

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
DEPUTY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS ALLOWANCE REVIEW

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel, we agreed to hold a meeting in May to consider the level of remuneration paid to Deputy Portfolio Holders. In order to better understand their work, we requested that they each complete a work log of their activity for the prescribed period of 19 March to 27 April 2012. All of the Deputy Portfolio Holders attended a briefing session on the completion of the work log and it was stressed that the log should only include the work relating to their position as a Deputy Portfolio Holder. They were also given the opportunity to submit further documentation about the role and were invited to speak to the Panel which convened on the 14 May 2012.
- 1.2 All six Deputy Portfolio holders submitted their work logs and supplementary documentation in advance of the meeting and attended the Panel in person. We also spoke to the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, Cllr Roger Evans (representing the Liberal Democrat Group) and Cllr Pauline Dee (representing the Independent Group). Cllr Alan Mosley (representing the Labour Group) submitted a written statement.

2.0 SUBMISSION OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 Each of the six Deputy Portfolio Holders submitted their work logs in advance of the meeting. These were very helpful and provided extra clarity on the work undertaken by each of the Deputy Portfolio Holders. We were however mindful that it was not possible to obtain a full picture of the role by analysis of these work logs alone. This view was endorsed by each of the Deputy Portfolio Holders and justified speaking to each of them in person at the meeting.
- 2.2 We received a suggestion from Cllr Roger Evans that as Deputy Portfolio Holders were helping to ease the workload of Portfolio Holders, that consideration should be given to a reduction in the Portfolio Holder Allowance. However, countering this point, representations were made that the current situation in Local Government was unlike any other with the rate of change meaning work loads were extraordinary high. Cllr Roger Evans made the point that the fact all Councillors receive a Basic Allowance must always be taken into consideration when assessing levels of Special Responsibility Allowance. Differing views were given regarding the attendance of Deputy Portfolio Holders at Cabinet and Scrutiny Meetings. We concluded that this varied depending on the Deputy Portfolio Holder and the agenda of the meetings.

- 2.3 Cllr Alan Mosley in his written statement stated that it was not apparent that the profile of the role had enhanced significantly. He also stated that if an increase was to be recommended, it should only occur if the overall budget for payment to members was not increased and that the proportion of the budget paid to members of the Administration did not change. Cllr Pauline Dee stated that at the current time she believed the status quo was the best option until more was learnt about the role.
- 2.4 After speaking to all six Deputy Portfolio Holders it was clear that each of them had developed their own working relationship with their Portfolio Holder and they were content with the way the role was operating. Each Deputy believed that they were adding value to the Council and had been of considerable help to their Portfolio Holder. This view was also endorsed by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. Due to the unique nature of the new role and the different operating styles of the Portfolio Holders it was sometimes difficult for us to obtain a full understanding of the remit of the role. It appeared that it was variable depending on the Deputy Portfolio Holder. The work logs helped to give us a good understanding of the significant level of workload for each of the Deputy Portfolio Holders. We believe that the Council would benefit if further information was released on the remit of the role, the reporting lines and structure and the monitoring arrangements.
- 2.5 The Chief Executive was of the view that Deputy Portfolio holders were helping to direct policy thinking and were now interacting more with the Cabinet. They were also having a dialogue with the general public which was further helping to develop policy. He made the point that there had been a reduction in the Cabinet from ten down to nine, which had meant a further increase in workload. We had a detailed discussion with the Leader of the Council. He informed us that Deputy Portfolio Holders had been able to pick up work that Portfolio Holders would not have had time to address. There were many examples where the work of the Deputies had been of considerable benefit to the Council. They were also important for succession planning. There had been savings in the budget by reducing conference attendance, reducing the travel allowance rate, and from a reduction in the members of the Cabinet, this would help to offset any increase in the allowance for Deputy Portfolio Holders.
- 2.6 Having analysed all of the evidence, we believe on balance that the Deputy Portfolio Holder role does deserve an increase in the level of remuneration as outlined in the recommendations. We believe that the workload carried out by a Deputy Portfolio Holder does justify an increase, even though the levels of defined responsibility tend to vary among them.

3.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Remuneration Panel recommends that the Deputy Portfolio Holder Allowance be increased to £5,757.00 (0.5 multiplier of the Basic Allowance) and that this be backdated from the date of appointment. However we believe that the Council would benefit if further information was released on how the role works, the reporting lines and structure and the monitoring arrangements. The Panel are also mindful that with a Local Government Election planned for next year and the changing structures in the public sector it will have to conduct a thorough review of the Members Allowance Scheme in 2013.

Ciaran Martin (Chairman)
Julia Baron
June Jones

James Parker
John Thomas