

Report of The

**Kirklees Council  
Members' Allowances  
Independent Review  
Panel**

10 January 2020

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## **1 Panel Membership**

The Members of the Independent Review Panel are as follows:

Andrew Taylor (Chair)  
Ian Brown  
Chris West  
Lynn Knowles  
Stephen Thornton  
Fiona Weston

The meeting of the Independent Review Panel took place on 10 January 2020.

The following officers attended the Panel meeting:

Carl Whistlecraft, Head of Democracy  
Deborah Nicholson, Councillor Support & Liaison Manager

## **2 Terms of Reference**

The Panel's Terms of Reference are:

- (a) To advise the Council on what would be the appropriate level of remuneration for Councillors having regard to the:
  - Roles Councillors are expected to fulfil
  - Varying roles of different Councillors
  - Practice elsewhere and other Local Authorities.
- (b) To consider schemes of Members Allowances for Town and Parish Councils as and when required.
- (c) To make recommendations and provide advice to the Council on any other issues referred to the Panel by regulation or by the Council.
- (d) The Council retains its power to remove a discredited Panel Member.
- (e) The Panel can appoint its Chair from amongst its Members.

## **3 Constitutional Issues**

### **(a) Term of Office**

It was agreed that the current Panel membership be retained and that all relevant terms of office be renewed until December 2020.

### **(b) Election of Chair of Independent Review Panel**

Andrew Taylor was re-elected Chair of the Independent Review Panel.

#### **4 Place Partnership Lead Councillor**

At the Members' Allowances Independent Review Panel Meeting in July 2019, the Panel made the following recommendation:

(a) Following its evidence-led method of working the Panel would like to hear from the Place Partnerships Lead Councillors when the Panel meets in November 2019 to get a clearer idea of what work is involved and hear about what has (and has not) been achieved so far. They will consider reviewing the allowance at this time, alternatively the Panel will look at the allowance again when they meet in November 2020.

(b) The Panel would like to see evidence of the impact of the role and also positive outcomes relating to the pilot theme, Mental Health, Domestic Abuse.

(c) The Panel would also like to understand more about the relationship between the Place Partnerships Lead Councillors Role and the Cabinet Lead Member and also with the Councillors within their locality. They would like to know what the impact is, and how it has been achieved.

At its meeting on 10 January 2020 the Panel had the opportunity to meet with five of the Place Partnership Lead Members to discuss and explore the above mentioned points. In particular the Panel were keen to ensure that there was sufficient evidence of progress and more importantly to affirm that the role had been assigned the correct band within the overall scheme. In light of the evidence received the Panel made the following observations:

- That despite initial delays the role was now beginning to make real progress, with all Place Partnerships being able to evidence activity in line with the framework that had been co-produced by them;
- That this is an exciting and evolving initiative that will need time to develop properly and thereafter become embedded. This will take time, particularly in terms of being able to evidence impact and positive outcomes;
- That the current Band recommended by the Panel has been fixed at the correct level based on the evidence received;
- That the Panel will continue to revisit the role at future meetings to ensure that it is remunerated appropriately;
- That thought should be given to the ways in which engagement with Place Partnerships is included as part of the developing role profile for the Ward Councillor.

#### **5 Representations from Group Leaders**

The Panel received written representations from Cllr David Hall, Leader of the Conservative Group and Cllr Charles Greaves Leader of the Independent Group.

The Panel considered comments made relating to the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance paid to Councillors and concluded that the Allowances Scheme as a whole would benefit from a full review with a view to recommending revision of the Scheme.

This review will take place in Summer 2020 and will have regard to the issues raised by the written submissions as well as by other developments.

## **6 SRA paid to the Chair of Standards Committee**

At the Members' Allowances Independent Review Panel Meeting in November 2018, the Panel considered evidence from Julie Muscroft, Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning, in respect of the Chair of Standards role in the context of the wider allowances scheme. The Panel made recommendation that this be subject to review in 12 months.

The Panel considered evidence from Julie Muscroft, Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning and Councillor Paul Davies, Chair of Standards, in respect of the Chair of Standards role in the context of the wider allowances scheme.

In light of the evidence received the Panel made the following observations:

- The Chair of Standards role has not diminished and indeed some additional levels of complexity have emerged. For example, there have been a number of significant issues over the last 12 months, with one particular matter receiving 50 complaints, 30 of which went through the Standards process;
- Noted that the Committee on Standards in Public Life have published the outcomes of a consultation, some of the recommendations by CSPL were already in place in Kirklees or have been introduced since the report;
- The role is seen as extremely important in governance and key to giving the public confidence in terms of the accountability and oversight arrangements in place;
- There is a growing need for the work in this area to be proactive, addressing issues before they enter formal procedure and employing techniques such as conflict resolution.

In considering the evidence the Panel recommends that the Chair of Standards continues to be paid at Band E. The role will be revisited as part of the full review of the Scheme in the Summer of 2020.

## **7 Councillor Role Profile**

The Panel received a draft of the new Councillor Role Profile and noted and welcomed the breadth of consultation which had gone into it. This had included dialogue with citizens, officers and councillors.

The Panel recommended that the finalised Councillor Role Profile be brought back for consideration when the review of the Allowances Scheme takes place in Summer 2020. This final Role Profile will, as in the past, form the foundation of the Panel's review of the Scheme.

## **8 Agree the rate for the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance for 2020/21**

The Panel considered changes to the Members allowance scheme for 2020/21.

In particular the Panel considered the following:

- (a) The Basic Allowance;
- (b) Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs);

### **The Panel recommends that:**

- (i) The current basic allowance be increased in line with the amount awarded to Kirklees Council officers (% yet to be agreed as national negotiations are ongoing) with effect from 1 April 2020.
- (ii) The increase of all special responsibility allowances (SRAs) in line with the amount awarded to Kirklees Council officers (% yet to be agreed as national negotiations are ongoing) with effect from 1 April 2020.
- (iii) Should the amount awarded to Kirklees Council officers not be agreed by 1 April 2020, any increase will be backdated to this date.

## **9 Consequential changes to the Scheme**

There are no consequential changes to be made to the scheme.

Report produced on behalf of the Members Allowances Independent Review Panel by Carl Whistlecraft, Head of Democracy, January 2020.