

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 4TH MARCH, 2019**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Felicia Opoku (Chair), Luke Cawley-Harrison,  
James Chiriyankandath, Preston Tabois and Khaled Moyeed**

### **69. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

Noted

### **70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bull and Cllr Moyeed attended as a substitute in line with committee standing orders 54, 56 and 59.

### **71. URGENT BUSINESS**

None

### **72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Cawley–Harrison declared a personal interest in item 74 as a recent father he would potentially benefit from the proposed changes to the Member’s Allowance scheme in relation to parental leave.

### **73. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

#### **RESOLVED**

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2019.

### **74. MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME 2019/20**

The Committee considered the report which sought agreement to recommend the amended Members’ Allowances Scheme to Full Council for agreement. The amendments to the scheme for 2019/20 included explicit provision for maternity, paternity and sickness leave as agreed by the Committee at their meeting in January. It also contained express provision for adoption and shared parental leave. The report further proposes a 1% or 2% uplift to the all Members’ basic allowance in line with the pay settlement increase expected for staff. The Leader had indicated his intention to continue to appoint 2 Assistant Cabinet Members and the report further proposed consideration of an additional 2 Special Responsibility Allowances for these two posts and includes information on the activity of the post holder for Women and Equalities for 2018/19.

The Committee continued to consider the proposed members Allowance scheme for 2019/20 attached at appendix A, and agreed the added provision for maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental and sick leave was important in meeting equalities objectives, and recognising that the demographic of Councillors had changed over the years. The Committee agreed that there was a need for the Council to openly provide support to Councillors that become parents, or needed to take a prolonged leave of absence due to ill health, and not be discouraged from doing so. These changes would bring the Council in line with neighbouring borough policies and meet a recommendation of the IRP.

The Committee discussed the options of a 1%, 2% or no uplift to all Member's basic allowance, considering overall equalities duty and the need to provide all Councillors with as fair remuneration as possible, reflecting the level of their duties, commitment and responsibility in the community. It was recognised that Councillors needed to reflect the demographic of their wards and there needed to be some attraction to the local councillor role, in the future, for local people. An increase in the basic allowance could also mean, in some cases, Councillors being able to commit more time to their councillor role rather than their employment role. Some Members expressed a view that there should be no uplift to the basic allowance given there was to be a fuller review of the Members allowance scheme being undertaken in the coming municipal year by the Committee. Also the potential negative response this increase could receive in the community was highlighted.

Consideration was also given to the proposed cost of the increases on the overall Council budget. It was noted that the proposed 2% uplift to the basic allowance would still keep this figure under the recommended IRP basic allowance figure of £11,045. It was clarified that the 2% increase would be to the basic allowance and not the SRA amount. Following consideration of Committee Member's individual view of this matter, a vote was taken with three in favour of the uplift to the basic allowance and two against. It was resolved that a 2% uplift to Members Allowances be recommended to full Council.

The Committee further considered the proposal to add 2 additional Special Responsibility Allowances [SRA's] for the Assistant Cabinet Member posts. This would involve remunerating the Assistant Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities, and the Assistant Cabinet Member for Broadwater Farm & Northumberland Park Housing Standards. The Committee debated the level of commitment that these roles would entail, noting the major projects and cross cutting strategic issues that the Assistant Cabinet Members were leading on.

Some members advocated that these roles would need to be fairly remunerated due to the additional work being carried out by the Assistant Cabinet Members. Also the level of commitment to these roles required was felt, by some Members, to be similar to the Cabinet roles.

There was a view expressed that given the information provided in the report , these roles were no different to other non- cabinet and non-Committee roles undertaken by other Councillors and should not be remunerated at this time. Instead, there should be

a fuller consideration of the activities and responsibilities of these roles, along with other SRA roles, in the forthcoming review of Member's Allowances.

The Committee also noted that, the original proposed remuneration figure of £5000 had been updated to £6700. This figure was reached by considering the IRP report at appendix B page 8 which recommended a band 1 SRA's should be on a sliding scale of between 20-30% of the remuneration package of the Leader. The Committee noted that there were five London Boroughs with Assistant Cabinet Members, paying an average SRA of £6545 per post. It was queried whether the duties carried out by these roles were similar and questioned the different numbers of Assistant Cabinet Member roles to the number of Members receiving an SRA at these boroughs. However it was concluded that due to the differing composition of boroughs, there was unlikely to be a pattern.

Following consideration of Committee Member's individual view of this matter, a vote was taken with three in favour and two against. It was resolved to recommend to full Council that the 2 Assistant Cabinet Member positions receive a special responsibility allowance of £6700 each.

The Committee further considered the suggestion in relation to Licensing Committees and agreed that there should be legal advice sought and consultation with the Regulatory Committee Chair.

The Committee agreed that there would be no further changes to the existing SRA positions for 2019/20 as it would be undertaking a wider review of SRA's in the coming municipal year, considering in more detail SRA positions, in relation to responsibilities and activities.

## **RESOLVED**

1. To agree the amended Members' Allowances Scheme set out at Appendix C, and recommend this preferred option to Full Council for agreement and adoption.
2. To note Cllr Cawley – Harrison's opposition to Appendix C as it included a 2% uplift to Member's basic allowances and remuneration of Deputy Cabinet Member positions.

## **75. UPDATES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

This report sought Member's initial views on the areas of the Council and Committee standing orders, including Full Council protocol that required review.

The Committee noted that the changes to the Constitution relating to the discontinuation of the Shared Digital Committee and changes to the senior officer structure which impact on the Health and Wellbeing Board were to be agreed by the Monitoring Officer under officer delegated powers. These were areas which have already been subject to decision making, by the Cabinet, Staffing and Remuneration Committee and the Chief Executive. Further required minor changes are due to be explored in the coming weeks and reported up to full Council as appropriate.

The Committee agreed that an informal meeting was held in April to consider proposed changes to the Council and Committee standing orders.

#### **76. REGISTER OF INTERESTS - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST IN LAND**

The Committee considered the report which was responding to a request from the Chair of Standards and Committee members to explore consideration of the requirement to divulge a Councillor's home address on the Councillor Register of Interest form published on the Council's website and consider the risks around this option as well as provide information on how other boroughs take this requirement forward.

In discussion the following was noted:

- Member's register of interests, including their home address was required for display to the public via the website.
- It was the responsibility of the Monitoring officer to have Member's register of interest available to the public.
- The Monitoring officer would consider on a case by case basis representations from members about the disclosure of the details of the interest [home address] could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.

It was unlikely that a blanket policy of withholding all member's interest would be agreed but the committee felt a middle ground should be sought by seeking an understanding of whether Member's address details could be available on request.

The Principal lawyer agreed to put forward this suggestion to her internal legal colleagues.

#### **RESOLVED**

To note the report.

#### **77. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

Noted.

#### **78. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

Noted

#### **79. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **RESOLVED**

To exclude the press and public be from the meeting to consider exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985); paras 1&2.

**80. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

To agree the minutes of the Standards Sub – Assessment Committee held on the 11 September 2018.

CHAIR: Councillor Felicia Opoku

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....

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