



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Report to: Council

Date of Meeting: 30 September 2008

Report from: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Title of Report: Special Responsibility Allowance – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item Number:

1. Purpose and Summary

1.1 Earlier this year the Council decided to reduce its existing three Overview & Scrutiny Panels and Management Board to a single Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the sole responsibility for discharging overview and scrutiny matters. Cllr Geoffrey Armstrong was subsequently elected as Chairman with Cllr David Holding elected as Vice-Chairman.

1.2 In its Report of 2007 the Independent Remuneration Panel [in the exercise of its statutory duty under regulation 21 of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI No.1021)] recommended the responsibilities or duties in respect of which special responsibility allowance should be payable. These recommendations included the responsibilities and duties being undertaken by the then chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

1.3 Looking at the substance of responsibilities and/or duties, the purpose of this report is to decide whether or not a special responsibility allowance should be paid to the Vice-Chairman of the new single Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the light of the level of responsibilities and duties being undertaken.

1.4 It is recommended that:

The responsibilities and/or duties being asked of and undertaken by the Vice-Chairman of the new enlarged single Overview and Scrutiny Committee are such as to attract the payment of a special responsibility allowance and that the Council hereby resolves that Cllr David Holding should be paid a special

responsibility allowance of £2,173.57 per annum for so long as Cllr David Holding discharges those responsibilities and/or duties, with immediate effect.

2. Consultation

2.1 None

3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority

3.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is very much part of the process as evidenced by its work programme.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications and Value for Money Statement

The number of special responsibility allowances have been reduced earlier this year (the Executive has one less Member and there has been a saving of two special responsibility allowances since the move to only one Overview & Scrutiny Committee). Therefore, given this reduction (and the consequential savings accrued to date), there is money available to pay for a special responsibility allowance should Members decide so to do.

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Issues

See paragraph 3.1 above.

4.3 Legal

The Council has power to pay special responsibility allowances provided the Independent Remuneration Panel has made a recommendation as regards the responsibilities or duties which should in its view attract a special responsibility payment.

4.4 Personnel

None

4.5 Other Services

None

4.6 Diversity

None

4.7 Risk

Unless the Council properly recognises the contribution made by members there is a risk that the number of people willing to undertake public duty will diminish to the detriment of local democracy.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

None

4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

None

5. Background , Position Statement and Option Appraisal

5.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel reported in its report of 2007 the responsibilities or duties which it recommended should attract payment of a special responsibility allowance and the amount of that allowance. This included the responsibilities or duties undertaken by the then chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees, amounting to an individual special responsibility allowance of £2,173.57 per annum.

5.2 In September 2007 the Council endorsed that recommendation and decided that such a sum should be payable.

5.3 There are two options. Option one is that the Council decides that no special responsibility allowance should be payable to the Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (e.g. because it feels that the level of responsibilities or duties in respect of overview & scrutiny matters are not such as to reach the level which would trigger such a payment). Alternatively, option two is that the Council decides that in substance the responsibilities or duties being asked of and undertaken by the Vice-Chairman are commensurate to those which justifiably attract a special responsibility allowance i.e. they are the same as or higher than those previously undertaken by the former chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels. It is considered that the payment of a special allowance is justified in this case.

6. Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that:

The responsibilities and/or duties being asked of and undertaken by the Vice-Chairman of the new enlarged single Overview and Scrutiny Committee are such as to attract the payment of a special responsibility allowance and that the Council hereby resolves that Cllr David Holding should be paid a special responsibility allowance of £2,173.57 per annum for so long as Cllr David Holding discharges those responsibilities and/or duties, with immediate effect.

7. Background Papers/ Documents referred to

7.1 None.

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DESIGNATION

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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