

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON 4 JUNE 2015

PRESENT: Mrs. Susan Lowe (in the Chair)
Mr. E. Davies, Mr. J. Fraser and Mrs. S. Lowe

ALSO PRESENT: Jill Coule, Head of Corporate Legal Services, Paul Fraser, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Margaret Rawding, Head of Corporate Finance and ICT and Andrea Watts, Head of Governance, Neighbourhoods and Partnerships

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED:

That Mrs. Susan Lowe be appointed Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel for the 2015 -2016 Municipal Year.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

The Panel considered the report of the Head of Governance, Neighbourhoods and Partnerships that indicated that following the Local Government elections in May 2015, the Council had appointed a new Leader of the Council who, in turn, appointed a new Cabinet; that the number of Cabinet Members had increased from the Leader plus 6 to the Leader plus 8 and that the Chair of the Planning Committee was now a

Cabinet Member; and that it was noted at the Adjourned Annual Council meeting held on 21 May 2015 that:-

“...it be noted that there will be no additional cost of the above arrangements. The Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for Cabinet Members will be adjusted to ensure the new arrangements are cost neutral and the Independent Remuneration Panel is requested to confirm this position.”

Appendix A to the report detailed the current Scheme of Members Allowances based on multiples of the Basic Allowance (BA) to give the levels of SRA for various posts; that in order to meet the requirements that the changes should be cost neutral, the Panel was requested to consider that the BA no longer be the applied multiplier for the Leader and Cabinet posts and that a multiplier of £7,246 be used instead; and that this represented a reduction in the multiplier of 17.6% based on the current BA of £8794.51.

The report concluded by requesting the Panel's views on the above mentioned reduction (in the multiplier of 17.6% based on the current BA of £8794.51) for submission to the Council meeting on 16 July 2015.

The Panel also considered an email submitted by Councillor Dawson in which he expressed concern that the Panel were being invited to endorse a decision of the Council relating to the amendments to SRA's rather than the Panel formulating its own decision on the matter; and that he considered that the decision taken by Council to increase the number of Cabinet Members from 7 to 9 was unconstitutional. The email concluded by detailing a number of reasons why Councillor Dawson considered supporting a reduction in the level of Sefton's SRA's.

Following questions from Panel Members the Monitoring Officer advised that she was satisfied that the decision taken by Council was neither unlawful nor unconstitutional.

RESOLVED: That:-

- (1) the Council be commended for maintaining a cost neutral position regarding the proposed arrangements and for the small reduction in the overall amount of Special Responsibility Allowances paid to Cabinet Members;
- (2) it be noted that the Leader of the Council and all Cabinet Members had given notice in writing, to the Chief Executive, to voluntarily forgo a portion of their Special Responsibility Allowances with immediate effect to £21,738 per annum (from £26,383.54) and to £14,492 per annum (from £17,589.03) respectively pending the approval of the new arrangements by Council;
- (3) it be noted that the proposed arrangements do not have any effect on the level of Members' Basic Allowance;
- (4) the Council be advised that the Panel recommends the proposals as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report and detailed below:-

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Basic Allowance	66 x £8794.51	£580,437.66
Leader of the Council	1 x £21,738	£21,738
Cabinet Member	8 x £14,492	£115,936
Party Leaders	2 x £4,397.26	£8794.52
Chair of Licensing and Regulatory Committee	1 x £8,794.51	£8794.52
Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny Committees	4 x £4,397.26	£17,589.04
Chair of Audit & Governance Committee	1 x £4,397.26	£4,397.26
TOTAL COST		£757,687

- (5) in future, the Panel considers that should the Leader of the Council wish to propose changes to the Members Scheme of Allowances wider than the Cabinet Membership then consultation should take place with all Members affected by those proposals in advance of any consideration of this matter by the Panel, so that the Panel can be advised of members views accordingly