recommendations as agreed at this meeting would then proceed to Full Council for endorsement on 14 December.

Members deliberated in some considerable detail on the recommendations before them, which they considered each at a time making the following comments:

Recommendation 1 - Rejected – Chairman's Allowance to be same as Leader and should not be more – It was the majority view that the level of the Leader's allowance should be set at a higher level than that of Chairman. However, it was agreed that a sub-committee should be established to undertake further work on the levels for the Leader & Chairman, which would report back to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee with its recommendations.

Recommendation 2 - Agreed – Chairman's allowance to exclude travel expenses – Any expenses should be claimed in the usual way as for any Member incurring expenses.

Recommendation 3 - Agreed – Establishment of a separate budget code for Chairman's Office expenses and a portion not be held back for expenses incurred during the year. It was also recommended that £3,600 from the existing Chairman's allowance figure should be allocated to fund this budget code (Chairman's allowance therefore to be £15,500).

Recommendation 4 - Rejected – The temporary levels implemented by the Leader become permanent - It was felt that each Leader should retain the ability to make temporary changes to suit the composition of his/her Cabinet, providing the levels remained within the overall budget.

Recommendation 5 - Rejected- – The current level of the basic allowance which currently stood at £4660 remain unchanged – Members felt that there should be an increase in the basic allowance but that a sub-committee should be established to undertake further work on this matter and report back to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee with its recommendations.

Recommendation 6 - Agreed – Link to Officer Pay be retained – Members requested that it be made clear that this related to the national pay settlements.

Recommendation 7 - Agreed – Maintain the current provision of paying no more than 1 SRA (highest only) – Members agreed with this with the exception of also paying the SRA payment set out in 10 & 11 below should they be implemented. .

Recommendation 8 - Rejected – No more than 40% of Members should receive an SRA payment - It was felt that this was not enforceable due to the number of roles undertaken and also if additional SRA payments such as set out at 10 & 11 below were implemented.

Recommendation 9 - Rejected- SRA payments for Planning Committee Member to be withdrawn and replaced by 10 and 11 below - Members felt that the additional work and commitments of being a Member of the Planning Committee should be recognised and the current payment should remain in place.

Recommendation 10 - Rejected at the current time - SRA payment of £50 per site visit be provided replacing the existing payment to Planning Committee Members – The Committee felt that something should be put in place to recognise this but that further consideration was required and agreed that this was also a matter to be considered by a sub-committee and their recommendations be reported back to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee.

Recommendation 11 - Rejected at the current time – SRA payment of £50 per meeting attendance at Licensing Panel – It was the view that as this payment was based upon the length of the meetings being held in the daytime, there may potentially be others entitled to the same payment. As such this issue should be also within the remit of the Sub Committee to consider further and report back the Regulatory and Appeals Committee.

Recommendation 12 Agreed – The level of allowance be maintained at no less than the minimum wage – Members stipulated that this should be at no less than the minimum wage hourly rate.

RECOMMENDED: That

- a) The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on Members Allowances be noted and the Panel be thanked for its work;
- b) The Democratic Services Manager be authorised to amend the Scheme accordingly to reflect any agreed amendments;
- c) A Sub Committee be established comprising Cllrs Mrs Clarke OBE, Collingwood, Green and Knights to further explore recommendations 1, 5, 10 and 11 above, with a report back to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee with recommendations on the way forward;
- d) The level of the Leader's allowance be set higher than the Chairman's Allowance, and this be the subject of further work to be undertaken by the Sub Committee;
- e) The exclusion of travel expenses from the Chairman's Allowance be agreed;
- f) The establishment of a separate budget code for Chairman's Office expenses be agreed, and £3,600 be allocated from the current Chairman's allowance to set this code up;
- g) The temporary levels implemented by the Leader be not made as a permanent arrangement;
- h) The basic allowance for all Members should be increased, and that this be the subject of further work to be undertaken by the Sub Committee;
- i) The link to officer pay be retained in accordance with the national pay settlement;
- j) The payment of no more than 1 SRA be maintained, with the exception of numbers 10 and 11 set out above if they were implemented;
- k) The number of SRA payments being restricted to 40% of Members be rejected;
- l) Withdrawal of the SRA payment to Planning Committee Members be rejected;
- m) The introduction of a £50 attendance fee per site visits be rejected at the current time, and be further explored by the Sub Committee;

- n) The introduction of a £50 attendance fee per Licensing Panel be rejected at the current time, and be further considered by the Sub Committee;
- o) The Carer`s allowance be maintained at no less than the minimum wage hourly rate.

11 CHAIRMAN`S NOTE

The Chairman thanked the Panel for its deliberations and for the detailed report produced.

He also stated that it was his view that the Panel Members should involve themselves in learning more about the role of the Councillor, and their interaction with officers. It was suggested that perhaps they could shadow the Councillors to appreciate the extent of their responsibilities prior to the next scheduled deliberations.

12 SPECIAL MEETING

Members were in agreement that a Special meeting of the Committee should be held on Monday 7 December at 7pm. This was to be convened in order to consider the deadlines for Members` questions at Council.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Ian Hunt - Democratic Services Manager
Iram Malik - Democratic Services Officer