

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MIDSUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From Independent Remuneration Panel	Report Number N25
To Babergh Council Mid Suffolk Council	Date of meeting 25 June 2013 27 June 2013

REPORT TO BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP) – JUNE 2013

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE (SRA) FOR CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND THE JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. Panel Members

Dr John Hill: Dr Alan Lower: Professor David Muller

All three of us have considerable experience and expertise of Allowances Schemes in Suffolk.

2. Role of the Panel

2.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) England Regulations 2003 (as amended) we were asked to make a recommendation to both Councils on the level of SRA to be paid to the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the two Joint Committees.

3. The Independent Remuneration Panel RECOMMENDS

3.1 That an interim Special Responsibility Allowance of £3,667 per annum per Chairman be payable to the Chairmen of the new Joint Scrutiny and Joint Audit and Standards Committees.

3.2 That an interim Special Responsibility Allowance of £921 per annum per Vice-Chairman be payable to the Vice-Chairmen of the new Joint Scrutiny and Joint Audit and Standards Committees.

Note from the Head of Corporate Organisation

If Members are minded to accept the recommendations in 3.1 and 3.2 above, it will be necessary to consider agreeing the following additional recommendation:-

3.3 That the Allowances referred in 3.1 and 3.2 above be payable with effect from the date of the respective Annual Council Meetings for Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Further, that the Members' Allowances Schemes be amended accordingly.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 We were aware that the closer working arrangements between Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils together with the integration of services will require a more fundamental review of the current Members' Allowances Schemes in the future, but in the meantime, the establishment of the new Joint Committees has led to the current very limited exercise.
- 4.2 We had before us the Terms of Reference for the two Committees as adopted by both Councils at their meetings in April 2013, together with extracts from the relevant minutes, Paper M187R and details of the current levels of SRA and Basic Allowance.
- 4.3 Further information has been supplied by the officers on the anticipated operation of the new Committees, particularly in relation to frequency of meetings and potential workload, although we realise that the length, and frequency of meetings, together with the potential workload are difficult to quantify at this point in time. We noted that in the immediate short-term there may be additional work for the Chairs and Vice-Chairs in finalising the new working arrangements and refining the terms of reference, so our recommendations are to be regarded as relating to the interim period before a full Review can take place, when the intention will be to align, as far as possible, the Schemes operated by the two Councils.
- 4.4 In addition, we recognised the volume and complexity of working across two sovereign Councils and the political management aspects of the closer working arrangements and service integration.
- 4.5 We were also aware that, in this interim period, our recommendations could not be based upon multiples or fractions of a common Basic Allowance.

5. Findings of the IRP

SRA for Chairmen

- 5.1 We consider that, taking into account that the new arrangements have yet to bed in, it would be reasonable to fix the SRA at an average of the current payments to Chairs of the former Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) and (Stewardship) Committees and the Scrutiny Committee. Those SRAs represented 100% of the Basic Allowance for each Council, being £3,684 for Mid Suffolk and £3,649 for Babergh, a difference of only £35. The recommended figure for this interim period to which the current Review relates is therefore £3,667 (Recommendation 3.1 above).

SRA for Vice-Chairman

- 5.2 The current SRAs for the Vice-Chairmen of the three main predecessor Committees identified above are as follows:-

Babergh
£364 (10% of Basic Allowance)

Mid Suffolk
£921 (25% of Basic Allowance)

Having taken into account that there might be additional work for the Vice-Chairs in the initial period of operation, particularly in relation to the matters identified in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 above, and the difference (of £557) between the existing SRAs, we considered the following options.

1. An average of the existing SRA payments
= £643 (17.5% of the average of the 2 Basic Allowance figures)
2. 20% of the SRA recommended for the Chairs
= £733
3. The current SRA paid by Mid Suffolk.
= £921 (Recommendation 3.2 above)

Additional Information – Financial Implications of the IRP Recommendations

The Financial Implications of the IRP's recommendations are included below, for completeness.

The Head of Corporate Organisation reports that the proposal from the Independent Remuneration Panel for the SRAs for the Scrutiny, Audit and Standards functions provides a solution which is cost neutral for each Council, when compared with the current cost base for the allowance structure for the relevant Committees. This includes the contribution made by each Council to the Suffolk Standards Board.

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