

AT A MEETING of the Independent Remuneration Panel of HAMPSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL held at the Castle, Winchester on Wednesday, 29th
September, 2021

Present:

Julia Abbott, David Heck, Richard Kinch and Martin James (Chairman)

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman: Councillor Keith House

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations on this occasion.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had no announcements on this occasion.

6. **COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND RELEVANT CO-OPTED MEMBER COMMENTS**

The Chairman confirmed that the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) had received one comment in regard to their review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, which would be considered under Item 7 on the agenda.

7. **AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME FOR 2021/22**

The IRP considered the report of the Head of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer providing information to enable the IRP to make its recommendation as to a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the following roles:

- Assistant to the Executive – Adult Services and Public Health
- Assistant to the Executive – Children’s Services
- Chairman of the River Hamble Harbour Board

The Director of Adult Services and Public Health, Assistant Director – Performance and Resources in Children’s Services and the Marine Director for the River Hamble Harbour Authority were in attendance to answer the IRPs questions about the roles.

In regard to the two Assistant to the Executive Roles, the IRP noted the depth and breadth of the Adult Services and Public Health, and the Children’s Services portfolios including statutory and safeguarding responsibilities, the importance of robust and effective political engagement to meet the challenges that both these important service areas face against the backdrop of organisational-wide recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, maintaining and developing key partnerships and supporting the stakeholder and public interface in the light of increasing demand and continuing cost pressures. Full details of the roles were set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

In regard to the role of Chairman of the River Hamble Harbour Board, the Marine Director provided some background information about the work of the Harbour Authority. The IRP recognised the unique nature of the role, noted its statutory responsibilities, direct accountability and the level of risk attached to the role. Full details of the role was set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

In reaching its conclusions, the IRP was minded to support an SRA for all three roles from their respective dates of appointment following the County Council Elections on 6 May 2021, with the caveat that the roles be reviewed in 12 months’ time and supported by appropriate evidence to demonstrate their effectiveness.

The IRP were in receipt of a comment from a County Councillor regarding the criteria used to determine whether a Minority Group Leader qualified for an SRA was fit for purpose in light of two smaller minority groups having been formed on the Council. The current criteria, i.e. that an SRA should only be payable to the Leader of a Minority Group on the County Council when the Group comprises four or more Members, was recommended by the Employment in Hampshire County Council Committee, following a recommendation by the IRP, and resolved on by the County Council at its meeting on 23 February 2012.

Following consideration, the IRP were of the view that in the absence of compelling evidence to support an amendment to the current criteria to lower the Group size threshold, that the current threshold remained fit for purpose.

RESOLVED:

That the IRP recommend to the Employment in Hampshire County Council Committee:

- a) That an SRA of £4,645 per annum (25% of an Executive Member SRA) be payable to the Assistant to the Executive – Adult Services and Public Health from the date of appointment to this role (13 July 2021) and reviewed again in 12 months' time.
- b) That an SRA of £4,645 per annum (25% of the SRA for an Executive Member) be payable to the Assistant to the Executive – Children's Services from the date of appointment to this role (13 July 2021) and reviewed again in 12 months' time.
- c) That an SRA of £3,097 per annum (25% of the SRA for a Select Committee Chairman) be payable from the date of appointment as the Chairman of the River Hamble Harbour Board (County Council AGM on 27 May 2021) and reviewed again in 12 months' time.
- d) That an SRA should only be payable to the Leader of a Minority Group on the County Council when the Group comprises four or more Members remained fit for purpose.
- e) That the list of approved duties for the purposes of the payment of travelling and other relevant expenses should be amended to include provision of the roles set out above.

8. **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 AND 2025/26**

Following full consideration, the IRP were of the view that a Members' Allowances Scheme for the four-year period 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 should replicate the current Members' Allowances Scheme for 2021/22 and that no revision to the current level of SRA payments within that Scheme was required, subject to the outcome of the recommended SRAs for the three roles set out in Minute 7 above.

As per the current arrangement, any uplift to the Scheme would be linked to the annual pay award for staff at Grade H.

RESOLVED:

That a Members Allowances Scheme for the years 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 be prepared, whereby Basic Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances payable to Members are adjusted from 1 April 2022 and thereafter annually, in line with the pay award (if any) for Senior Managers at grade H, taking into account any amendments to the Members' Allowances Scheme 2020/21 agreed by the County Council following consideration of the recommendations of the IRP.

The meeting closed at 3.25pm.

Chairman,