

PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

2 February 2023

Present:-

Councillors I Hall (Chair), D Barnes, F Biederman, J Brazil, C Leaver and C Whitton (remote attendance)
Councillors J Hart and S Hughes (in person)

Apologies:-

Councillors J Hodgson

* 27

Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022 be signed as a correct record.

* 28

Items requiring urgent attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* 29

Report of the Independent Members Allowances Remuneration Panel for 2023/2024

The Committee considered the Report of the Independent Members' Allowances Remuneration Panel for 2023/24.

The Chair of the Panel presented their Report, highlighting specifically that the conclusions and recommendations made had been based on sound evidence and that they had given consideration to the issues asked of them as well as the national position with the cost of living, the impact on communities as well as the operations and finances of the Council. She further thanked her Panel colleagues and officers for their support during the review.

The Panel also expressed concern over the time commitment of the Councillor role, as reported to them throughout their enquiries, and would address this in next years review as well as reviewing the role of the Chair of the Audit Committee.

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 recommended that allowances rise by 4.32% in line with their previously agreed formula. In past years, the staff pay award had been used as a benchmark, but given this had been a lump sum payment of £1925 for 2022/2023, it was felt this was not appropriate.

The recommended allowances from May 2023 were set out in Appendix 1 of its Report, showing the impact of various percentage rises.

The Committee placed on record its thanks to the Panel for their comprehensive Report.

Members commented as follows:

- that any increase should be at the lower end of the scale;
- that the age profile of elected members, albeit younger, was still not reflective of communities;
- how the Panel linked with / considered the NJC pay negotiations;
- the reason for Councillors standing down from the role;
- to note that allowances were taxable and subject to national insurance contributions as well as not being pensionable;
- the personal safety of councillors and the work that was ongoing in this area. Members were encouraged to raise any concerns with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services;
- the importance of encouraging people to stand as Councillors and learn from those standing down if there were any issues to be addressed; and
- the balance between making allowances attractive enough for people to stand for election and providing value for money to the public.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Brazil, **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitton, 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 and the changes, as outlined at Appendix 1, to support clarity in submitted claims be agreed.

ii. The Panel feels it important not to depart from its established formula of calculating the basic allowance and therefore the basic allowance increases by 4.32% to £14,025 to take effect from May 2023 and the multipliers be recalculated accordingly; This is based on the Panel's standard formula, as outlined at paragraphs 6.4.

- iii. Careful consideration should be given, in the future, to the levels of allowances to ensure they keep pace with the economy generally;
- iv. In light of the concerns raised over workload, the Panel will conduct a thorough review in 2023/2024 which will particularly include hours/workload and will be inviting all Councillors to respond;
- v. The overnight rate for London remain at £153.00, in line with the rates calculated by Price Waterhouse Cooper for the average daily rate (ADR) for London from 2019 (noting that the most recent figures for 2020 and 2021 are very much skewed due to the impact of the pandemic);
- vi. The current position in the number of SRA's be welcomed and that the levels be kept below the 50% threshold;
- vii. That the Panel endorse the Council's wish to have only 1 SRA per Councillor and as such removed the SRA for Chair of the Procedures Committee from the Scheme (noting that the individual holding the role of Chair already receives an SRA for that role);
- viii. That the Panel will undertake a review of the Audit Committee Chair SRA in 2023/24, including benchmarking and comparative analysis of roles across other Local Authorities;
- ix. That Members of the Council be encouraged to claim those expenses that are due to them, noting the work of the Panel in widening those meetings and events that can be claimed for;
- x. 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; and
- xi. The Panel wish to place on record their appreciation to Councillors for their continued Leadership and tireless working in their communities, especially given concerns raised in paragraph 5.2.

NOTES:

- 1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
- 2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

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

The Meeting started at 8.49 am and finished at 9.36 am