

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON 9 JULY 2009

PRESENT: Mr. N. Edwards (in the Chair)
Mr. E. Davies (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Bigley, Brady, Fairclough, M Fearn, Hill
and Papworth and Mr. J. Fraser (Independent
Member) and Mrs. B. O'Brien (Parish Council
Member)

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Mr. D. Warren (Parish Council Member).

8. MRS. GWEN STOREY

The Chair referred to the recent death on 3 July 2009 of Mrs. Gwen Storey, wife of Councillor Eric Storey, a substitute Member of this Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the sincere condolences of the Committee be extended to Councillor Storey on the sad death of his wife.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received.

Member	Minute	Reason	Action
Councillors Hill and Papworth	11 - Members Allowances - Independent Remuneration Panel	Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Left the room and took no part in the consideration of the item
Councillor Brady	11 - Members Allowances - Independent Remuneration Panel	Chair of Audit and Governance Committee	Took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 May 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

11. MEMBER ALLOWANCES - INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Further to Minute No. 3 of the meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) of 3 December 2008, and Minute No. 25 of the meeting of this Committee held on 22 January 2009, the Committee considered the report of the Legal Director which incorporated a copy of the report of the IRP in relation to the review of the Members' Allowance Scheme. The views of the Committee were sought on the recommendations of the Panel prior to the submission of the report to Council for consideration.

The report indicated that the IRP's views had been sought on the following issues:

- (a) the appropriate figure for the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs;
- (b) the appropriate figure and level of SRA for the Audit and Governance Committee Chair; and
- (c) if it was appropriate to pay travelling expenses to those Members who undertook statutory visits to Children's Homes.

The IRP, at its meeting held on 3 December 2008, had resolved in respect of the views referred to above that:

- (1) in recognition of:
 - (a) the evolving workload and responsibilities placed upon Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and in particular on the Chairs of such Committees;
 - (b) the evidence identified within national research commissioned by the Local Government Association and the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government which clearly demonstrates that the average allowance to Overview and Scrutiny Chairs is comparable, or higher than, the Chairs of Licensing and sometimes Planning Committees; and;
 - (c) the need to raise the profile and the value that the Council places upon the function of Overview and Scrutiny;

the Special Responsibility Allowance for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs be increased from the 2009/10 Municipal Year, to a multiplier of 100% of the Basic Allowance;

- (2) the current link that the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee is the same as that to Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees be severed; and that the SRA for the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee remain as a multiplier of 50% of the Basic Allowance;
- (3) although the Panel is concerned that Sefton is not fulfilling the required number of statutory Regulation 33 visits to Children's Homes; and that one political party's Members have not undertaken any such visits in 2006/07, 2007/08 and to date in 2008/09, the Panel does not consider that the payment of travelling expenses to undertake such visits is a suitable way to remedy such problems and accordingly, the request to pay travelling expenses to those Members who undertake statutory Regulation 33 visits to Children's Homes be declined, but that the situation be kept under review;
- (4) the issue of the payment of travelling expenses in relation to Regulation 33 visits be considered further following the review currently being undertaken by the Fostering Service Working Group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services); and
- (5) it be noted that in accordance with Minute No. 3(9) of 14 June 2007, a full review of the Member Allowances Scheme will be undertaken prior to the beginning of the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be advised that the Standards Committee has accepted the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel with the exception of the implementation date; and therefore Council be requested to determine the implementation date.