

AT A MEETING of the Independent Remuneration Panel of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Thursday, 7th September, 2023

In attendance:

Martin James (Chairman), Julia Abbott, David Heck, Pinky Kwok and Rosemary Lynch

Also in attendance: Councillors Roz Chadd, Adrian Collett, Keith House and Rob Humby.

The Chairman welcomed everyone present to the meeting and introductions were carried out.

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All members of the Panel were present.

NB: Councillor Alex Crawford made a submission for Item 6 on the agenda but was unable to attend the meeting and sent his apologies.

16. 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.

17. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. DEPUTATIONS

No deputations had been received.

19. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman noted that since the Panel had last met Barbara Beardwell, former Head of Law & Governance had retired from the organisation. The Panel extended their thanks for the support they had received from Barbara.

20. **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2023/24 - REVIEW OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of People and Organisation to inform a review of some Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) together with a request for an additional SRA.

a) Deputy Leader of the County Council SRA – 12 month review:

The Panel considered the submission detailing the work the Deputy Leader of the County Council had carried out in the preceding 12 months (Appendix 2 to the report).

The Panel were of the view that the information provided justified the current SRA.

b) Opposition Group Leader and Opposition Group Spokespersons' SRAs – 12 month review:

The Panel considered the submissions of the Leader of the Independent Group and the Leader of the Labour Group (Appendices 3a and 3b to the report).

The Panel reflected on the principal argument set out in the submissions that there was no difference between the roles depending on size of group. The Panel were of the view that there was a direct correlation between the role of Opposition Group Leader and Opposition Group Spokesperson and the size of the political group. In essence for a political group comprising four members, the effort required in coalescing views would be less than a political group comprising 30 members. Furthermore, the Panel were of the view that the position was a direct result of the proportionality rules therefore, a political group comprising four or less members would not have as much sway as a political group comprising 17 members.

In regard to the argument that a member of a smaller political group sitting on two Select Committees as the Group Spokesperson has twice as much work, the Panel were of the view that if a member is appointed to two committees as the only member representing their political group, by definition they will be the Group Spokesperson.

The Panel's recommendation at their last meeting on 6 October 2022, subsequently agreed by the full Council, benefited both the Independent and Labour political groups by introducing both Opposition Leader and Opposition Spokespersons' allowances.

On this occasion, the Panel were of the view that the evidence provided did not warrant an increase to the current SRA.

c) Pension Fund Panel and Board Member Responsibilities:

The Panel considered the request for a new Special Responsibility Allowance for the members of the Pension Fund Panel and Board due to the complexity of the matters considered by this committee and the level of training required.

The Panel recognised that pensions are a complicated subject, however the Board was supported by experienced officers and external Fund Managers. All committees and panels of the County Council have an associated time commitment, many of which involve technical and legislative issues together with training, such as the Regulatory Committee. Overall, the Panel considered that the information provided did not warrant the introduction of a new SRA to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

In conclusion the Panel recommended to the Employment in Hampshire County Council (EHCC) Committee:

- a) That there be no change to the current SRA for the Deputy Leader of the County Council.
- b) That there be no change to the level of SRAs for the Opposition Group Leaders and the Opposition Group Spokespersons' allowances.
- c) That an SRA for members of the Pension Fund Panel and Board was not appropriate.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Chairman,