

Report of: The Independent Remuneration Panel

To: Blackpool Council on Monday 20 July 20

Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme – Fostering Panel

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has appointed an Independent Remuneration Panel to advise the Council on the scheme of members' allowances.
- 1.2 The Panel was convened under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021). These regulations, which arise out of the relevant provisions in the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to set up and maintain an advisory Independent Remuneration Allowances Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances. All Councils are required to convene their Allowances Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their allowances scheme and they must 'pay regard' to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 1.3 The Panel met specifically to consider the potential payment of an allowance to the elected member representative on the Fostering Panel.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 We were supplied with the following information to assist us in our work:
 - An overview of the work of the Fostering Panel provided by representatives from the Children's Services department.
 - A brief description of the level of commitment required by the current elected member representative
 - Details of the allowances made to the independent members appointed to Blackpool's Fostering Panel
 - A list of allowances paid by other local authorities for comparable positions.
- 2.2 The Director of Governance and Partnerships and the Scrutiny Manager attended the meeting to answer questions from the Panel.

3. Fostering Panel Allowance

- 3.1 We gave consideration to the amount of time spent by the elected member representative on the Panel both in preparation for the meetings and attendance at the meetings themselves and the importance of the work of the Panel. We considered that the time commitment and responsibility of the role was over and above what would be expected by an elected member as part of their ordinary role and therefore that a special responsibility allowance was appropriate in this case. We noted that meetings were held on at least a monthly basis.

- 3.2 In addition we noted that the allowance payable to independent members on the Fostering Panel had recently been increased to £90 per meeting attended and that the role and time commitment of the independent members and the elected member was comparable. We therefore considered that the allowance be set at the same level for the elected member and that the allowance should be uplifted in line with that payable to the independent member, should that occur in the future.
- 3.3 In our last report to Council in June 2019, we noted that in exceptional circumstances it might be appropriate for two special responsibility allowances to be paid and that we would consider each case on its individual merits. The current elected member representative on the Fostering Panel is already in receipt of a special responsibility allowance for another position. In this case, we do consider that the extra time commitment and responsibility required by this position merits the additional allowance to be paid. The payment of an allowance in these circumstances would require an exception to the current Members Allowance scheme. Such exceptions are permitted when there is for example work involved of a very frequent nature, over and above current arrangements.

4. Recommendations to Council

- 4.1 That a special responsibility allowance of £90 per meeting attended of the Fostering Panel should be paid to the elected member representative from the 11th May 2020, with future uplifts to be in line with the rate paid to the independent member representatives and that the allowance be paid as an allowed second allowance.

Mrs H Hockenhull (Chair)
Mrs K Eaton
Mr G Molyneux