

Agenda Item: 17

Meeting: ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Date: 18 JUNE 2009

Subject: Members' Allowances Scheme – Update to Report of Director of Corporate Resources

Summary: To consider the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to the 4 non portfolio Members of the Executive and an enhanced Special Responsibility Allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council, who also served as Vice Chairman of the Executive, without Portfolio, for the second transitional period, being the period from 1 April 2009 until the fourth day after the ordinary election on 4 June 2009.

Contact Officer: Stephen Cooke

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the Council considers, having regard to the comments of the majority of Panel members, as set out in paragraph 7, whether to make a retrospective amendment to the Scheme of Members' Allowances for the period from 1 April to 8 June 2009, to provide a Special Responsibility Allowance for those Members of the Executive who had no Portfolio during that period.**

The Members' Allowances Scheme for the Period of the Second Transitional Period

1. This report provides additional information to the report included as Agenda Item 17 for this meeting and advises the Council of the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel for the payment of:
 - (a) an enhanced Special Responsibility Allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council who was also Vice Chairman of the Executive but without Portfolio, and
 - (b) a Special Responsibility Allowance for those Members of the Executive without Portfolio.

2. When the members of the Independent Panel were recently consulted on this matter they were made aware that the Department for Communities and Local Government, in a Statutory Instrument made on 30 March 2009, specified that those persons who, on the coming into force of the Order, were members of the Executive, should continue as members of the Executive during the second transitional period. In other words those Members appointed to the Executive at the inaugural meeting of the Shadow Council on 10 April 2008, served for both the first and second transitional periods. This information was not known to the Panel when they held meetings in September and October 2008 to consider their recommendations for the Scheme of Members' Allowances for the year commencing 1 April 2009.
3. During the consultation the Panel were also made aware that the Executive, during the second transitional period, continued to discharge an enhanced range of functions because the intended range of Overview and Scrutiny Committees had not been fully developed. It was not however possible to provide details of any specific additional responsibilities that were carried out by the non portfolio members of the Executive during this period of intense activity.
4. Due to time constraints it was not possible to arrange for the Panel to meet formally and the consultation took the form of an exchange of correspondence.
5. The Panel has in the past taken the view, when considering Special Responsibility Allowances, that evidence as to the nature of the specific additional responsibilities, together with an indication as to the time commitment, needs to be available.
6. Having considered the current issue the Panel were unable to reach a unanimous agreement as to whether a special responsibility allowance should be paid to non portfolio members of the Executive or, whether an enhanced allowance should be paid to the Deputy Leader.
7. However a majority of Panel members were content with a special responsibility allowance of 7.5% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance being paid to Non Portfolio Holders of the Executive, but that no additional allowance be paid for the position of Deputy Leader.
8. If this recommendation were to be adopted by the Council, and applied retrospectively to the Scheme of Members' Allowances, the figure paid to each non portfolio holder would be pro rata to an annual sum of £2,525 for the period from 1 April 2009 until the fourth day after the day of election, namely 8 June 2009. This equates to approximately £477 per Member and £2,386 in total.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS
Council Priorities: None directly.

Financial:

Financial implications of the recommendation of the Panel would be budget neutral if adopted due to compensatory savings within the Members Allowances Budget due to an unforeseen reduction in the Membership of the Council during the second transitional period.

Legal:

Sections 85 and 86 (1) (c) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Risk Management:

None

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None

Equalities/Human Rights:

None

Community Safety:

None

Sustainability:

None