

Appendix A

Recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Mid Suffolk District Council – 26 October 2016

Panel Members

Sandra Cox – Chair
Karen Forster
Ivor Holden

Summary of the Panel recommendation

In summary the Panel recommends that the newly created Members with Special Responsibility (MSR) role should receive an allowance of 75% of the allowance currently given to Portfolio Holders; the recommended allowance is therefore 0.75 of the current Basic Allowance for Mid Suffolk District Council Members, ie £3,000.

Context

1. Mid Suffolk District Council appointed 5 persons to be the Independent Remuneration Panel at the Council meeting on 22 September 2016. Following this appointment, the Interim Assistant Director Law and Governance contacted the Panel requesting that they carry out a focused review of the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the newly created Members with Special Responsibility (MSR) role. A Panel was formed of three members meeting the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Panel members were:
 - Sandra Cox – Chair
 - Karen Forster
 - Ivor Holden.

The brief

2. The brief for the review asked for a focused consideration of one aspect of the SRA element of the Members Scheme of Allowances for Mid Suffolk District Council. It was suggested that the approach and methodology should take into account the proposed timeline for the review, the focused nature of the requirement, meaning that this could mainly be a desktop based review of the evidence along with some key interviews to inform and nuance the final recommendations.

3. The brief for the review was to consider:
 - changes introduced in April 2016 with the creation of the MSR role subsequent to the adoption of the revised Joint Strategic Plan;
 - a consideration of the impact of new ways of working (i.e. the development and implementation of administration based theme boards and the extended administration meeting);
 - analysis of the evidence sources and comparison with other local Councils;
 - that this is only a review of the specific SLA's and is not a full review (ie last full review was recently in 2014);
 - the MSR role and provide a single allowance for the MSR role for Mid Suffolk District Council;
 - using the existing Special Responsibility Allowances under the current scheme of Member Allowances and range of responsibilities as a comparator;
 - examining the impact that the introduction of a potential MSR allowance may have on other SRA's (ie Portfolio Holder's, Deputy Leader/Leader).
4. The Panel was asked to make recommendations to Council as follows:
 - a. Review the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the newly created role of Member with Special Responsibility and recommend an appropriate level of Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA);
 - b. Review the impact of the potential introduction of this additional SRA on other linked and complementary SRAs in the current scheme (ie Leader /Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holders).

Approach and methodology

5. The IRP was given the task of recommending an SRA for the five newly created posts for Members with Special Responsibilities to support the delivery of the Council's Joint Strategic Priorities.
6. The Panel considered how best to gain the information it needed to make such a recommendation. After discussion it decided the best way was through research and consultation.
7. The research element of the Review consisted of analysis of both historical and contextual information sources (including the current scheme of allowances and previous IRP recommendations) and then information on the development of the role, the relationship with Portfolio Holders and the focus on delivering the Joint Strategic Plan and holding Officers to account.
8. The Panel also devised a questionnaire which was given to various Officers and Councillors asking them to numerically evaluate the duties of the new posts and to

contrast them with other posts receiving special allowances. Completed questionnaires - from Portfolio Holders, Members with Special Responsibility, Leader and Deputy Leader along with a number of Senior Managers – were analysed.

9. The Panel also consulted with two Councillors, one of whom held a Portfolio and one of whom held an MSR post for a specific theme. Senior Officers were also interviewed to provide an Officer perspective on the relative requirements and time commitments for the new role compared to other Councillor roles in the governance structure.

Recommendation

10. From this information the Panel devised a spreadsheet which showed total scorings for each post. The Panel then compiled an averages chart – the latter is attached. This chart showed that the new posts were considered to require 77% of the responsibility, knowledge and expertise of those performing the role of Portfolio Holders.
11. The analysis of the range qualitative data and the face to face interviews also provided a very similar picture of how the new role fits within the member structure and the relative commitment required compared to other roles (ie Portfolio Holders).
12. Taking into account the range of data sources, and bearing in mind the need for rounding to bring the allowance in line with other allowances, the Panel therefore concluded that these posts should be awarded an allowance that was 75% of the allowance allocated to Portfolio Holders at the moment, i.e. 75% of £4,000 (the current SRA for Portfolio Holders), which produced a recommended allowance of £3,000 pa.

Additional comments

13. The Panel reviewed the impact of the implementation of their recommendation in relation to the Members with Special Responsibility Allowances on the relative allowances for the generic Leader/Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder SRAs (ie as opposed to Committee Chairing responsibilities).
14. In view of the level of the recommended allowance for Members with Special Responsibility the panel will not make any recommendation for changes to other SRAs at this time. The Panel would however like to recommend to Council that another full IRP should be convened if there are further wider changes made to the basic organisation of the Council in the near future.
15. The Panel would like to thank Peter Quirk in particular and all the officers who supported it for their help and assistance.