

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2009/2010 REPORT NO. 21

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Council
30 June 2010

REPORT OF:

Governance Review Group

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Agenda – Part: 1	Item: 12
Subject: Members' IT and Allowances	
Wards: All	
Cabinet Member consulted:	
Councillor Doug Taylor	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. At its meeting on 21 June 2010, the Governance Review Group considered reports from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources on IT arrangements for Members and on amendments to the Member Allowances Scheme.
- 1.2. This report outlines the recommendations made by the Governance Review Group to Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Members be given the option of being provided with either a Council laptop or a mobile telephone with email and web capabilities.
- 2.2. That Members be canvassed as to whether they would prefer to receive a laptop or mobile telephone, and if opting for a mobile telephone, which particular type and model from the options presented by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.
- 2.3. That the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources be given delegated authority to decide on which type and model of mobile telephone be issued to Members once survey results have been collated, based upon usability benefits, costs and compatibility to the Council's IT systems.
- 2.4. That if a Member chooses to receive a mobile telephone and does not already have a Centrex telephone line installed at their home, no Centrex line be installed.
- 2.5. That Council considers whether Member allowances be increased in 2010/2011, and if so, should the increase be in line with the average earnings as at October 2009 (in line with the previous Council's agreement and currently 1.4%) or any other amount Council sees appropriate.

- 2.6. That Council considers whether it wishes to retain the current arrangements whereby allowances are increased annually in line with the average earnings figure and notes that a more detailed review of the scheme will be undertaken for implementation in 2011/2012.
- 2.7. That Council considers funding the special responsibility allowance (SRA) for the additional Cabinet Member in line with the proposal set out paragraph 3.12 below.

3. BACKGROUND

Members' IT

- 3.1. At its meeting on 21 June 2010, the Governance Review Group considered the report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources on the provision of IT equipment to Members following the election of the new Council on 6 May 2010.
- 3.2. At present, new Members are being seen by Corporate IT on an individual basis and being shown how to access their Council e-mail and a MembersNet service from their own home PC or laptop. Where Members do not have access to their own PC or laptop, they are being given the option to receive a Council provided laptop, with returning Members being given the further option of keeping their existing Council laptop in place of a new one should they prefer.
- 3.3. Requests have been made from some Members that they be provided with Blackberries, iPhones or a Council PDA (a HTC brand SmartPhone with access to Council network for e-mail and MembersNet and the ability to remotely wipe data from the memory in the event of theft or loss).
- 3.4. As the Council currently does not use such devices, they are not supported by Serco, and additional costs will be incurred should the Council decide to offer them to Members, although the cost of providing a mobile telephone rather than a laptop would be similar.
- 3.5. To ensure that value for money and appropriate support to Members can be provided, it is recommended that the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources be given delegated authority to decide on which type and model of mobile telephone be issued following a survey of Members.
- 3.6. Members may currently request that a Centrex telephone line be installed in their homes, which provides a dedicated line for Council business. The Governance Review Group recommends that should Council decide to offer mobile telephones to Members and individual Members take up that option, no new Centrex line be installed.

Member Allowances

- 3.7. At its meeting in June 2006, Council resolved that Members' allowances be increased annually in line with the preceding October's average earnings figure.

- 3.8. The increase due for the 2010/2011 financial year is 1.4%, but this increase has not currently been included in the allowances paid to Members. The increase has however been included in the base budget.
- 3.9. Council is therefore asked to consider whether allowances should be increased for 2010/2011, and if so, by what amount.
- 3.10. Details of the effect of the potential 1.4% increase are shown below along with a comparison of the fees that the Independent Remuneration Panel for London shows could be paid:

