

Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 9th March 2021

Present: Councillor Will Simpson (Chair)
Councillor Kath Pinnock
Councillor Steve Hall
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Paola Antonia Davies
Councillor Susan Lee-Richards
Councillor Donald Firth

In attendance: Councillor Eric Firth (Ex Officio) – Chair of Standards Committee
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Ex Officio) – Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Graham Turner (Ex Officio) – Cabinet Member (Resources)

1 Membership of the Committee

All Members of the Committee were present.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 January 2021 be approved as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Admission of the Public

It was noted that there were no matters listed for consideration in exempt session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time (Written Questions)

No questions were received.

7 Report of the Members' Allowances Independent Review Panel (MAIRP) 2021/22 (Reference to Council)

The Committee received the report of the Members Allowances Independent Review Panel, which set out recommendations proposed for the 2021/2022 municipal year. It was noted that the Panel met on an annual basis to consider and recommend a scheme, having regard to evidence received.

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The report of the Members Allowances Independent Review Panel was attached at Appendix A of the considered report, and recommended that;

- (i) The current basic allowance be increased in line with the amount awarded to Kirklees Council Officers (to be determined) with effect from 1 April 2021.
- (ii) Special Responsibility Allowances remain at the 2020 rate pending a root and branch review of the Members' Allowances Scheme due to take place in summer 2021, and that any increase to Special Responsibility Allowances arising as an outcome of the review, be backdated to 1 April 2021.
- (iii) Should the amount awarded to Kirklees Council Officers not be agreed by 1 April 2021, any increase to the basic allowance be backdated to 1 April 2021.

The draft scheme for 2021, taking account of the recommendations, was attached at Appendix B.

In considering the report, the Committee conveyed thanks to the Panel for the work that had been undertaken, but were of the view that the basic allowance should not be increased with effect from 1 April 2021, and that a report be submitted to the meeting of Council on 17 March 2021 with a recommendation that an increase to the basic allowance not be applied for the 2021/2022 municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the report be submitted to the meeting of Council on 17 March 2021 with a recommendation;

- (i) That Council conveys thanks to the Members Allowances Independent Review Panel for their work and notes the outcomes of the Panel, as attached at Appendix A of the report.
- (ii) That Council resolve not to apply an increase to the Members Basic Allowance for the 2021/2022 municipal year.
- (iii) That it be noted that, should changes subsequently be applied to Special Responsibility Allowances, following the review of Members Allowances Scheme scheduled to take place in summer 2021, the Panel had recommended that any such adjustments to payments be backdated if applicable.
- (iv) That it be noted that the outcome of the review of the Members Allowances Scheme, scheduled to take place in summer 2021, will be considered by Corporate Governance and Audit Committee before any further recommendations are made to Council regarding any proposed changes to Member Special Responsibility Allowances.

8 **Mayoral Accountability (Reference to Cabinet)**

The Committee received a report which set out proposals with regards to mayoral accountability and requested that the Committee give consideration to potential recommendations for holding the Elected Mayor to account.

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The report provided an overview of concurrent powers and Appendix 1 set out a table of functions which would be conferred upon the Mayoral Combined Authority. Appendix 2 to the report summarised the suggestions which had been made at a workshop held on 14 January 2021 and which had been attended by Members of the Committee, along with Chairs of Scrutiny Panels, and representatives from Groups not otherwise represented on Committees party to the discussions.

In considering the report, the Committee raised several matters in terms of both mayoral accountability, and to inform a separate independent submission to be sent from the Chair of the Committee to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). The issues discussed by the Committee included (i) the need to strengthen the relationship between WYCA and constituent Councils (ii) the need to create a model of operation fit for all constituent authorities and across the West Yorkshire area (iii) creating arrangements for the Elected Mayor to attend a meeting of Council, at least annually (iv) improve engagement and transparency by allowing Deputation and Public Questions at WYCA Meetings, enabling representations at meetings including Scrutiny (v) enabling attendance at meetings via the use of a Substitutes Panel (vi) encouraging changes to improve local democracy, and to implement changes as soon as is possible (vii) the need for clarity with regards to operational scrutiny arrangements (viii) considering attendance arrangements at local WYCA scrutiny meetings and developing better joined up working and (ix) enabling annual accountability of the mayoral programme and their achievements.

The Committee also requested that recommendation 6.3 in the report be amended to reflect that consultation be with Group Leaders, and not solely the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the report, and the suggestions presented at the workshop, held on 4 January 2021, and set out at Appendix 2, be noted.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Chair of the Committee to submit an independent representation to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, setting out recommendations for mayoral accountability.
- 3) That the report be submitted to the meeting of Cabinet on 16 March 2021 with the recommendation that (i) Cabinet adopt the draft protocol on concurrent functions and associated statutory consents, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, to further document the basis on which the Council, along with other West Yorkshire Councils and the Mayoral Combined Authority, work together and (ii) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Group Leaders, to agree any subsequent changes to the protocol.

9 Dates of Council Meetings 2021/2022 (Reference to Council)

The Committee received a report which set out a provisional schedule of Council meeting dates for the 2021/2022 municipal year. The report sought endorsement of the schedule for submission to the meeting of Annual Council on 19 May 2021.

The Committee noted the schedule and discussion took place regarding the format of Key Discussion meetings, specifically regarding the selection of discussion topics

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and the need for members to engage in valuable discussions, by being informed by presentation documents or reports in advance of the meeting were possible. The Committee also noted the need to give consideration at a later stage to scheduling the attendance of the Elected Mayor so that discussions could take place at a full Council meeting as to their ambitions for the area.

RESOLVED – That the schedule of Council meetings for the 2021-2022 municipal year be submitted to the meeting of Annual Council on 19 May 2021 with a recommendation of approval.