

Council

23 October 2014

Agenda Item 34

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: **Review of Members' Allowances 2014 - Extract from the Proceedings of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 16 October 2014**

Date of Meeting: **16 October 2014**

Report of: **Monitoring Officer**

Contact Officer: Name: **Ross Keatley** Tel: **29-1064**

E-mail: ross.keatley@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE***Action Required of Council:***

To receive the item referred from the Policy & Resources Committee for approval:

Recommendation:

- (1) That the Council be recommended to adopt the new Members Allowances Scheme for the payment of allowances in 2015/16 with effect from the Annual Council Meeting in May 2015; subject to the implementation of the Basic Allowance from the 11th May 2015 as detailed in the IRP's report and the Scheme in appendix B;
- (2) That the Chief Executive be authorised to issue the Brighton & Hove Members' Allowances Scheme in accordance with the regulations following council approval;
- (3) That where there are any changes to any role listed as attracting a Special Responsibility Allowance under the scheme, and the revised role is substantially the same as the previous role in terms of the nature or level of responsibility; the Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to apply to the new role. This is subject to the Independent Remuneration Panel being consulted and agreeing that it is substantially the same role;
- (4) That the allowance payable to each of the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be increased by 1% in line with the Public Sector pay award with effect from 21st May 2015, in recognition of the time commitment and the role of the Panel.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

4.00pm 16 OCTOBER 2014

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor J Kitcat (Chair) Councillors Sykes (Deputy Chair), G Theobald (Opposition Spokesperson), Morgan (Group Spokesperson), Bowden, Hamilton, Lepper, A Norman, Peltzer Dunn and Shanks

PART ONE

59 REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - 2014

- 59.1 The Committee considered a report of the Head of Law & Monitoring Officer in relation to the Review of Members' Allowances 2014. In accordance with the council's recommendations the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) had undertaken a comprehensive review of the scheme. The IRP had conducted an online survey of Members and met with each of the Group Leaders, Chairs & Deputy Chairs of Committees, Opposition Spokespersons and other Members in July, and had taken on board the comments received. It was the view of the IRP that the new scheme should come into effect from Annual Council in May 2015. The Chair of the IRP, Mr Childerhouse, was also invited to address the Committee, and stated the IRP had been fully aware of the difficult financial position of the Council. The IRP had looked carefully at the Council's objectives and tried to attract a wider range of individuals into public service. It was also added that the report was clearly evidence based, and much of the information came from the serving Members themselves.
- 59.2 The Chair thanked Mr Childerhouse for the work of the IRP – especially in relation to the projected reduction in cost of the new scheme. It was noted that this scheme would be for the incoming Council after the 2015 local elections.
- 59.3 Councillor Morgan reiterated thanks and stated that it was appropriate that Members should also take their share of the savings over the next few years. Members often had to give up a great deal to undertake the role, and it was important that they did not suffer financially as a consequence. The pool of Members should not always be drawn from the retired and financially independent. Councillor Morgan noted his support for the report and asked that colleagues did the same.
- 59.4 Councillor Sykes noted his thanks to the work of the IRP, and agreed it was important a wide range of individuals were attracted to public service. On a separate note he

highlighted his disappointment at the withdrawal of the Local Government Pension Scheme for elected councillors.

- 59.5 Councillor A. Norman thanked the IRP for their work; in response to some of the points she raised Mr Childerhouse stated that to attract younger candidates the dependency allowance had been bought more in line with the living wage, and he noted that the IRP had been aware of the much higher than estimated number of hours some Members put into their role each week. Councillor A. Norman noted this response, but added that not all young people would have dependants.
- 59.6 Councillor Peltzer Dunn agreed with others in the debate that all Members should contribute to the wider savings of the Council, but noted this was not explicitly set out in the report. He went on to explain his view that there was a vital role for the main opposition party with in the city, and as such he opposed the removal of Special Responsibility Allowances for certain Opposition Spokespersons – for this reason he would be unable to support the recommendations in the report. In response Mr Childerhouse noted that whilst the proposals were for the next four year administration there would always be the possibility of review by the IRP if any part of the new proposals were found to be causing issues or impacting on Members' ability to effectively undertake their roles.
- 59.7 Councillor Bowden noted that all Members undertook their roles as part of a sense of public duty, and he welcomed the comments of others on the Committee in relation to ensuring the pool of Members was wide and diverse.
- 59.8 Councillor Lepper noted she would support the report, but noted that she would be standing down at the end of this term in office – she also added that on the whole Brighton & Hove remunerated 'quite well' compared to other authorities. She also highlighted that it had been an ongoing source of frustration that she was unable to use her free older-persons bus pass before 9.00 a.m.; whilst younger colleagues on the Council who had annual bus-passes purchased for them, as part of the allowances scheme, could use them before 9.00 a.m.
- 59.9 The then put the recommendation to the vote.

59.10 **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Panel's report as detailed in appendix A be received and endorsed and the recommendations therein be recommended to the Council for approval;

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

- 2) That the Council be recommended to adopt the new Members Allowances Scheme for the payment of allowances in 2015/16 with effect from the Annual Council Meeting in May 2015; subject to the implementation of the Basic Allowance from the 11th May 2015 as detailed in the IRP's report and the Scheme in appendix B;
- 3) That the Chief Executive be authorised to issue the Brighton & Hove Members' Allowances Scheme in accordance with the regulations following council approval;

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- 5) That the allowance payable to each of the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be increased by 1% inline with the Public Sector pay award with effect from 21st May 2015, in recognition of the time commitment and the role of the Panel.