



GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MEETING : Tuesday, 15th January 2019

PRESENT : Cllrs. Williams (Chair), Taylor (Vice-Chair), Coole, Hanman, Hilton, D. Norman and Pullen

Others in Attendance

Stewart Dove, Independent Remuneration Panel
Managing Director
Policy & Governance Manager
Democratic Services and Elections Officer

APOLOGIES : None

20. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Committee noted the appointments made by Annual Council of Councillor Williams as Chair and Councillor H Norman as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed for Councillor Taylor to replace Councillor H Norman as Vice-Chair of the Committee following her appointment to the Cabinet. This appointment would be added to the Council agenda.

The Committee agreed to this appointment.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair declared a personal interest in Item 6, a report of the Independent Remuneration Panel concerning the review of Members' Allowances 2019, as it included recommendations for a reduction in the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Chair of General Purposes Committee.

Councillor Coole also declared a personal interest in Item 6 as it included a recommendation to increase the SRA for the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Both the Chair and Councillor Coole advised they would not take part in the debate relating to these appointments.

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
15.01.19

The Policy and Governance Manager advised that there was no legal requirement to declare an interest.

22. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

23. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no public questions.

24. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions and deputations.

25. REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2019

The Committee considered the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) relating to the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme and to seek a decision on an appropriate scheme for the payment of allowances in 2019-20.

The Chair welcomed Stewart Dove from the Independent Remuneration Panel and thanked him for attending the meeting.

Mr Dove explained that the Panel had met 5 times in the course of the review. The main recommendations were:

- No changes to the Basic Allowance
- Minor amendments to Members currently in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance (the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the General Purposes Committee)
- Changes to the Dependants' Carers Allowance
- That the Council adopt a Parental Leave Policy

Mr Dove passed on the Panel's thanks to Members for their involvement in the review, which had received a response rate of 82%.

The Panel also expressed their thanks to the Policy and Governance Manager for her help throughout the process.

In response to a question from Councillor Coole relating to the procedure for adopting a parental leave policy, the Policy and Governance Manager advised that this was already an agreed Council motion. She added that the LGA were currently working on this and the Council would investigate their proposed timetable. The Policy would be presented to the General Purposes Committee for consideration.

Councillor Pullen referred to the hourly rate of £10.00 for childcare and enquired if this figure was in line with current rates. The Policy and Governance Manager advised this had been discussed with Members using the provision. She added

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
15.01.19

that no requests had been made for adult dependent care allowances and that the Panel would work with Members if a request was received.

The Chair of the Committee thanked Mr Dove and the Panel Members for their work.

General Purposes Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** to Council that:

- (1) The recommendations of the Members' Allowances Panel be noted and the proposed Members' Allowances Scheme at Appendix 2 be approved for the payment of allowances in 2019-20.
- (2) That the Council adopts a Parental Leave Policy for Councillors that takes into account any recommendations or policy approved by the Local Government Association.
- (3) The next four yearly detailed review of Members' Allowances be scheduled to report in January 2023.

26. MEMBERS' PERSONAL SAFETY

The Committee considered the report of the Chair of the General Purposes Committee which highlighted matters relating to the personal safety of elected Members' and the need to identify what is already in place to support Members' and to highlight additional advice and guidance.

The Committee recognised that the risk to Councillors' safety had changed over the years due to advanced technology and this had highlighted the need to improve safety for all Councillors. The Chair noted the release of Members' personal addresses on ballot papers and on the Council's website.

The Policy and Governance Manager advised that when a Member had been elected, they would be requested to complete a form to provide contact details which would be published on the Council's website. Members' would be given an option to give their home details or the Council's office address, also the choice for their personal phone or a council-supplied phone number. Members could also request for their personal details to be removed at any time.

The Policy and Governance Manager added that the Register of Interest form required Members to provide details of any interests in land ownership e.g. their home. Members would be required to submit details as to why this information should not be disclosed. This decision would be approved by the Monitoring Officer.

The Policy and Governance Manager referred to the inclusion of candidate personal addresses on ballot papers and advised that the legislation had now been passed which meant that this would no longer be compulsory. She noted that agents addresses did have to be published therefore a candidate acting as their own agent would still have their address in the public domain.

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
15.01.19

The Committee discussed the various options to protect themselves and the need to reassure newly elected Members of their personal safety.

The Chair advised that she had spoken to the Head of Democratic Services at the County Council relating to issuing Members with numbers of welfare and support networks.

The Policy and Governance Manager referred to the Council's Employee's Assistance Programme, which Members could access and suggested details be included in the Members' bulletin each month.

Councillor D Norman referred to the Member development session on personal safety held on 13 February 2017 which had seen a low attendance by Members. He added that if another event was to be held, each political party would need to encourage their Members to attend. He also suggested inviting colleagues from other local authorities to attend the session.

Due to the low attendance at the previous development session and the upcoming elections in 2020, the Policy and Governance Manager suggested this should be included in the induction for all Members.

The Chair made reference to public meetings. The Committee were advised that the Council had employed security during difficult/hostile meetings. This option would be available if any Members had concerns for a particular meeting.

The Policy and Governance Manager suggested that the Chair make use of announcements at Council on 24 January 2019 to make Members aware of the discussion and agreed actions.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The contents of the report be noted.
- (2) The report and guidance documents referred to in the report be circulated to all Members and uploaded to the Intranet.
- (3) The LGIU guidance to be shared with the County Council.
- (4) Details of the EAP be included in each Members' Bulletin and leaflets be circulated at the next full Council meeting.
- (5) A personal safety card be produced in conjunction with the County Council.
- (6) Personal safety training to be included in the 2020 Member Induction Programme.
- (7) The Member Development Working Group be asked to explore personal resilience training for Members.

27. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 12 March 2019 at 6.00pm.

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
15.01.19**

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm hours
Time of conclusion: 6.50 pm hours**

Chair