

Agenda Item No: 11
Report To: COUNCIL
Date: 13th December 2012



Report Title: **Members Allowances – Recommendations from the Members’ Allowances Independent Remuneration Panel**

Report Author: Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – on behalf of the Chairman of the Members’ Allowances Independent Remuneration Panel

Summary:	The Members Allowances Independent Remuneration Panel met on the 11 th December 2012 to review the level of Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the newly created Lead Members. A full note of the Panel’s recommendations is included within this report.
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Key Decision: NO

Recommendations: **The Council is asked to**

- (i) consider the Members’ Allowances Independent Remuneration Panel’s report and approve a level of Special Responsibility Allowance payable to Lead Members. The Panel’s recommendation is £1,872.07 per annum.**
- (ii) note that the Panel intends to meet in May 2013 to review the full level of allowances payable under the Members Allowances Scheme.**

Policy Overview: When making changes to the Scheme of Allowances, the Council should take the views of the Independent Remuneration Panel into consideration. Notice that the Council has received a report from the Independent Panel, and the outcomes, will be advertised in accordance with the regulations.

Financial Implications: Should the Council agree the Panel’s recommendations, expenditure will be contained within budget (as outlined in paragraph 8)

Other Material Implications: None at this stage

Background Papers: None

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Members Allowances – Recommendations from the Members’ Allowances Independent Remuneration Panel

Introduction

1. The Members Allowances Independent Remuneration Panel met on the 11th December 2012 to review the level of Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the newly created Lead Members. The Panel is chaired by Mr Christopher Page, and the other members are Mrs Judy Blount and Mr Mike Eede.
2. Back in May the Leader signified his wish to increase the opportunities for Member involvement in the work of the Council and, through this, promote closer Member interaction with, and support for the Council, Cabinet, partners and Officers in various areas of activity. This was to be done through the introduction of a Lead Member scheme. This scheme will allow appointed Members who have skills and interests in a specific subject area to assume additional responsibility and raise the prominence and standing of that area, whilst also working with greater authority with the relevant Officers and external partners in promoting the subject area. The Lead Member role can be viewed as a natural progression from the existing role of Member Champion, a role that will continue to exist, but is distinct from it in that the latter is essentially advisory in form, whereas the former is essentially executive in form and function and is thus akin to a quasi-Cabinet or Deputy Cabinet role.
3. It was agreed at that time (May 2012) that the Lead Member role would attract an appropriate Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) which would be determined in consultation with the Independent Remuneration Panel in due course. The Leader has appointed three Lead Members covering the following areas: Economic Development; Procurement and IT; and the Romney Marsh and those Members have been operating in those roles since May. The Leader and Chief Executive both attended the meeting with the Panel on the 11th December and discussed the role of Lead Members and their views on an appropriate SRA.
4. The Panel also considered a number of background documents by way of information including: - the Terms of Reference of the Panel; a summary from the Leader on the position of Lead Members; and the Council’s current Scheme of Members Allowances including the current SRA’s paid. The Panel also discussed matters with advice from the Council’s Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.
5. The Panel’s recommendations are set out within this report. Part 6 of the Constitution (Members Allowances Scheme) will have to be updated to reflect any amendments agreed by the full Council.

Lead Members

6. As this was a new role, the Panel agreed to set the allowance for Lead Members at a level of £1,872.07 (equivalent to the Vice-Chairman of the

Planning Committee and 13.3% of the Leader's SRA). It was recognised that given the level of work and responsibility involved, this may be pitched a little low, but as the role was a new one and still evolving it was an appropriate level at this stage. It would be something that was examined further in a future review of SRA's. Payment of the agreed amount will be backdated to when the three existing Lead Members took up their positions in May 2012.

Future Reviews

7. The Panel also considered that as they had not reviewed the full levels of allowances payable since 2008 it would be opportune to undertake a full review during 2013. It was agreed that this should take place in May 2013 and the Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer would make arrangements to convene the Panel.

Budget Implications

8. Following the disbanding of Policy Advisory Groups and the Community Partnership Group in May 2012, there has been an underspend equivalent to a total of £7,488.26 per annum in the Members Allowances Budget. The proposals recommended by the Panel would result in a total of £5,616.21 being paid to Lead Members which, at this current time, would actually generate a net saving to the overall budget of £1,872.05.

Summary of Recommendations

9. **The Council is asked to**
 - (i) **consider the Members' Allowances Independent Remuneration Panel's report and approve a level of Special Responsibility Allowance payable to Lead Members. The Panel's recommendation is £1,872.07 per annum.**
 - (ii) **note that the Panel intends to meet in May 2013 to review the full level of allowances payable under the Members Allowances Scheme.**

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