



Independent Remuneration Panel 22 October 2008

Representation from the Members' Allowances Panel

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 11 December 2007, the Council resolved (minute 73 refers) that *'a politically balanced group of five Members be established to consider the Members' Allowance Scheme and make representations to the Independent Remuneration Panel'*.
- 1.2 The following components of the Members' Allowances Scheme were reviewed by the Members' Allowances Panel (MAP) which are listed below in the order that they were considered:-
 - (a) Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA);
 - (b) Members' Basic Allowance (MBA);
 - (c) the link between the MBA and the annual 'cost of living' pay award paid to employees of the Council; and
 - (d) long-term sickness/absence arrangements for Members.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel is asked to consider the following proposals from the MAP, which was agreed on 17 September 2008. For ease of reference, the actual proposals are shown in bold italics:-

2.1.1 **Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)**

- (a) Following consideration of the SRAs in respect of which posts should continue to be paid and which should not, and as a result of the consultation with other Members of the Council, detailed below are proposals agreed by the MAP:-
- (b) ***no Special Responsibility Allowances be payable to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, and to the Chairman of the Service Delivery Review Panel, Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party and Haverhill Area Working Party;***

Rationale behind the above proposal

The MAP considered that having taken into account the roles of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of other Committees that currently attracted an SRA compared to the work undertaken by the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen outside of each Committee/Panel/Working Party meeting, that these posts did not warrant the payment of an SRA.

- (c) no Special Responsibility Allowances be payable to Group Leaders, however, should a future administration reflect a clear opposition to the majority party, a Special Responsibility Allowance be payable to the Leader of the main opposition Group, regardless of the number of Members contained in this Group; and**

Rationale behind the above proposal

The MAP considered that Group Leaders should not attract an SRA as the work undertaken by the Group Leaders did not significantly exceed that of other Members of the Group, particularly if the Group consisted of a relatively small number. However, the MAP recognised that should a future administration reflect a clear opposition to the majority party, the Leader of the main opposition party should, in principle, attract an allowance, regardless of the number of Members contained in the main opposition Group. Having included the addition of a 'Leader of the Opposition' post, the MAP considered that should a future administration enable this post to be filled, this post should attract a similar SRA to the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees.

- (d) the proposed SRAs expressed as a factor of the MBA to be applied to each of the posts to calculate the actual payment due, are proposed and detailed in the table below:-**

Post:	Current factor:	Current total:	Proposed factor:	Proposed total:
Leader	2.0	2.0	2.8	2.8
Deputy leader; or	1.2		1.4	
Deputy leaders	1.15	2.3	1.3	2.6
Other Cabinet Members	1.1	5.5	1.2	6.0
Chairman: Overview and Scrutiny	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5
Vice-Chairman: Overview and Scrutiny Committee	0.3	0.3	0.25	0.25
Chairman: Policy Development Committee	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5
Vice-Chairman: Policy Development Committee	0.3	0.3	0.25	0.25
Chairman: Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Vice-Chairman: Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

Chairman: Development Control Committee	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Vice-Chairmen: Development Control Committee	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.6
Chairman: Licensing and Regulatory Committee	0.2	0.2	0	0
Chairman: Standards	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Standards Co- optees allowance	0.04	0.12	0.04	0.12
Chairman: Sustainable Development Panel	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Chairman: Service Delivery Review Panel	0.4	0.4	0	0
Group Leaders 10+ members	0.6		0	
Group Leaders 5-9 members	0.3		0	
Leader of the Opposition	0		0.4	
Totals:		14.92		15.62

Rationale behind the above proposals

The MAP considered that the Leader, Deputy Leaders and other Cabinet Members, had a significantly greater workload than other Members of the Council, both outside of Committee meetings and in connection with their Portfolios. Therefore, it is proposed that these SRA factors be adjusted, as indicated.

The MAP also considered that the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees should be amended to reflect a fairer, consistent approach to the payment of SRAs to each of these posts based upon the workload currently undertaken by these Members. However, following consultation with other Members of the Council, the MAP concluded that as the Performance and Audit Scrutiny (P&AS) Committee comprised of only 7 Members compared to 13 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) and Policy Development (PD) Committees, and that the P&AS Committee only considered items that specialised in performance and financial affairs as opposed to a wide-range of topics by the other two committees, that the SRAs payable to the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the O&S and PD Committees should remain slightly higher than the SRAs received by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the P&AS Committee.

The MAP also considered the roles of the Vice-Chairmen of the Development Control Committee. This Committee meets 12 times a year, plus 6 Site Inspection meetings, each lasting several hours. Together with the Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen of this Committee undertake a significant amount of work outside of the meetings such as attending lengthy pre-meeting briefings. Therefore, although

the MAP did not propose a higher SRA, it was accepted that the IRP may wish to keep this under review.

2.1.2 Members' Basic Allowance

The MAP reviewed the current MBA of £4,995 which was payable from 1 April 2007. The increase is currently automatically linked to the pay award received by the Council's employees; however, no increase has yet been applied from 1 April 2008, as no agreement as to the level of increase for the Council's employees has yet been reached.

The MAP agreed that the MBA should not be increased to a level above the increase in Council Tax for 2008/2009 (3.4%) and therefore, the Panel proposes that the current MBA should be increased by 3.3% to £5,160 payable and back-dated from 1 April 2008.

2.1.3 The link between the MBA and the annual 'cost of living' pay award paid to employees of the Council

The MAP also considered applying an alternative method to the automatic link with the Council employees' annual 'cost of living' pay award to be applied for future years.

Consideration was therefore given, to linking the increase in the MBA to a percentage below the current level of inflation as recorded by the Retail Price Index (RPI) as published in the previous September of each year.

Therefore, with effect from 1 April 2009, the MAP proposes that the MBA should be increased by 0.6% less than the level of inflation published in the previous September's Retail Price Index, and should be applicable at this rate for each year thereafter.

2.1.4 Long Term Sickness/Absence Arrangements for Members

Having considered the long term sickness arrangements currently in place for employees of the Council, the MAP proposes that should a Member be absent up to a period of six consecutive months the Member would remain entitled to his/her full allowances. However, should absence continue beyond six consecutive months, and the Member was excused for their absence having obtained a dispensation from the Council, the absent Member should only receive half of their allowances for up to the following six consecutive month period of absence.

3. Considerations

The Panel is requested to **CONSIDER** the proposals of the Members' Allowances Panel, as detailed in Section 2 of Report Z306.

For further information, please contact:-

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