

**INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL –
NOTE OF MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2018, TOWN HALL, ST ANNES**

Present: Mr David Cam, Chairman

Mrs Helen Hockenhill

Mrs Karen Eaton

Tracy Morrison, Director of Resources

Ian Curtis, Head of Governance

Katharine McDonnell, Democratic Services Officer (note taker)

Tracy welcomed everyone to the meeting. By way of introduction to the matter under consideration, she reminded the Panel members of the meetings held last year. She reminded them that the Panel had met to consider potential changes to member allowances, and had discussed whether to recommend Special Responsibility Payments to Planning Committee members due to the workload of the committee. The Panel had recommended no changes to the allowance scheme last year. However, the panel had asked that members of the council be canvassed regarding workload and allowances. One response had been received, which was considered as part for the panel's deliberations. Following the brief update, Tracy asked Ian Curtis to present the report.

Ian Curtis presented the 2019/2020 Member Allowance Scheme report, of which a copy had previously been circulated to members of the Panel. The report covered the current level of members' allowances and the special responsibility allowances; dependent carers' allowance; and a comparison of allowances paid in 2006 and 2018. The report also provided information regarding the different allowances, the annual budgeted amount for members' allowances and the Council's financial position. It also provided a detailed spreadsheet comparing the allowances paid by other Lancashire authorities and authorities who operated a committee system.

Ian referred the Panel to Appendix 2 which showed the comparative payments made at other local authorities. He highlighted that the basic allowance paid to Councillors was below the average for Lancashire authorities, but that on a per resident basis, the cost of Fylde's basic allowances was the highest in Lancashire. This was a function of the relatively small population of the borough and the relatively large number of elected members.

The Panel thanked Ian for his report and discussed the questions posed in the report. In the course of their discussion, the panel noted that the minimal number of representations from members of the council could be taken to indicate than members were broadly satisfied with the present allowances. They felt that allowances at Fylde were properly viewed as an honorarium, rather than a salary. The panel inquired about the financial position of the council and were informed that, though there was no room for complacency, the finances of the council were presently stable.

In the course of their discussion the Panel considered councillors' workload and discussed the roles that attracted Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) and the time commitment for those roles.

In particular, the panel discussed a suggestion that had been made by a member of the council about rebalancing the special responsibility allowances for the Leader and Deputy Leader, but felt that there was no pressing need to change the present levels of allowance. Nor, having discussed the matter last year, did they agree with a suggestion that members of Planning Committee should be paid a special responsibility allowance.

The Panel recommended that there be no change to the allowance scheme for 2019/20. In doing so, the panel was mindful that allowances had not increased in recent years, despite inflation, and felt that it would be appropriate next year to look at inflation-adjusted historical data.

Mr Cam thanked the other Panel members for their attendance and consideration of the matters at hand, and thanked the officers for their work and advice.
