

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 01/09/2015

Title:

**INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - REVIEW OF SPECIAL
RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Robert Knowles]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) met recently to consider whether a Special Responsibility Allowance should be payable to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Planning Committee. This report summarises the discussions of the Panel and sets out their recommendation.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The levels of allowances paid by the Council could impact on the ability of people in the community being able to put themselves forward as candidates for the Council and thus could impact on achieving all of Waverley's objectives.

Financial Implications:

Waverley's budget includes £353,430 for members' basic and special responsibility allowances. The proposals in this report total an increase of £4,650. Regulation 10(6) of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations allows for an amendment to the scheme to apply with effect from the beginning of the year in which the amendment is made. The Council's Members' Allowances Scheme includes a restriction that members will only be entitled to the basic allowance plus one special responsibility allowance.

For 2015/2016, the Chairman of the Joint Planning Committee is also the Chairman of the Southern/Western Area Planning Committees and therefore only entitled to one special responsibility allowance. The financial implications for 2015/2016 only relate to the additional payment for a special responsibility allowance to the Vice-Chairman of the Committee who is not currently entitled to any other special responsibility allowances. This equates to £1,550 but may not be the case in future years. The additional budget required for 2015/2016 will be met from the underspend resulting from the reduction in size of the Executive from 10 to 9 members for the remainder of the year, thereby reducing the amount of special responsibility allowances payable to portfolio holders.

Legal Implications:

The Council has to agree a scheme of allowances every year and publicise this. The Council is also under a duty to set up and maintain an Independent Remuneration

Panel, and the Panel last reported to the Executive on its findings on 10 January 2012. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the scheme may be amended at any time and the IRP was therefore invited to consider whether the scheme should be amended to include the addition of a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Planning Committee.

Introduction

1. The Independent Remuneration Panel last reviewed the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances in 2011 and the Council meeting on 21 February 2012 agreed to adopt the recommendations, for implementation within the remaining three years of the Council. These increases have now been implemented.
2. Since the last review, there has been a steady increase in the workload of the Joint Planning Committee with a continuing rise in the number of meetings, particularly since the start of the Council year 2014/2015, see Annexe 1. At the time of the last review, the Joint Planning Committee met very infrequently and it was agreed that no Special Responsibility Allowance should be payable to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman because the majority of the planning application workload was being dealt with at the Area Planning Committees.
3. An additional criteria for which planning applications are referred to the Joint Planning Committee has impacted on the number of applications coming forward since the start of 2014/2015, as follows

“to review all housing scheme which propose a net increase of more than 25 dwellings, where the recommendation is for permission to be granted”.
4. The Council's practice has been to consider one planning application at each Joint Planning Committee meeting, largely because of the likely contentious and sensitive nature of the application proposals and the high level of public interest in it, often resulting in a large attendance of members of the public and the need to manage this effectively.

Considerations of the Independent Remuneration Panel

5. As background information, the Independent Remuneration Panel was provided with a copy of their last report and recommendations from 2011, the members' allowances scheme from 2011/2012, the current members' allowances scheme for 2015/2016 and the statistics around the increasing number of Joint Planning Committee meetings. The Panel had now been asked to look solely at the issue of whether a special responsibility allowance for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Planning Committee should be included within the Members' Allowances Scheme. The current special responsibility allowances payable are attached as Annexe 2.

6. The Panel recognised that the workload for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee had increased dramatically since they last carried out their review of the scheme, particularly since each meeting necessitated attendance at a Chairman's briefing and a site visit in advance. The Panel was particularly mindful of the responsibility associated with managing the Joint Planning Committee meetings because of the often politically contentious nature of the applications being considered, and the resulting scale, quantity and quality of the leadership required.
7. The Panel reiterated a principle set out in their last report that special responsibility allowances should be used to recognise the significant additional responsibilities which attach to some roles and not just the extra time required. The Panel felt that this criteria was met in this instance because of the nature of the applications being considered at the Committee. It also wished to ensure that the level of allowances remained sufficient so as not to discourage or deter existing councillors from fulfilling their roles and balanced this alongside the need for the allowance system to remain as simple as possible.
8. To this end, for ease of understanding to a member of the public looking at the scheme, the Panel recommended that the level of allowances should be consistent for the Area Planning Committees and the Joint Planning Committee.

