

Committee: Full Council
Date: 12th December 2006
Item No. 1
Title: Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2007/08
Authors: Ruth Whitlam, Steven Bennett, Martyn Fiddler

1. Introduction

1.1 The membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel is:

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

Steven Bennett – Secretary and Clerk to Anglia Ruskin University

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

1.2 We would like to thank those members of the Council who have taken the time to supply us with their views and information which have informed our discussions. We would also like to thank Mick Purkiss for his continued support, assistance and advice.

1.3 In this report for 2007/08 we consider and make recommendations on:

- the payment of a special responsibility allowance for committee vice-chairmen;
- the level of special responsibility allowance payable to the Deputy Leader of the Council;
- recognition of the unusual workload associated with the Stansted Airport application for members of the Development Control Committee;
- future membership of the panel; and
- the annual increase in the basic, special responsibility and carer's allowances.

2. Payment of a special responsibility allowance for committee vice-chairmen

We received representations to consider the payment of a special responsibility allowance for committee vice chairmen. Clearly the workload which falls to the vice-chairman depends upon the working relationship between the committee chair and vice-chairman. We thought that the role description which applies to the post is that traditionally expected of a vice-chairman. More onerous duties may fall to a vice-chairman where they have to assume the full role of committee chairman if a chairman is indisposed for any length of time. The council has already accepted the panel's recommendation that, in these circumstances, the vice-chairman can be paid the SRA payable to a committee chairman.

The panel was not convinced that the role of committee vice-chairmen has changed substantially or their responsibilities increased to any great degree

and therefore recommends that no SRA is payable to committee vice-chairmen at this time.

3. Level of the special responsibility allowance payable to the Deputy Leader of the Council

Currently, the SRA payable to the Deputy Leader of the Council is one half of the basic allowance. Clearly the workload of the Deputy Leader is dependent upon the working relationship between them and the Leader. In this case, it is a high profile role with representative elements, a strategic focus and is often County-wide. The evidence presented to us seems to indicate an increase in the scope of the role and the level of responsibility associated with it and this led us to compare it to the role of committee chairman. The panel is persuaded that the SRA payable to the Deputy Leader should equate to that of a committee chairman and recommends that it should be increased to $\frac{3}{4}$ the basic allowance.

4. Development Control Committee

The panel received evidence of the unusual workload carried by members of the Development Control Committee during the period May to November 2006 associated with the Stansted Airport application. In this exceptional and short-term circumstance, the panel recommends that the committee chairman and members should be entitled to receive an allowance of £24 per special meeting attended to deal with this application. This figure being one third of the daily rate (£73.24) used for calculating allowances in 2006/07.

5. Future membership of the panel

Martyn Fiddler's term of office ends on 30th April 2007. Martyn was the panel's inaugural chair and his panel colleagues would wish to express their thanks and appreciation for his leadership during its formative period and to his wise counsel.

It is recommended that an open recruitment campaign should begin early in 2007 to appoint his successor and to identify my successor for when my term ends in April 2008. This person could join the panel as an observer in the interim.

There are a number of issues which the panel with its refreshed membership can usefully consider in order to make the role of councillor more attractive to a wider section of the community. For example, should the SRA payable to the Leader equate to a full-time salary or should there be recompense for proven loss of earnings for all members. Fresh eyes can review the whole scheme of members' allowances and its relevance to the way in which the Council now works.

6. Review of allowances for 2007/07

We recommend that the 2.95% increase awarded to full-time officers of the Council for 2006/07 is applied to members' basic and special responsibility allowances for 2007/08.

No adjustment is proposed to the carer's allowance but this will be kept under review.

7. Summary of recommendations

- 7.1 We recommend that no special responsibility allowance is payable to committee vice-chairmen at this time.
- 7.2 We recommend that the special responsibility allowance payable to the Deputy Leader of the Council is increased to $\frac{3}{4}$ the basic allowance.
- 7.3 We recommend that members of the Development Control Committee receive a payment of £24 per meeting in recognition of the unusual workload associated with consideration of the Stansted Airport application.
- 7.4 We recommend that an open recruitment campaign should begin early in 2007 to recruit two new panel members one to start on 1st May 2007 and one to start on 1st May 2008.
- 7.5 We recommend the payment of the following allowances in 2007/08:

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| Basic allowance | £4,900 (notionally 65 days at £75.40 per day) |
| Chairman of the Council | £4,900 + £3,675 + civic expenses (Basic allowance + $\frac{3}{4}$ basic allowance) |
| Vice Chairman of the Council | £4,900 + £2,450 (Basic allowance + $\frac{1}{2}$ basic allowance) |
| Leader of the Council | £4,900 + £7,350 (Basic allowance + $1\frac{1}{2}$ basic allowance) |
| Deputy Leader of the Council | £4,900 + £3,675 (Basic allowance + $\frac{3}{4}$ basic allowance) |
| Committee Chairmen & Chairmen of Area Panels | £4,900 + £3,675 (Basic allowance + $\frac{3}{4}$ basic allowance) |
| Chairman of Standards Committee | £3,675 ($\frac{3}{4}$ basic allowance) |
| Group Leaders | One basic allowance + either £1,030 p.a. or £111 x group membership as at 1 st April (subject to a minimum group size of 2) which ever is the greater. |
| Members of the Development Control Committee | £4,900 + £490 (Basic allowance + $6\frac{1}{2}$ days at £75.40 per day) |
| Carer's allowance | £10 per hour |

Ruth Whitlam
Chairman

December 2006