

Supplementary report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Council meeting, April 25, 2006, Item 1

Committee:	COUNCIL	Agenda Item
Date:	APRIL 25, 2006	1
Title:	Supplementary report of the Independent Remuneration Panel	
Author:	Ruth Whitlam, Steven Bennett, Martyn Fiddler	Item for decision

1. Introduction

The membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel is:

Ruth Whitlam (Chairman) – local resident and Director of Corporate Affairs, NHS Appointments Commission

Steven Bennett = Secretary and Clerk to Anglia Ruskin University

Martyn Fiddler – local resident and consultation on aviation customs duties and VAT.

The Independent Remuneration Panel reconvened on 6th March 2006 to specifically address three issues arising from the Council's consideration of our report for 2006/07.

Members asked that we:

- review the level of special responsibility allowance payable to area panel chairmen;
- consider whether a special responsibility allowance should be paid to policy committee vice-chairmen; and
- review whether the meeting allowance granted to members of the Licensing Committee should also be payable to the Licensing Committee chairman.

2. Special Responsibility Allowance Payable to Area Panel Chairmen

It was certainly not our intention to create a “two-tier” system (as suggested in the Minutes of the 15th December full Council meeting) when we recommended that the area panel chairmen receive 60% of the committee chairmen's special responsibility allowance, in the first instance.

The principle upon which the panel has always operated is that our recommendations should be open, transparent and based upon evidence.

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From the evidence available to us in the autumn of 2005, it was not clear that the workload and responsibilities of area panel chairmen, whose role was created upon the adoption of the revised Constitution, would be equivalent to their policy committee chairman colleagues. We understood at that time that the panels would meet less frequently than other committees and that their working arrangements would be different and a mixture of the formal and informal.

It was for this reason we made an interim recommendation with a commitment to review the situation in the summer of 2006 when the operation of the new constitution had had a chance to bed down and its impact could be better evaluated.

The area panels have met at least twice since we made our original recommendation and their methods of operation are developing. From what we have seen and the information supplied to us by the Democratic Services Manager, we are persuaded that the role of area panel chairman is comparable to that of a policy committee chairman in terms of responsibility, workload, preparation and time commitment.

We are therefore able to recommend that area panel chairman receive the full special responsibility allowance payable to committee chairmen (i.e. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the basic allowance), this to be effective from 1st January 2006.

3. Vice-Chairmen of policy committees

We have been provided with a paper which describes the role of vice-chairmen of policy committees under the revised Constitution. We are pleased to see that this role has now been documented however we have not yet seen evidence that the role has been fully enacted. Therefore, we are unable to recommend a payment of a special responsibility allowance at this time. We have asked the Democratic Services Manager to seek comments and evidence from the vice chairmen so that we can reconsider this recommendation during our 2007/08 review which will commence this autumn.

4. Licensing Committee

We recommended to the Council that a meeting allowance be paid to members of the Licensing Committee in recognition of the unusual and exceptional workload undertaken during the period June to September 2005. Conventionally, councillors (other than group leaders) are restricted to the receipt of a basic allowance plus one special responsibility allowance. It was for this reason that we applied our recommendation to members of the committee only.

We have since been advised that a number of members of the Licensing Committee have received both the meeting allowance and a special

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responsibility allowance since they are (or were) themselves committee chairman in 2005/06. To exclude the chairman of the Licensing Committee from receiving this exceptional meeting allowance is, therefore, clearly inequitable.

We are pleased to recommend that the chairman of the Licensing Committee receive a payment of £24 per meeting attended in recognition of the exceptional and unusual workload during the period June to September 2005.

5. Summary of recommendations

- 5.1 That area panel chairmen receive the special responsibility allowance payable to committee chairmen with effect from 1st January 2006.
- 5.2 That no special responsibility allowance is paid to vice chairmen at this time, but that this recommendation is reviewed, in light of information and evidence requested, in the autumn of 2006.
- 5.3 That the meeting allowance of £24 granted to members of the Licensing Committee in recognition of the unusual and exceptional workload carried during the period June to September 2005, be payable to its chairman also.

Ruth Whitlam
Chairman

March 2006