

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 2 January 2014)

1. WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2014-2016 (REPORT A) (MINUTE NO. 52)

The Cabinet has approved a new Workforce Strategy to cover the period 2014-2016. Preparation of the Strategy had been slightly delayed to allow it to take account of the employee survey that was carried out during 2013, and it had already been the subject of extensive consideration, including through the Industrial Relations Committee.

The Strategy identifies 6 main themes:

- Planning our workforce
- Transforming our organisation
- Developing our management and leadership capability
- Recruiting and developing workforce, skills and capacity
- Managing our performance
- Developing pay and reward

These themes will be delivered through high level actions that will operate throughout the period of the Strategy.

The Strategy will be monitored on an annual basis through a report to the Executive Management Team.

2. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2014/15 – 2017/18 (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 53)

Earlier this year the Cabinet requested the statutory Independent Remuneration Panel to evaluate the Members' Allowances Scheme and to make recommendations for the scheme that should be adopted with effect from 1 April 2014 (Minute 9, 5 June 2013 refers). After undertaking substantive research, the Panel has concluded that the current scheme is largely still fit for purpose, but has recommended a number of minor changes. Of greatest note is the proposed reduction of the ICT allowance from £581 per annum to £373, to take account of reductions in the cost of providing the equipment and also allocating 25% of the cost to personal use, in recognition of changes in the patterns of member usage. This generates a net reduction in the basic allowance payable to all Members to £5,897.

It is proposed that the special responsibility allowances payable to the Leader, the Portfolio Holders, the Chairmen of the Audit Committee, Planning Development Control Committee and of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels should remain unaltered. It is however proposed that the allowance payable to the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee should be increased to £1,936 as the current allowance of £1,329 does not fully recognise the workload and responsibilities of the post.

With the advent of a second opposition group in the Council, some changes are proposed to the methodology for the calculation of the Special Responsibility Allowance that should be payable to the Leaders of these groups, to reflect the workload involved.

The Panel has concluded that, now the Cabinet model of decision making has settled down and various roles have become clearer, there is no longer any justification for paying a Special Responsibility Allowance to Shadow Portfolio Holders. That role is not defined in the Constitution and few other authorities give any remuneration for it. If the major Opposition Group achieves a membership of 12 seats (20% of the Council) it is however suggested that the Deputy Leader of the Group should receive an allowance.

Overall, it is anticipated that the proposed revisions to the scheme will achieve a saving of at least £6,737 per annum.

At the Cabinet meeting it was recognised that any process involving benchmarking of this Council against others is limited by the lack of comparable authorities. Members have been invited to discuss the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations, in detail, through their various political group meetings, leading to a decision making discussion at the meeting of the Council.

RECOMMENDED:

(a) *That, in the light of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, the following changes be made to the Members' Allowances Scheme with effect from 1 April 2014:*

- i. That the Basic Allowance for all members be reduced to £5897 per annum to take account of a reduction in the annual payment for the provision and support of ICT equipment;***
- ii. That the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chairman of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee be increased to £1,926;***
- iii. That if the Major Opposition Group has less than 6 Members (10% of the Council Membership), then the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to their Leader be reduced by 25% to £5,286;***
- iv. That if the Major Opposition Group reaches 12 Members (20% of the Council membership), the Deputy Leader of that Group be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance of £1,000;***
- v. That the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Leader of the Minority Opposition Group be reduced to £1,000;***
- vi. That if there are two or more opposition groups of equal size, then the sum of the Special Responsibility Allowances that would be payable to Opposition Group Leaders of differing sizes be divided equally between the Opposition Group Leaders;***
- vii. That the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to Shadow Portfolio Holders be discontinued;***
- viii. That it be confirmed that the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Working Groups will not be paid any Special Responsibility Allowance;***
- ix. That it be confirmed that no Member may receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance;***

- x. That the maximum rate for the childcare element of the Dependants' Carers' Allowance be increased to £7.45 per hour;***
 - xi. That the maximum Dependants' Carers' Allowance childcare element be indexed to the living wage hourly rate (outside of London); and that the elderly or other dependent relatives' element continue to be indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column 28), both to be applied from the same date that indexation applies to staff;***
 - xii. That it be confirmed that the Basic Allowance (including ICT element) and Special Responsibility Allowances be indexed to the national annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column 28), to be applied from the same date applicable to employees;***
 - xiii. That it be confirmed that mileage rates continue to be indexed to the HMRC approved mileage rates for motor vehicles, motor cycles and bicycles; and***
- (b) That, subject to the inclusion of the above amendments, the Council makes its Scheme of Members' Allowances with effect from 1 April 2014.***

**Councillor B Rickman
CHAIRMAN**