

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON WEDNESDAY 3RD JULY, 2024

PRESENT: Susan Lowe (in the Chair)
Ed Davies, Tony Hussey and Susan Murphy

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Atkinson

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Joanne Hadley.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interest were received.

9. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

10. PAYMENT OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES TO DEPUTY LEADER POSITIONS

Further to Minute No. 6 of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 the Panel considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking the reconsideration of the level of payment of special responsibility allowance (SRA) to Deputy Leaders of the Council.

The report indicated that at its meeting held on 10 June 2024, the Panel agreed with the principle of the payment of a special responsibility allowance for the Deputy Leader positions; and that having taken into account comparisons between the other Liverpool City Region local authorities and Sefton in terms of population and numbers of elected members serving on such authorities, the Panel considered that Sefton most aligned to Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.

Accordingly, the Panel agreed that the special responsibility allowance made to a Deputy Leader position should be 10% of the special responsibility allowance made to the Leader; and that the formula be adopted whereby if the Council had two Deputy Leaders then the 10% enhancement to the special responsibility allowance be split 50/50 and that if the Council had three Deputy Leaders then the 10% enhancement to the special responsibility allowance be split by thirds and so on.

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The report also indicated that prior to making its decision, the Panel suggested that it would have been helpful if a justification for the introduction of an SRA for the Deputy Leader positions had been set out.

Councillor Atkinson, Leader of the Council, was made aware of this and welcomed the opportunity to set out her justification; and this was detailed in paragraph 2.4 of the report. The Panel was advised that the report to the IRP on 10 June was submitted without seeking any input from the Leader of the Council; hence there being no justification contained in that report from Councillor Atkinson for her proposal.

Councillor Atkinson was present at the meeting and answered questions from Panel members on her justification.

RESOLVED: That having heard the justification from Councillor Atkinson, the Panel understands the principles of the decision for two Deputy Leaders and accordingly:

- (1) Minute No. 6 (e) of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 be rescinded and the level of special responsibility allowance for the positions of the two Deputy Leaders of the Council be made such that 100% of the allowance be paid to each position as opposed to being split on a 50:50 basis; and
- (2) the backdating of the allowances to the Deputy Leader positions to 16 May 2024 be reaffirmed.