

**INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL –  
NOTE OF MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2015, TOWN HALL, ST ANNES**

Present: Mr David Cam, Chairman

Mrs Helen Hockenhull

Tracy Morrison, Director of Resources

Paul O’Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer

Ian Curtis, Head of Governance

Katharine McDonnell, Democratic Services Officer

Ms Morrison welcomed the Panel and provided a precis of the meeting last year which reviewed the allowances in light of the forthcoming governance change. The recommendations of the panel had been taken to the council meeting in January 2015, where the decision was deferred until July 2015, to allow for one cycle of meetings to occur following the governance change in May 2015. When the council agreed the member allowance scheme there was some deviation to the recommendations of the panel. Tracy summarised these differences.

Ian Curtis presented the 2015/2015 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; a comparison of allowances paid in 2006 and 2015; and comparison statistics for neighbouring local authorities.

Mr Curtis highlighted two particular issues on which the Panel were asked to give their recommendation. The first was to consider an addition to approved duties list for travel and subsistence. To add the words “*or event*” after “*meeting*”, where it occurred in the preamble wording to the table and the table header.

This changed the final row of the table to the following:

Any other meeting or event at which the attendance of a member is invited or sanctioned by an officer	Member whose attendance is invited or sanctioned
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Mr Curtis explained that members were often invited or expected to attend official events which were not meetings, but where payment of expenses would be appropriate. He further advised that it was not a frequent occurrence but an addition to the list of official duties would remove ambiguities when adjudicating claims.

The Panel discussed this amendment and took that view that it was a pragmatic solution to an infrequent problem.

The second issue the Panel were asked to consider was whether to increase the honorarium paid to the Independent Persons. Mr Curtis explained the rationale behind the suggested increase was due to changes in their responsibilities. He advised that due to legislative changes the Independent Persons were now co-opted members of the Chief Officers Committee. He added however that the increase in duties was at the moment theoretical as the Chief Officers Committee had yet to meet since its inception and would only meet if there was a disciplinary or recruitment issue to discuss. He further advised that there may, however, be a training requirement for the Independent Persons to allow them to undertake the new role.

The Panel discussed the suggestion, and recommended that the issue be left unchanged for the forthcoming 12 months, with it to come back to the Panel for review, and with the consideration that if any work occurred in the interim that it could be backdated if necessary.

In regards to the rest of the Member Allowance Scheme, the Panel recommended that it remained unchanged. The Panel discussed that the Council had only recently considered and decided on changes and it was too soon to recommend further changes. The Panel felt that the next annual review may be more meaningful when members had experienced a full 12 months under the committee system. They commented that some member feedback on the level of allowances for the next meeting could be useful to their considerations.

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

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