POSITION	CURRENT	PLUS 1.4%	INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
	£	£	£
Basic	10,570	10,720	10,597
Leader of Majority Party (full-time)	27,825	28,215	54,227
Deputy Majority Party	16,705	16,940	34,780 – 41,262
Opposition Leader	16,705	16,940	15,333 – 28,298
Opposition Deputy	4,185	4,245	not covered in report
Majority Whip	8,905	9,030	15,333 – 28,298
Opposition Whip	4,455	4,515	2,368 – 8,852
Cabinet Members	13,915	14,110	34,780 – 41,262
Overview Scrutiny Chairman			34,780 – 41,262
Scrutiny Chairmen	8,910	9,035	15,333 – 28,298
Audit Chairman	8,910	9,035	15,333 – 28,298
Planning Chairman	8,910	9,035	15,333 – 28,298
Licensing Panel Chairman	8,910	9,035	15,333 – 28,298
Pension Board Chairman	8,910	9,035	15,333 – 28,298
Mayor	6,675	6,770	15,333 – 28,298
Deputy Mayor	3,370	3,415	not covered in report
Standards Chairman	2,615	2,650	not covered in report

- 3.11. Council is also asked to consider whether it wishes to continue with the arrangement whereby allowances are increased automatically each year in line with the average earnings figure for October.

3.12. Council is also asked to consider how it wishes to adjust the SRAs to allow for the additional Cabinet Member. The Governance Review Group considered a proposal made by the new administration to pool the budget currently allocated to the existing Cabinet member positions, the Scrutiny Chairmen and the Licensing, Planning, Pension Fund and Audit Committee Chairmen and then re-calculating the allowances using the same factor differentials between the positions. The other Opposition SRAs and the those for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Standards Chairman will remain the same. Details of the proposals are as follows:

	Revised SRA**	Total Cost	Reduction Of
	£	£	£
Leader of Majority Party	26,721	26,721	1,494
Deputy Majority Party	16,042	16,042	897
Opposition Leader	16,939	16,939	0
Opposition Deputy	4,244	4,244	0
Majority Whip	8,552	8,552	478
Opposition Whip	4,517	4,517	0
Cabinet Members (x 7)	13,363	93,539	747
Overview Scrutiny Chairman	8,557	8,557	478
Scrutiny Chairmen (x 7)	8,557	51,338	478
Audit Chair	8,557	8,557	478
Planning Chairman	8,557	8,557	478
Licensing Panel Chairman	8,557	8,557	478
Pension Board Chairman	8,557	8,557	478
Mayor	6,768	6,768	0
Deputy Mayor	3,417	3,417	0
Standards Chairman	2,652	2,652	0

** incorporating the 1.4% increase.

3.13. The Member Allowances scheme provides that where the same Councillor holds two or more positions that attract an SRA, only the higher SRA may be claimed.

3.14. In percentage terms, the reduction in SRAs equates to 5.296%

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. With regards to Member IT, the option of offering the same services as at present exists, although this may not give Members what they require to enable them to undertake their roles as effectively as they might otherwise be able to.
- 4.2. The option of creating the additional Cabinet member position at the same SRA as currently paid would cause the budget to be overspent.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1. To provide Members with suitable IT provision.
- 5.2. To confirm the Member Allowances Scheme for 2010/2011.

6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

6.1. Financial Implications

Should Members decide to use laptops and PDA devices, the supply & support for them, is covered by the existing IT contract. If other devices are required, a variation to the contract will need to be negotiated.

The readjustment of SRAs, as proposed, will achieve the objective of creating an additional Cabinet Member position at nil extra cost. To create the additional Cabinet Member position within the allowances scheme at the same rates as currently paid would cause the budget to be overspent. The 2010/2011 budget had assumed the 1.4% increase.

6.2. Legal Implications

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require all local authorities to set up and maintain an advisory Independent Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances. The London Council acts as the Independent Panel and has completed a report for 2010. The recommendations in this report are compatible with the recommendations of the Independent Panel's remuneration for Councillors in London report

7. KEY RISKS

If Members are not supplied with appropriate IT equipment with which to work, there is a risk that they will be unable to undertake their roles as effectively as they might otherwise be able to.

8. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

If Members are not supplied with appropriate IT equipment with which to work, there is a risk that they will be unable to undertake their roles as effectively as they might otherwise be able to.

9. COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS

The proposals will assist Members in delivering effective representation and community leadership.

10. PUTTING ENFIELD FIRST

The provision of high quality IT to members and a robust Member Allowances Scheme will contribute towards the delivery of excellent services in Enfield.

Background Papers

Independent Remuneration Panel Report