

REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2/2021/22

FULL COUNCIL 14 March 2022

Chair: Councillor Opoku

1. INTRODUCTION

Full Council is being asked to revoke the Members Allowances Scheme for 2021/22 as of 31st March 2022; and to approve a new Members Allowances Scheme for the municipal year 2022/23 as set out in the recommendations below and to take effect from 1st April 2022. This is in accordance with Article 14.03 of the Council's Constitution.

- 1.2 Full Council is also being asked to extend the appointment of Lisa Klein as an Independent Person, and Stephen Ross as Secondary Independent Person to the Standards Committee. This is under s28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 for a period of 1 year commencing 1st July 2022 and ending on 30th June 2023; Full Council is further asked to approve the allowance paid per annum to the Independent Person, and Secondary Independent person at £1250.00 and £250.00 respectively.

2. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2022/23

We noted that before a London Council can adopt a Members Allowances Scheme the Council has a duty to consider the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the payment of Members Allowances.

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 allows London Boroughs to use an Independent Remuneration Panel set up for the purpose of making recommendations across London. London Councils set up a panel for this purpose in 2001 and its most recent report was published on the 14th of January 2022 and we considered this report, attached as Appendix 2, on the 25th of January 2022 and we commented that:

- The SRA bandings in the attached IRP report remained out of touch with local Council decision making on Member's Allowances and the SRA thresholds were too high. We felt that the report was not realistic in expecting residents to accept these potentially high payments for local representations.
- We could not find evidence in the IRP report to support its claim that allowances should not be an incentive to carry out the Councillor role but also not be a disincentive.
- We noted IRP recommendation that the Basic Member Allowance be index linked to rises to local government officer pay awards and it was suggested that the 1.75% increase being negotiated with local government officers could be applied and capped at this figure.

- We further discussed the percentage rate connections between the SRA bandings and noted the difficulties in having a set scheme as provided for in Wales.
- We noted that the SRA's thresholds in Haringey were traditionally in the lower ranges of the proposed SRA bandings and noted that most Councils in London did not fully apply the SRA banding thresholds. This was a locally agreed issue with Councillors mindful of resident's expectations.

We further considered the latest position on the local government officer pay increase of 1.75% which had not been agreed. We felt that given the current economic climate together with steep increases in the cost of living being faced by residents, it was not felt appropriate to agree any increases to Member's Allowances. There was an annual opportunity to review the position on index linking the increase in the basic Allowance to the local government officer pay increase in 2023.

3. WE RECOMMEND

That Full Council:

- 3.1 Revoke the Members Allowance Scheme for 2021/22 as of 31st March 2022;
- 3.1.1 Approve the new Members' Allowances Scheme for the Municipal year 2022/23 as set out at Appendix 1 of the attached report,

4. Appointment of Independent Persons under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 (to support the operation of the Code of Conduct by the Standards Committee) from 1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023

- 4.1 We considered a report, attached as appendix 3 on the continued appointment of the Independent Persons under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 to support the Standards Committee in relation to allegations that members or co-opted members have failed to comply with the Member's Code of Conduct, and to be considered for appointment to the Staffing and Remuneration Committee when considering the dismissal of either the Head of Paid Service, the Chief Finance Officer, or the Monitoring Officer.
- 4.2 We considered the following: that the Localism Act which had not been updated following the report on 'Standards in Public Life', the resource intensive recruitment process for appointing new independent persons and current experienced contribution of the current Independent persons.
- 4.3 We further noted the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officers views that the incumbent IP continues to provide an excellent advice and the secondary IP is also an experienced and reliable advisor. We raised no issues

or concerns raised on the advice received from the independent persons for complaint cases and this was noted to be consistent and uncompromised,

- 4.4 We noted that both the Primary and Secondary IP had received recent refresher training on their roles.

WE RECOMMEND

That Full Council:

- 5.1 Approves the extended appointment of Lisa Klein as Independent Person, and Stephen Ross as secondary Independent Person under s28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 for a further period of 1 year commencing on 1st July 2022 and ending on 31st of June 2023;
- 5.2 Approves the allowance to be paid to the Independent Person, and Secondary Independent person at £1250.00 and £250.00 per annum respectively.