

Regulatory & Appeals Committee Minutes

Date: 8 June 2016

Time: 7.00 - 7.57 pm

PRESENT: Councillor J A Savage (in the Chair)

Councillors S Broadbent, M Clarke, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, M Hussain JP, D Knights, I L McEnnis and R Raja, A R Green

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A D Collingwood, C Etholen, R Gaffney, and Ms J D Wassell.

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory and Appeals Committee held on 2 March 2016 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4 CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

The Committee welcomed the Council's Procurement Manager to the meeting, who gave a brief overview of the changes to Contract Standing Orders, which had been agreed by Full Council on 11 April 2016.

It was noted that the Public Contract Regulations 2015 had initiated a number of the proposed changes and the opportunity had also been taken to undertake a full review of Contract Standing Orders.

The Committee noted each proposed change in turn and the Procurement Manager outlined the detail relating to them. Members asked questions seeking clarity on some of the changes, during which it was noted that detailed checks would be taking place on expenditure and invoices.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee confirmed that they were happy with the changes and explanations presented. Members thanked the Procurement Manager for his attendance and assistance.

5 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme, following work undertaken by the Allowances Sub Group.

At the last meeting of the Committee, Members were presented with the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel setting out recommendations following their review of members' allowances. The Committee considered these recommendations in detail and in turn, made onward recommendations to Full Council. A copy of the report and Minutes of this meeting, setting out the Committee's responses to each of the Panel's recommendations, were set out at appendix A to the report.

These recommendations had included the establishment of the sub-group to undertake further work in relation to four outstanding issues, as follows:

- The Leader's allowance should be set higher than that of the Chairman of the Council
- The level of the basic allowance – the Committee had rejected the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendation that this level should remain unchanged and that there should be an increase.
- The Committee had rejected the Panel's recommendation that a special responsibility allowance of £50 per Planning Committee site visit be introduced to replace the existing special responsibility payment to Planning Committee Members.
- The Committee had rejected the Panel's recommendation to introduce a special responsibility payment of £50 per meeting at Licensing Panels, and asked the Sub-group to consider this further and report back

Members noted that as part of their work, the Sub-Group had received information relating to the level of allowances from neighbouring District and Borough Authorities with a similar size population as the Council. Information relating to the level of allowances from neighbouring Buckinghamshire Authorities was also taken into account.

The Committee was invited to consider a number of recommendations from the Sub Group, and it was noted that there was no budgetary provision for increases in members' allowances. Implementation of the proposals would result in an additional budget requirement of £114,376.

Following discussion, it was

RECOMMENDED: That (i) the proposed recommendations from the Allowances Sub Group as set out below, be agreed:

- a) Basic Allowance – Having noted that this allowance had not been increased for a number of years, and in noting that the average level of the basic allowance of the top 12 District and Borough Councils via

population was £6,100, the level of the basic allowance be increased to £6,000.

- b) Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for Chairmen of Regulatory & Appeals, High Wycombe Town, Audit, and Licensing Committees – in order to reflect the workload of these positions, the ‘multiplier’ in the current Scheme be amended from 0.25 x basic allowance to 0.5 x basic allowance. (Multiplier for other Chairmen positions to remain unchanged).
- c) SRA for Chairman of Improvement and Review Commission – in order to reflect the workload of this position, the ‘multiplier’ in the current Scheme be amended from 0.75 x basic allowance to 1 x basic allowance.
- d) SRA for Vice-Chairmen of Committees – the multiplier in the Scheme be amended from the current level of 0.25 x basic allowance to 0.5 x basic allowance of the relevant Chairman’s level.
- e) The Chairman of the Council’s Allowance – The Sub-Group considered in detail the level of the Chairmen and Mayor’s allowance for the top 12 District and Borough Councils via population, together with neighbouring Buckinghamshire Authorities. Having also noted the Regulatory and Appeals Committee’s comments that the level of the Leader’s allowance should be higher than that of the Chairman’s, the Chairman’s allowance be set as basic allowance x 2. (This is a reduction from the current level of £15,500).
- f) The Vice-Chairman of the Council’s Allowance – This be set as the basic allowance x 0.75. (This results in an increase from the existing level of £2,600).
- g) Daytime Meeting SRA Payment – The existing SRA payment to Planning Committee members in the Scheme be removed, and replaced by a daytime meeting SRA payment of £100 per meeting. This will apply to Members attending planning site visits, daytime meetings of the Licensing Panel, and any daytime meetings of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee or its panels. This payment not be payable to Cabinet or Deputy Cabinet members, or to any Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.
- h) SRA for Deputy Cabinet Members – This payment be withdrawn from the Scheme and that should the Leader wish to make a payment to Deputy Cabinet Members, this should be drawn from the ‘Cabinet pot’ of allowances, i.e. temporary levels would need to be put in place to fund these positions by reducing the levels for the other Cabinet positions.

(The Scheme does provide for temporary variations to be made and this is what the current Leader has implemented with her own Cabinet positions).

- i) Link to Officer pay (national pay settlements) and annual increase – The existing link to Officer pay be maintained when a national pay settlement is agreed, and the allowances should also receive an annual increase in line with the level of RPI each year.
- j) Implementation of Proposals – The above proposals be implemented with effect from the Annual Council meeting on 24 May 2016 (backdated).
- k) Future Independent Remuneration Panel reviews – that the Council adopt a four yearly review cycle, to be held in the last year of a Council term.
- ii) the Council's budget be amended to fund the additional financial requirement, and the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Head of Finance & Commercial Services be asked to identify how the additional financial requirement is met.

6 SCHEME FOR THE ENROLMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN

The Committee considered a report on proposed amendments to the Scheme for the Enrolment of Honorary Aldermen.

It was noted that the operation of a scheme for Honorary Aldermen was governed by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. Part 5H of the Council's Constitution set out the Wycombe Scheme and a copy was attached to the report as appendix A.

The Leader of the Council had requested that the Scheme be amended to state that there should be a maximum of 10 Honorary Aldermen at any one time. Currently, the Council had 10 Honorary Aldermen, and the Leader considered that this number should be a maximum for the Council. It was proposed that a new section (f) be inserted in paragraph 1 of the Scheme, to read "That there shall be a maximum of 10 Honorary Aldermen at any one time".

It was noted that it was appropriate to tidy up other aspects of the Scheme. For example, under section 5 'Privileges', references were made to the use of the Members Room in the District Council offices, and it was proposed that this should be removed from the Scheme as there was no longer a members' room in the Offices. In addition, the Scheme contained references to Honorary Aldermen receiving the Council Year Book and Diary, and it was proposed that this be removed as these publications were no longer produced.

RECOMMENDED: That the proposed amendments to the Scheme for the Enrolment of Honorary Aldermen (Part 5H of the Constitution), as set out above and in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report, be agreed and the Democratic Services Manager be authorised to make the amendments.

7 ACTIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Actions taken under delegated authority were circulated at the meeting for information.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Ian Hunt	- Democratic Services Manager
Steve Middleton	- Procurement Officer