

MINUTES OF MEETING Standards Committee HELD ON Tuesday, 30th January, 2024, 7.00pm - 7.40pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Erdal Dogan, Ibrahim Ali (Chair) and Simmons-Safo

ALSO ATTENDING: Fiona Alderman, Ayshe Simsek

30. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the filming at meetings notice and attendees noted this information.

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Emery and Cllr Opoku.

32. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair accepted as late business the report on Member's Allowances Scheme at item 6 to provide the Committee an opportunity to have an early look at the scheme and provide a steer on any changes needed.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED

To confirm and sign the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 31 October 2023.

35. MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME 2024/ 2025

This report asked the Committee to consider the Member Allowance scheme proposed for 2024/25 municipal year and recommend the final scheme for approval by full Council on the 14 of March 2024, in accordance with Article 14.03 of the Council's Constitution.

The Committee noted that before it could adopt a Members Allowances Scheme the Council had 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 allow 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 5th of January 2024 following a detailed review, with recommendations on the remuneration of Councillors in London.

The Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager outlined the following key findings of the attached IRP report:

- Focus on to increasing challenges and complex role of councillors and how in London this is becoming more seismic with inclusion of national and international changes are directly impacting communities.
- Reiterates the wide-ranging responsibilities of local councillors, the time commitment needed and ensuring that the role remains attractive to local residents that have skills, knowledge of the communities and also reflect the demographics of the borough.
- Strong recommendations for changes to the basic allowance of councillors, and to the SRA for the Leader and Mayors of Councils.
- Recommendations are supported by research, which has been compiled from canvassing members and holding focus groups with the public to provide Councils with some assurance that the recommendations have been tested and to limit the anxiety around reputational risk.
- Details how the Leader and Cabinet Member roles are in reality full time positions. There is further information in section 9 of the attached report on the Leader SRA and the responsibility of the role in comparison to other public roles and other roles with financial responsibilities.
- Discusses, sickness, paternity and maternity leave and noted this is already incorporated in the Haringey Member Allowance scheme. There has been some work to simplify the process for claiming childcare and carer payments and this form is attached for comment at appendix 3. This can be better publicised as part of this report to Council in March.
- The deleted right of Councillors to access the local government pension scheme which has had an impact on recruitment of councillors.
- Outlines the cost of increasing Councillors basic allowance by 2% as the practice in previous years when there is a local government pay increase for Council employees.

The Committee considered the report and discussed the following:

- The cover report and IRP report referred to member allowances as salaries and this was felt to be misleading as there were many key differences. This included that salaries were associated with permanent positions and additional benefits related to a job role such as a pension. Members allowances were payments for additional responsibilities undertaken in a role which was not permanent and did not relate to the volume of additional work and time allocation.
- There was a future need to promote important role of councillors in the community and attract local people who were passionate about making changes and supporting their communities and this could also involve considering the basic member allowance.
- Noted that often the more full-time roles such as Leader and Cabinet Members were having to entail carer breaks or cuts in job salaries to undertake these roles. Noted the increased responsibility and community role of Leader's, Mayors and Cabinet Members.
- The Committee were in favour of a 2% increase in the basic allowance and saw this as a reasonable adjustment for the increase in volume of casework, increased communications through emails and taking account that councillors themselves were spending on additional resources to maintain increased volume of work and had families themselves to support. The 2% increase would likely be considered and discussed at political meetings and noted that if this was taken forward, there would not be additional budget allocation and instead be met from the Democratic Services budget envelope.
- Noted that any further changes to SRA's can still be taken forward during the municipal year and any changes would need to be consulted on and have supported reasoning.

Agreed the attached carers and babysitting form at appendix 3 for wider publicity and that should be a positive campaign to promote this.

RESOLVED

To note the current Member's Allowance Scheme and key findings of the remuneration of Councillors in London 2023 attached at Appendix 1 and put forward the above comments on recommended changes for consideration at the March meeting of Standards Committee.

36. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the following items for the next meeting on the 5th of March:

Members Allowance Scheme 2024/25
 Recruitment of Independent Persons – report to Council
 Council Standing Orders review
 Planning Protocol
 Member Complaints Process
 Procurement Standing Orders – TBC

The Committee were advised of delays in the Recruitment of independent persons due to the need to better publicise the role and attract candidates.

The Committee suggested advertising in the Community Press, linked in and also sending the link to the Multi Faith Forum.

37. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

38. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

5th of March 2024.

39. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

To exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting as the items contained 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; namely, information relating to any individual and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

40. EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED

To confirm and sign the exempt minutes of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee meeting held on 31 October 2023 as a correct record.

41. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS

None

CHAIR: Councillor Ibrahim Ali

Signed by Chair

Date