

# **MINUTES OF MEETING Standards Committee HELD ON Tuesday, 5th March, 2024, 7pm - 8.49pm**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Erdal Dogan, Felicia Opoku, Ibrahim Ali (Chair), Scott Emery and Simmons-Safo**

**ALSO ATTENDING: Fiona Alderman, Ayshe Simsek**

## **42. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

The filming at meetings notice was noted by attendees.

## **43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **44. URGENT BUSINESS**

Under s100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair of the meeting agreed that items 47 and 48 should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances which are to and ensure Committee are able to recommend adoption of the Member Allowances scheme to Full Council on the 14th of March 2024 and to allow the Council Standing Order changes to be agreed at the 14 March 2024 full Council meeting and implementation in the new municipal year. The reports were late to allow wider member consultation.

## **45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **46. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED**

To confirm and sign the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 30 January 2024.

## **47. MEMBER ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2024/2025**

The Democratic Services manager introduced the report which asked Standards Committee to consider the 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.

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 Committee had considered this report at the 30th of January 2024 meeting and comments set out at paragraph 6.4.

The Committee considered that the independent review of Members' Allowance commissioned by the Committee in 2019/20 indicated that the Members' Basic Allowance percentage increase be index linked to the local government officer pay percentage increase, capped at 2% to be reduced if a lesser percentage is agreed. In 2023/ 2024, the Standards Committee had agreed to keep to this principle and recommended a 2% increase in the basic allowance. The Committee noted that in 2023, the local government officer pay percentage increase, for 2023/24 was 3.88% on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer. The current basic allowance is £11,472 and if a 2% increase was agreed this would rise to by £229.44 to £11,701.44 (rounded to (£11, 701.00)). This would require additional budget spend of around £13, 053.00(57x £229.00). We 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 Councillor colleagues were spending on additional resources to maintain increased volume of work and had families themselves to support.

The Independent Remuneration Panel set up for the purpose of making recommendations across London on Members' Allowances schemes report, published on 5th of January 2024, further supported this recommended increase in the basic allowance and contained much wider details and analysis of SRA's for London Councils to consider. The Standards Committee noted that the Basic Allowance figure was not the highest or lowest in London but was in the mid-range of provision and was still much lower than the recommended increase set out in the attached IRP report at Appendix 1 of £15,960.

The Committee discussed that going forward, there should be a regularisation of increases to the Basic Allowance to link with the local government pay increase, capped at 2% but noted the legal requirement to consider the Members' Allowance Scheme on an annual basis.

The Committee noted queries about analysis of the Members' Allowance Scheme and the interpretation provided, in the full Council report on the 13th of November 2023, that the allocation of the SRA Band 1B is provided to both the Leader of the Second Opposition Group and Deputy Leader of the Principal Opposition. The Committee noted that an alternative interpretation could be applied, and the Committee were invited to specify whether the scheme should be either the Leader of the Second Opposition Group or Deputy Leader of the Principal Opposition or whether both individuals should receive an allowance.

The Committee discussed the following:

- That when the original wording had been added to the Members' Allowance Scheme in 2017/2018, it was prior to the 2018 local elections and when the Standards review of the Members' Allowance Scheme had considered the potential of three political parties being locally elected to take up positions on

the Council. The Committee considered that the second Opposition group had not been elected in the 2022 elections as a political party to provide representation on the Council.

- The balance of responsibilities and workload of the two opposition groups was considered and noted that the Principal Opposition group had more members and were responsible for scrutinising the administration.
- The Principal Opposition held a seat on all ordinary committees of the Council and also held a seat on all Scrutiny Panels.

The Committee continued to agree that at Table A, Banding group 1B, at bullet point 6, deletion of: **Leader of the second Opposition Group or.** Agreed that this change is reflected at Appendix 2.

The Committee noted that sickness, paternity and maternity leave for Councillors is incorporated in the Members' Allowance scheme. The Committee noted that some work had been done to simplify the process for claiming childcare and carer payments and the Committee agreed to better publicise this form and include it as part of the Council report. This was attached at Appendix 5 for noting.

## **RESOLVED**

1. To consider the changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme set out at paragraph 6.7 and reflected at Appendix 1 to the report.
2. To recommend that the Members' Allowances Scheme 2024/25 attached at Appendix 1, and the changes agreed above be adopted by Full Council on 14 March 2024.
3. To include the carers claim form attached at appendix 3 in the papers for Full Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 to support publicity.

## **Reasons for decision**

The Council has a legal duty to approve a Members Allowances Scheme before the end of each year to cover the following year. The Council can amend a scheme any time during the year but can only revoke a scheme with effect from the beginning of the year. The scheme must make provision for basic allowances and, if they are to be paid, special responsibility, dependents' carers, travelling and subsistence and co-optees allowances.

### **Alternative options considered.**

No alternative options were considered as there is a duty to adopt a members' allowance scheme annually.

## **48. COUNCIL STANDING ORDER CHANGES**

The Committee considered a report on changes to Council Standing Orders and the Full Council Protocol, relating to deletion of the Haringey debate provision, the

meeting process for motions, Mayor's communications and having additional oral Council questions to allow wider back bench member involvement in Council meetings. These proposals had been put forward following discussion and steer at the Constitution Working Group.

The Committee was asked to agree with the small update to CSO 8.1(v) to ensure that there was no ambiguity with the rules relating to Council meetings finishing at 10pm. The Committee noted that motions that were not considered could still be put forward to the next meeting, but the onus was still on the political group to put this forward in line with CSO 13 and the sequencing would still need to be in accordance with the Full Council Protocol.

The Committee considered the deletion of the Haringey debate provision from Council Standing Orders and the Protocol and discussed the following:

- How the debate enabled external speakers and presentation of wider topical issues and allowed the mayor to promote their charity.
- The debate had been included as a provision in 2011 and the purposes and outcomes were now questioned as there was discussion of the topic at the meetings, but not tangible actions or outcomes proposed following the debates. This situation was not meeting residents, stakeholder expectations. The Committee noted that deleting the debate would allow motions to be reached and this facility can provide tangible resolutions and commitments from the Council. The Committee were assured that this process did not exclude local issues from being raised and the deputation's facility still provided the opportunity for public participation.

(Cllr Emery left the meeting at 7.39pm)

- Councillors could proactively speak with local stakeholders and residents to promote deputations to connect with the motions.
- The need to make the access to Council meetings easier for local people to encourage a wide range of voices at Council meetings. This included Councillors reaching out to local people that had influence and also updating the web pages to make clearer the engagement in meetings process.

The Committee noted that the CWG will next consider process on petitions and deputations at Council meeting and requested a further report in November to understand and comment on the final shape of Full Council meetings.

The Committee noted the changes to the Council Protocol on motion sequencing and mayoral communications and had no specific comments.

## **RESOLVED**

1. To consider Appendix 1 outlining track changes to the Full Council protocol and recommend adoption by Full Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

2. To consider Appendix 2 for ease of reference which contains the proposed updated Full Council protocol without the track changes.
3. To consider Appendix 3, Council Procedure Rules, outlining resultant changes in yellow and recommend to Full Council for adoption on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 and for the changes to take effect from the Annual Council meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2024.

**49. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The work plan items were noted and agreed an item on dispensation rules for councillors in November.

**50. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no new items of business.

**51. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**52. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Not required.

**53. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS**

None

CHAIR: Councillor Ibrahim Ali

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....