

## Appendix 1 – Report by the Independent Remuneration Panel

**Title of meeting:** Governance & Audit & Standards – 13 March 2014  
Full Council – 18 March 2014

**Subject:** Proposed Minor Revisions to Members' Allowance Scheme

**Report by:** Independent Remuneration Panel

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### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To outline the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) 2014.

### 2. Background

The 2014 Independent Remuneration Panel comprising:

- Professor John Craven, former Vice Chancellor - Portsmouth University (Chair);
- Mark Waldron, - Editor of The News, Portsmouth;
- Ursula Ward, Chief Executive – Portsmouth Hospital NHS Trust;
- Sue Dovey, Chief Executive - Community Action Hampshire;
- Walter Cha, Managing Director - Blake Laphorn

was asked to review two elements of the City Council's Members' Allowance Scheme to enable (a) provision to be made for the inclusion of an interest free bus loan on the same basis as the officer scheme and (b) changes to be made to the Dependent Carers' Allowance so that it is more flexible and is similar to the Local Government Association's Scheme which is based on an hourly rate rather than a fixed total annual limit

#### A. Interest-free Bus loan

The City Council has adopted policies to help staff concerned about traffic congestion, air quality and their health to make a difference. These include a number of incentives to reduce unnecessary car use including catching the bus.

The scheme includes: -

1. An interest free loan facility for a bus ticket.
2. A substantially discounted price for an annual bus pass (unlimited travel within the area for 365 days) with Stagecoach Coastline and First Hampshire.

- Currently £434.70 for Portsmouth (Stagecoach Coastline)

## Appendix 1 – Report by the Independent Remuneration Panel

- Currently £623.70 for Portsmouth and Havant + (Stagecoach Coastline)
- Currently £351.00 for Portsmouth (First Hampshire all zones at weekends)
- Currently £421.00 for South-East Hampshire (inc Waterlooville, Fareham, Gosport and Southampton) (First Hampshire)

It is considered that all the above options should be available for members to choose which best meets their respective needs for the primary purpose of attending meetings/carrying out business at the council offices.

Such an arrangement should be on the same terms of eligibility criteria, annual cost, interest free loan arrangements and the associated conditions as applies to Officers. However, in respect of new or renewal season tickets, for ease of administration it is proposed that they will only be approved if the member has more than 12 months left in office.

Note - It is understood that Members may only claim travel allowance whilst on Council business outside of the City boundaries, or in extreme circumstances a taxi after 11pm within the city when no other means of transport available.

Consequently any travel allowance payable would not cover the cost of a bus season ticket.

### **B. Dependent Carers' Allowance**

This allowance is to enable a carer employed to look after a child or an elderly relative or disabled person who normally resides with a councillor and cannot be left alone.

A carers' allowance may be paid to those members with caring responsibilities for approved duties set out in approved members allowance scheme.

The member is required to complete and sign a form and submit for approval. The form includes details of the meeting, Civic function or other approved duty, proof of costs incurred and the name of the carer or carer group. By signing the form the member is agreeing that they have incurred the claimed for costs in carrying out their relevant duties as per the members allowance scheme, relevant codes of conduct etc.

A carers' allowance is not applicable for party group meetings, canvassing or electioneering but is available for ward work, advice centres and civic functions. Reimbursement for meetings is allowed beyond the actual duration of meetings, given that care must usually be booked in advance for a fixed period

The carers' allowance will be paid towards the cost of care for close relatives for whom the member is the main or joint main carer. This applies to children, or to

## Appendix 1 – Report by the Independent Remuneration Panel

elderly or disabled relatives. The allowance will not be payable to a member of the claimant's own household.

The proposed change is to delete the following element in the current scheme (if supported there would also no longer be a need for provision to be made for an ad personam increase).

"This allowance will be subject to a maximum claim of £1000 per annum per member"

and replace it with the following -

**"The rate of reimbursement for carers' allowance is equivalent to the minimum wage – currently £6.19 per hour for employees over 21. This is per person cared for and is unlimited "**

The change is intended to offer more flexibility than the current maximum figure of £1000 per annum .

Whilst the current scheme has not been greatly used since its introduction, it is understood to have been somewhat limiting for those that have very heavy council workloads and commitments. This proposed hourly rate approach, based on the current minimum wage, is seen as a more practical and reflective approach and brings the Council into the line with similar schemes operated by many other Councils and the Local Government Association.

### 3. Panel's recommendations

**RECOMMENDED that the above changes in respect of the interest free bus loan and the Dependent Carers' allowance be implemented.**