

## PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

4 February 2020

Present:-

Councillors J Mathews (Chair), J Hart, S Hughes, S Aves, F Biederman, A Connett, R Hannaford and C Wright

Apologies:-

Councillors N Way

\* 80

**Minutes**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hughes, **SECONDED** by Councillor Connett, and

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019 be signed as a correct record.

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**Items requiring urgent attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

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**Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel - Members Allowances**

The Committee considered the Report of the Independent Members' Allowances Remuneration Panel for 2020. The Chair of the Panel presented their Annual Report, highlighting specifically that the conclusions and recommendations made had been based on sound evidence, that the Panel felt it was better to raise allowances incrementally, and that they had given consideration to the issues asked of them such as the parental leave policy and the London overnight allowance.

Members welcomed the Panel's acknowledgment in the Report that while historically there had been little scope for improvement, the structure of the County Council's scheme remained fit for purpose with sound principles and noted that, in commending its Report to the Council, the Panel had not suggested any significant changes to the structure of the Council's scheme.

The Panel had nonetheless recommended a small number of amendments to the Scheme in support of their view that allowances should keep pace with the economy generally and that consideration should be given by the County Council to the uprating of basic and special responsibility allowances, as set out in Appendix 2 of its Report.

The Committee also considered the proposed parental leave policy. The Committee ([Minute 60](#) of 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019 refers) had considered a factual briefing note provided by the County Solicitor (CSO/19/10) which was in response to a Notice of Motion on Parental Leave Policies which had been previously submitted to the Council on 21 February 2019. The Procedures Committee at that meeting had endorsed the proposal of a parental leave policy for Members of the Council as a means of supporting those with caring and parental responsibilities and to encourage more individuals from a range of backgrounds to stand for election. It therefore asked the Independent Allowances Panel to formulate a scheme, with reference to both the model policy submitted as part of the Motion (prepared by the LGA Labour Women's Task Force) and also the model scheme recently circulated by the Chair of the Conservative Party, taking account of any best practice in other Local Authorities.

The Panel had submitted their draft Policy as part of their 2020 Independent Report and commended their policy to the Council which, if implemented, would contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of Elected Members as well as retaining experienced, and particularly female, Councillors, making public office more accessible.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hannaford, **SECONDED** by Councillor Biederman, and

**RESOLVED**

(a) that the Report of the Independent Panel be welcomed and its Members be thanked for their work;

(b) that the Committee notes the Report's conclusions and asks the County Council to accept the recommendations outlined below.

- i. the basic structure of the current scheme is endorsed and retained;
- ii. from May 2020, the Basic Allowance is increased by the NJC Staff Pay Award (still being negotiated at the time of this meeting) up to 3% as outlined in Appendix 2 (which shows the revised rates based on 2%, 2.5% or 3%) and that it be backdated to May 2020 should there be a delay in the award being agreed and the SRA multipliers be recalculated accordingly;
- iii. that the overnight rate for London be increased to £150.90, in line with the rates calculated by Price Waterhouse Cooper for the average daily rate (ADR) for London, but in the absence of a suitable benchmark for an overnight rate for accommodation in London, the Council be asked to amend its scheme to permit a more flexible approach with accommodation being booked in line with obtaining best value for money, taking account all relevant other factors (safety, proximity to venue, availability, convenience and location), with agreement being sought from the Head of Democratic Services;
- iv. that the Committee and the Council welcome and adopt the proposed policy on Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental and Adoption Leave, outlined at Appendix 1 of the Report, subject to amending paragraph 4.5 as follows;

*Unless the Member taking leave is removed from their post at an Annual Meeting whilst on leave, or unless their Party loses control of the Council during their leave period, they shall return after their leave period to the same post if possible.*

- v. careful consideration should be given, in the future, to the levels of allowances to ensure they keep pace with the economy generally;
- vi. the sustained reduction in the number of SRA's be welcomed and that the levels be kept below the 50% threshold, as is currently the case; and
- vii. that the Panel reiterate their desire that Group Leaders take a robust approach to the performance management of their Members and places on record their thanks for the levels of reassurance provided by Group Leaders for dealing with performance issues.

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**Appointment Process for Director of Public Health and Coroner - Terms of Reference for Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee**

The Committee noted that appointments to the post of Director of Public Health were jointly made between the Local Authority and Secretary of State and had to comply with the statutory guidance.

This meant that the appointment process had to be done in a different manner to that of other Chief Officers and Heads of Service. Whilst the appointment process would still need to involve representatives from the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee, the terms of reference for that Committee would need to be amended to reflect this approach.

The Committee further noted that the proposals for the recruitment and employment terms of the new Director of Public Health had been submitted to the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee on 4 February and a copy of the Report could be found at <https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=201&MId=3445&Ver=4>.

The Local Authority was also responsible for appointing the Coroner, so the terms of reference for the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee also reflected this requirement as well as the associated legislation and guidance.

A copy of the proposed changes had been circulated as part of the agenda for the attention of the Committee.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hughes and

**RESOLVED** that the proposed changes to the terms of reference for the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee to accommodate the legislative requirements of the appointment process for the Director of Public Health and the Coroner be endorsed and commended to the Council.

**\*DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 10.53 am