

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel to Rochford District Council – April 2007

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In December 2006 the Independent Remuneration Panel made recommendations for remuneration levels for Members for 2007/08, based on the operation of a Committee style decision-making system with five Policy Committees.
- 1.2 The Council in February 2007 requested that the Panel re-convene to consider specifically the impact the introduction of a new political decision-making structure might have, based on an Executive Board of nine Members with three Area Committees, and also with the additional role of 'Member Champion' in key areas of work.
- 1.3 The Panel also considered specific requests regarding firstly remuneration for the Chairman of the Standards Committee, and secondly Rayleigh Town Council remuneration levels.

2 WORK PROGRAMME

- 2.1 The Panel met on two occasions and heard from Councillor Cutmore, Leader of the Council, Councillor Back, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and Paul Warren, Chief Executive. The Panel would like to express their thanks for their contributions.
- 2.2 The Panel considered the following documents:-
 - comparative information about executive allowances in District Councils in Essex
 - report to full Council on 27 February 2007 outlining the potential new political decision-making structure.

3 DISTRICT COUNCIL PROPOSALS

3.1 Executive Board Allowance

The Panel considered information about the extra work and accountability required of roles on the Executive Board compared to the existing roles of Policy Committee Chairman. The Panel noted the Board would operate as a collective, and therefore Members would not be taking individual decisions. However, Executive Board Members would either be required to have an in-depth knowledge of their defined area of responsibility or be the Chairman of an Area Committee, and all Board Members would have to keep up-to-date with the entire broad range of Board responsibilities.

The Panel had wished to consider using a 'building block' of a percentage of the basic allowance to remunerate Executive Board Members, but felt unable to do this on the basis of the information provided. However, a one-off additional payment would recognise the extra work involved and this could be reviewed again later in 2007 when the Panel re-convened to consider remuneration levels for 2008/09.

Recommendation: All Executive Board Members (including Area Committee Chairmen) to receive the existing Committee Chairman's allowance of 50% of the basic allowance at £2,067 per annum, plus an additional payment of £1,000.

The Panel also considered the remuneration that should be payable if an Executive Board Member chaired a Sub-Committee within their area of responsibility.

Recommendation: That the existing Sub-Committee Chairman's allowance of 10% of the basic allowance at £413 per annum should only be payable if the Chairman of the Sub-Committee was not the Executive Board Member with overall responsibility for the area of work.

3.2 **Review Committee Chairman's Allowance**

The Panel further considered that in any new Executive Board structure, the role of the Review Committee Chairman would be increasingly important as part of the system of checks and balances on the work of the Board.

Recommendation: That the allowance for the Chairman of the Review Committee should be set at an equivalent rate to that of an Executive Board Member, at the existing Committee Chairman's allowance of 50% of the basic allowance of £2,067 per annum, plus an additional payment of £1,000.

3.3 **Member Champions**

The Panel considered the likely role of Member Champions. It was felt that this role was not clearly identified and the Panel requested that when they reconvened in 2007 a clearly defined role (with specific responsibilities and outcomes to be achieved) was available to assist their consideration of the appropriate remuneration level.

Recommendation: That the Member Champions allowance be set at 10% of the basic allowance at £413 per annum.

3.4 **Chairman of the Standards Committee**

The Panel was asked to give a view about the remuneration for the Chairman of the Standards Committee. This position was currently held by an elected Councillor, but forthcoming legislation looked likely to require that this Committee was chaired by an independent representative. The Panel considered that the Standards Committee was a key part of the overall governance framework and that if the work required remained the same, then the same level of payment should be made irrespective of who chaired the Committee.

Recommendation: That the allowance for the Chairman of the Standards Committee, currently set at 50% of the basic allowance at £2,067 per annum, be payable to whoever takes on the role of Chairman.

All other District Council allowances to remain in place as agreed by the Council on 27 February 2007.

3.5 **Remuneration for 2008/09**

The Panel asked to be provided with the following information when re-convening later in the year to consider remuneration levels for 2008/09 -

Outcome of the Peer Review

Report from the Review Committee of the results of their monitoring of any new political decision-making structure

Evidence from Executive Board Members about their new roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, including time commitment

Evidence from Officers about how any new structure is working and the difference it has made to the Council

A clearly defined role for Member Champions, including specific responsibilities and outcomes to be achieved.

4 **RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL ALLOWANCES**

- 4.1 Since the Independent Remuneration Panel had concluded their deliberations in December 2006, Rayleigh Town Council had been awarded Quality Parish status. The Town Clerk had enquired as to whether the Panel would be prepared to reconsider allowances as a result of this achievement. The Panel congratulated Rayleigh Town Council in achieving this recognition.

Recommendation: That as the Panel wished to review all Parish/Town Council schemes in 2008/09 it was considered appropriate to refrain from making any further changes until the Panel met again to consider remuneration levels for 2008/09.

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Independent Remuneration Panel

April 2007