

## **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL TO ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL – JUNE 2008**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require that each Council must establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations about the level of basic allowance for all Members, the level of special responsibility allowances and to whom they should be paid, and on whether dependants' carers' allowance and travel and subsistence allowances should be paid and the levels of these allowances. The Panel also can consider whether any allowances should be pensionable and/or subject to an annual inflationary increase.
- 1.2. The Council has to have regard to the advice of the Independent Remuneration Panel except in the instance of pensionable allowances where the view of the Panel is binding if it does not recommend their implementation. The Panel has not recommended that any allowances should be pensionable.
- 1.3. The Panel met in April 2007 to advise on remuneration for the Executive Board and Area Committee Structure, and then reviewed this in December 2007.
- 1.4. In April 2008 the Council decided to move to a stronger leadership model of governance with the Leader appointed for a period of 4 years, supported by an Executive of 7 portfolio holders with delegated decision-making authority. The Panel had therefore been requested to reconvene to consider the impact of this new structure.
- 1.5. The Panel was also asked to consider the remuneration for independent members on the Standards Committee, given the new statutory arrangements for dealing with complaints against Councillors.

### **2. Work Programme**

- 2.1. The Panel held one meeting and heard from John Honey, Corporate Director (Internal Services) and Monitoring Officer. The Panel would like to express their thanks for his contribution.
- 2.2. The Panel considered the following documents:
  - comparative information about executive allowances in District Councils in Essex
  - report to the Executive Board on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008 outlining the new political decision-making structure
  - extract from the Constitution showing levels of responsibility of the portfolio holders

- forward plan of key decisions containing the major decisions that would be taken by portfolio holders in the next 4 months.

### **3. District Council Proposals**

#### **3.1. Executive Allowances**

The Panel considered information about the additional work and accountability required of the roles of the new Executive, compared to the former Executive Board that had operated as a collective. In particular, the Panel noted that all of the Executive power is now vested in the Leader who can delegate authority to individual portfolio holders or officers.

The Panel wished to continue using 'building blocks' of the basic allowance (£4,250) to determine remuneration levels.

**Recommendation:** that Executive Portfolio holders receive an allowance of 200% of the basic allowance, plus the basic allowance of £4,250, making a total remuneration of £12,750 per annum.

**Recommendation:** that the Deputy Leader receive an allowance of 300% of the basic allowance, plus the basic allowance of £4,250, making a total remuneration of £17,000 per annum.

**Recommendation:** that the Leader of the Council receive an allowance of 500% of the basic allowance, plus the basic allowance of £4,250, making a total remuneration of £25,500 per annum.

#### **3.2. Chairmen's Allowances**

The Panel considered the roles of the Review Committee and other Chairmen but decided that at this stage their remuneration should remain at the existing levels.

**Recommendation:** that the remuneration for the Review Committee Chairman remain at £3,125 and for other Committee Chairmen (including Area Committee Chairmen) remains at £2,125 per annum.

### **4. Independent Members of the Standards Committee**

- 4.1. The Panel was advised that as a result of a new statutory arrangement, all complaints about Members' conduct within the District affecting Town/Parish Councils or the District Council had to be considered by a Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee that had to be chaired by an independent member. It was anticipated that there would be a significant increase in the workload as a result. The Panel considered various possibilities and decided that their recommendation would need to be subject to review once there was evidence of the actual level of work involved.

**Recommendation:** that the remuneration for the Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee remain at £2,125 per annum.

**Recommendation:** that the remuneration for the independent members of the Standards Committee be set at £425 per annum (10% of the basic allowance for District Council members).

Tracy Halpin  
Tony Payne  
Mike McDowall  
Independent Remuneration Panel  
June 2008