

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON WEDNESDAY 9TH MAY, 2012

PRESENT: Canon R. Driver (in the Chair)
Mr. E. Davies, Mr. S. Dickson, Mr. J. Fraser and
Mrs. S. Lowe

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED:

That Canon Roger Driver be appointed Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel for the 2012 -2013 Municipal Year.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME 2012-13

Members of the Panel met to take part in an induction/refresh session to aid them in formulating an objective review of the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2012/13.

Prior to the meeting, Panel Members were provided with the following information:-

Appendix A - Wirral MBC report of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances

Appendix B - Comparison of Local Authority Allowances

Appendix C - Members currently receiving SRA's

Appendix D - Cabinet Portfolio responsibilities across Council functions and corresponding remit of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Appendix E - Members' attendance at meetings

Appendix F- Role descriptions/person specifications for Cabinet Members; Leader (and Deputy Leaders); Mayor of the Council; Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs; Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members; Elected Members; Chair of Regulatory Committee, Area Committee and Standards Committees; and Regulatory Committee, Area Committee and Standards Committee Members

Appendix G - National Census of Local Authority Councillors Executive Summary and the time spent on Council activities.

Margaret Rawding, Head of Corporate Finance and ICT made a short presentation to Members updating on the budget position of the Council. Mrs. Rawding indicated that £44 million of cuts had been delivered in 2011/12; that £20 million of cuts would need to be made in 2012/13; and that significant cuts were forecast to be made in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and that the legislative changes associated with Council Tax support would also impact the Council's budgetary position. With regard to reductions, Mrs. Rawding indicated that the Council's senior management structure and associated management and support had been reduced by 25%; that critical frontline, regulatory business efficiencies had been made and services restructured; whilst some services had ceased. Mrs. Rawding also detailed the staffing implications of the cuts which included the cessation of incremental pay increases since 2008/09; no pay inflation increases since 2009; staff taking 4 days unpaid leave per year (a 1.2% pay cut); and that both voluntary and compulsory redundancies had been made. Mrs. Rawding concluded that the Council's financial situation would be monitored very closely but that in the future, services would continue to shrink and tough political decisions would have to be taken.

Ms. Andrea Grant, Head of Governance and Civic Services circulated a copy of the Members' Allowance Scheme from the Council's Constitution and provided specific information on the "multiplier" applied to the Special Responsibility Allowances. Ms. Grant also updated on the new political composition of the Council and advised that new governance arrangements were awaited from the Leader of the Council. Once such new arrangements were known and approved by Council on 15 May 2012, then the Scheme of Members' Allowances would need to be quickly reviewed.

The Chair, Canon Driver circulated a proposal that aimed to simplify the Allowance Scheme by creating 4 levels of payment that depended on the responsibilities of Councillors. The 4 categories related to Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member; Senior Councillor – a Councillor who held a significant position of responsibility in the Council's political management structure, for example, Chair of a major Committee, the Leader of a significant opposition group, the Mayor etc; and a Councillor – an elected Member who was unlikely to hold no significant position of responsibility in the Council's political management structure and who would receive the Basic Allowance.

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RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposals tabled by the Chair be used as a basis for the review of the Members' Allowance Scheme;
- (2) the Head of Governance and Civic Services be requested to:
 - (a) collate information from other Metropolitan local authorities regarding the Basic Allowances paid to their elected Members;
 - (b) invite the comments of Sefton's elected Members regarding the Members' Allowance Scheme; and
 - (c) e mail Panel Members with details of the new Governance structure of the Council when announced; and
- (3) further meetings of the Panel be held on:
 - (a) 6 June 2012 at 2.00 p.m. in Southport Town Hall; and
 - (b) 10 October 2012 at 10.15 a.m. in Bootle Town Halland Party Group Leaders (or their representatives) be invited to the meetings on 6 June and 10 October and to attend at 2.30 p.m. and 10.45 a.m. respectively.