

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON 15 DECEMBER 2009**

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

Councillors Fairclough, Hill, Mr. J. Fraser and
Mr. D. Warren

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Booth (Substitute Member) M. Fearn, Papworth and Storey (Substitute Member).

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received.

Member	Minute	Reason	Action
Councillor Hill	33 - Members Allowances - Independent Remuneration Panel	Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Left the room and took no part in the consideration of the item.

32. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 2009.

The Legal Director reported that arrangements would be made for all Members of the Council and representatives of all Parish Councils to view the DVD "Assessment made Clear" at a Members briefing session to be held on 14 January 2010 at 4.30 p.m. in Bootle Town Hall.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record; and
- (2) the verbal report by the Legal Director be noted.

33. REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Further to Minute No. 11 of the meeting of this Committee held on 9 July 2009 and Minute No. 12 of the Council meeting held on the same date, the Committee considered the report of the Legal Director which incorporated a copy of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

The report indicated that the IRP had met on 16 November 2009 to consider the resolution from the Council meeting and hear the comments of the Leaders of the Liberal Democrat Group and Labour Group (The Leader of the Conservative Group had sent apologies). After considering the issues, the IRP had resolved that:

- 1) We note the Council's concerns regarding the affordability of our proposals given the current economic situation generally and the difficult financial challenges the Council itself faces. Nevertheless our proposals were made after careful consideration of the report and information before us and we have not received any further information or evidence which would cause us to revise our original recommendations to the Council.
- 2) In those circumstances whilst the Council's concerns are both recognised and indeed to be applauded, we are firmly of the view that it is for the Council itself to make decisions on the budgetary implications of any change to the Members Allowances Scheme. Although we would recommend that should the Council approve any increase to the Special Responsibility Allowance of Overview and Scrutiny Chairs then this should not be backdated beyond the date of the Council's formal approval.
- 3) In the light of Members concerns we would respectfully draw Members' attention to the current under spend in the Members Allowance Scheme for this financial year and to the provisions within Section 5 of the Scheme itself which does allow Members to give notice in writing to the Finance and Information Services Director and elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to an allowance under the Scheme.
- 4) Finally, it was recommended in our report of 14 June 2007 that there should be a full review of the Members' Allowance Scheme prior to the beginning of the municipal year 2010/11. This recommendation was accepted by the meeting of the Council of 6 September 2007. We have therefore requested that the Legal Director and Finance and Information Services Director facilitate a further meeting of the panel in early April 2010 to progress this review.

RESOLVED:

STANDARDS COMMITTEE- TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER, 2009

That the Council be advised that the Standards Committee has accepted the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.