

Meeting: Council
Date: 12 July 2007
Report of: Director of Strategy & Governance
Subject: Review of Members Allowances
Wards Affected: All

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 28 JUNE 2007**

Present: Councillor Oxley (Chair); Councillor Mrs. Brown (Deputy Chair), Councillor Mrs. Mears (Deputy Chair), Councillors Elgood, Hamilton, Hawkes, Kemble, Meadows, Mitchell (OS), Mrs Norman, Norman, Peltzer Dunn, Randall, Taylor and Wrighton.

PART ONE

ACTION

***28. REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

- 28.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance, concerning the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of Members' Allowances (for copy see minute book). The report also detailed the proposed increase for the allowance paid to the members of the Panel in recognition of their time commitment and role.
- 28.2 The Chairman welcomed Mr. Simon Keane, the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the meeting and invited him to address the committee.
- 28.3 Mr. Keane thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to introduce the Panel's report and explained that the Panel had reviewed the level of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) paid to Members since reporting in March 2006. Having met with various Members and taken on board the levels of allowances paid by other authorities, he stated that the Panel had concluded that the Basic Allowance should be increased by 2.2% which equated to the salary inflation rate. He noted that the Panel had also been mindful of the elections and had felt that its report should wait until after their outcome, in order to take into account any changes and the views of the new Administration in respect of the SRAs. He stated that the Panel met with both the Chief Executive and the new Leader of the Council and has taken on board the Leader of the Council's objectives in seeking to reduce the number of SRA's that would be paid. The Panel welcomed the overall reduction in SRAs to 27, which met the government guidelines for 50% of the number of

councillors to be in receipt of an SRA. It also recognised the changes in the committee structure which the Administration had brought in and therefore the necessary changes in the posts that would be in receipt of an SRA. The Panel had also as part of its review concluded that the Chairs of both the Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee should be included within the Members Allowances Scheme and set their SRA's at £2,110 and £3,517 respectively. He stated that the Panel wished to recommend that the level of SRAs should be increased by the salary inflation rate of 2.2%.

28.4 The Chairman thanked Mr. Keane for attending and asked that the committee's thanks and appreciation of their work be relayed back to the members of the Panel.

28.5 Councillor Wrighton welcomed the Panel's report and stated that having been interviewed by the Panel felt that her concerns had been taken on board and she could appreciate the challenging role faced by the Panel. However, she wished to raise a concern in respect of the number of allowances that were attributable to the Labour Opposition Group, bearing in mind that the Green Group had only one less seat on the council but only one SRA paid to the Convenor.

28.6 The Chairman noted the point raised by Councillor Wrighton but stated that the Members Allowances Scheme and the SRAs had been based on the council's structure and as such the Opposition Group were recognised as were the leaders of other minority groups. It was therefore a reflection of the actual situation and should that change then it would result in changes in respect of the SRAs paid to Opposition Members.

28.7 **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND –**

- (1) That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in its report be accepted;
- (2) That the Chief Executive be authorised to amend the Brighton & Hove Members' Allowance Scheme to reflect the foregoing, to submit to Council for adoption, and issue the revised Scheme following council approval;
- (3) That the allowance payable to each of the Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be increased to £500pa with effect from the 25th May 2007 (this being the day after the Annual Council meeting and in line with the effective date recommended by the Panel for the increases in Members' Allowances), in recognition of their time commitment and their important role.

NB This item has been referred to the Council for decision under Procedural Rule 20.3(b)