Conclusion

9. The Panel concluded that it was fair and reasonable to include payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Planning Committee in the Members' Allowances Scheme that was equitable to that paid to the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Area Planning Committees. This would equate to an entitlement of £3,100 for the Chairman and £1,550 for the Vice-Chairman. The Panel also recommended that payment of the allowances should be backdated to the start of the current Council year.
10. Should the Council be minded to accept the recommendation of the Panel, the Council will be required to publish the amendment to the Scheme in the local newspaper, make the members' allowances scheme available for inspection at the Council Offices and on the Waverley website.

Recommendation

The Executive is asked to recommend to the Council that the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2015/16 onwards be amended to include provision for the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Chairman (£3,100) and the Vice-Chairman (£1,550) of the Joint Planning Committee.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Emma McQuillan **Telephone:** 01483 523351
E-mail: emma.mcquillan@waverley.gov.uk

ANNEXE 1

Table of Joint Planning Committee meetings and durations since 2011/12

<u>Council year 2011/12:</u>	<u>Date of meeting:</u>	<u>Length of meeting:</u>
1	15 February 2012	2hours 25minutes
<u>Total 1 meeting</u>		<u>Average length:</u> <u>2hours 25minutes</u>

<u>Council year 2012/13:</u>	<u>Date of meeting:</u>	<u>Length of meeting:</u>
1	1 August 2012	3hours 25minutes
2	6 August 2012	2hours 18minutes
3	20 March 2013	2hours 24minutes
<u>Total 3 meetings</u>		<u>Average length:</u> <u>2hours 42minutes</u>

<u>Council year 2013/14:</u>	<u>Date of meeting:</u>	<u>Length of meeting:</u>
1	10 June 2013	3hours 9minutes
2	18 June 2013	2hours 15minutes
3	19 March 2014	1hour 2minutes
<u>Total 3 meetings</u>		<u>Average length:</u> <u>2hours 8minutes</u>

<u>Council year 2014/15:</u>	<u>Date of meeting:</u>	<u>Length of meeting:</u>
1	28 May 2014	1hour 5minutes
2	27 August 2014	0hours 45minutes
3	22 September 2014	2hours 0minutes
4	24 September 2014	1hour 45minutes
5	28 October 2014	0hours 10minutes
6	12 November 2014	0hours 45minutes
7	17 November 2014	0hours 28minutes
8	5 January 2015	3hours 20minutes
9	26 January 2015	1hour 10minutes
10	2 February 2015	2hours 25minutes
11	18 February 2015	2hours 35minutes
12	30 March 2015	1hour 35minutes
13	1 April 2015	1hour 39minutes
14	21 April 2015	0hours 53minutes
<u>Total 14 meetings</u>		<u>Average length:</u> <u>1hour 28minutes</u>

<u>Council year 2015/16:</u>	<u>Date of meeting:</u>	<u>Length of meeting:</u>
1	8 June 2015	1hour 35minutes
2	15 June 2015	1hour 20minutes
3	17 June 2015	1hour 35minutes
4	24 June 2015	1hour 25minutes
5	1 July 2015	1hour 47minutes
6	14 July 2015	1hour 40minutes
7	10 August 2015	(meeting not yet convened)
8	26 August 2015	(meeting not yet convened)
<u>Total 8 meetings</u>		<u>Average length:</u> <u>1hour 33minutes</u>

ANNEXE 2

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES 2015/16

The following are specified as the special responsibilities in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable, and the amounts of those allowances:

Special Responsibility Allowances		
	Chairmen etc	Vice-Chairmen
	£	£
<u>Leaders/Executive:</u>		
Leader of the Council	13,433.00	-
Deputy Leader of the Council	9,299.00	
Leader of the Principal Opposition Group	3,100.00	-
Members of the Executive (8 Portfolio Holders at £6,200.00 each)	49,600.00	-
Council	543	
Chairmen/Vice-Chairmen:		
<i>Overview and Scrutiny Committees:</i>		
Corporate	3,100.00	1,550.00
Community	3,100.00	1,550.00
<i>Regulatory Committees:</i>		
Standards Committee	1,820.00	Nil
Licensing and Regulatory Committee	3,100.00	1,550.00
Audit Committee	2,320.00	1,160.00
Joint Planning Committee	Nil	Nil
Eastern and Central Area Planning Committee	3,100.00	1,550.00
Western and Southern Area Planning Committee	3,100.00	1,550.00
	£95,615.00	£8,910.00

Note – Members will only be entitled to the basic allowance plus one special responsibility allowance

SUMMARY OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES:

	£
Leaders/Executive/Chairmen	95,615.00
Vice-Chairmen	8,910.00
	£104,525.00

The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances is subject to the deduction of income tax.