

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Independent Remuneration Panel
Date: 16 June 2011
Reporting officer: Assistant Director (Communities)
Subject: Members' Allowances Scheme 2011-2012

Purpose and summary of report:

To set out proposals to update the Special Responsibility Allowances as laid out in the Members' Allowances Scheme, so as to reflect changes that have occurred to committee arrangements post election.

Recommendations:

That the panel consider whether to recommend the proposed changes in rates for Special Responsibility Allowances.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of full Council held on 21 December 2010 it was agreed that 'due to the current financial situation affecting the Council and Gravesham Borough Council's staff having a pay freeze during the 2011-12 financial year that there be no increase to Members Allowances during 2011-12 and that the meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which recommends increases to the Allowances, be cancelled.'
- 1.2 The current scheme of Members' Allowances is to be found at Annex 4 to the Constitution.

2. New executive governance and committee arrangements

- 2.1 On 21 December 2010, pursuant to Schedule 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Local Government Act 2000, the Council resolved to adopt the new Leader and Cabinet style of executive governance with effect from 8 May 2011.
- 2.2 This model places all executive functions and powers initially in the hands of one individual (the Leader) who, in the normal course of events, will serve an uninterrupted four year term. It is at the discretion of that individual whether to exercise some or all of these functions and powers personally, or to make arrangements for their discharge by an executive, by an individual member of the executive, or by officers.

- 2.3 Following the recent change in administration at the borough elections held on 5 May 2011, the Leader has laid out how he intends to operate the executive powers and functions.
- 2.4 Under the new arrangements, each portfolio holder (Cabinet Member) will chair and be supported by a cross party 'Cabinet Committee'. These Cabinet Committees are new committees which did not exist under the previous administration. It is necessary to put in place a new special responsibility rate for the Vice-Chairs of these committees. (5 in total)
- 2.5 The Policy Overview Committees (5 in total) which existed under the previous administration no longer exist. Hence the special responsibility allowance previously paid to the Chairs of these committees is no longer required.
- 2.6 It is therefore an urgent necessity to amend the Members' Allowances scheme to reflect these new arrangements.

3. Proposals for change

- 3.1 Existing annual rates and proposed annual rates are set out at Appendix A to this report.
- 3.2 The only changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme being proposed at this time are in relation to Schedule 1 of the Scheme where the Special Responsibility Allowances are set out.
- 3.3 In putting forward these changes to the scheme there is no requirement for overall budgetary growth. All proposed changes are accommodated within the existing revenue budgetary provision for Members' Allowances of £ 224,700 for 2011-12.
- 3.4 As well as the new scheme reflecting the demise of the old Policy Overview Committees and the introduction of the new Cabinet Committees; the opportunity has been taken to rationalise and make consistent the allowances paid to the Vice-Chairs of all committees.