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## **Cabinet - Supplementary Report**

### **Report of the meeting held on 17th April 2009**

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#### **87. REVIEW OF DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE**

Item No. 4 on the Council's agenda relates to a review of the Council's democratic structure that has been undertaken by a working party appointed by the Cabinet and chaired by Councillor K J Churchill.

The report and recommendations have been the subject of extensive discussion, including presentations to all Members. Following initial consideration by the Cabinet, the recommendations have been discussed by both Overview and Scrutiny Panels and by the Corporate Governance Panel. There has been little divergence of opinion on most of the recommendations. Where views have differed, the Cabinet has reviewed those recommendations again before reaching agreement on the changes to be submitted to Council.

A matrix is attached which summarises the views of the various bodies that have considered the report thus far.

Much debate has taken place on the financial implications of the recommendations, particularly in terms of the additional special responsibility allowances (SRAs) listed in paragraph 25.2 of the report. The only SRAs that are now being recommended by Cabinet are those for the chairman and vice chairman of the additional overview and scrutiny panel that is being proposed. These will amount to £9,148 per annum at current rates.

Provision of 3% has been made in the Council's budget for the current year for an increase in Members' Allowances. The current scheme provides for an annual increase in allowances as at the date of the Annual Meeting based upon the inflationary increase in the retail price index each year. With RPI currently standing at zero, no increase in allowances will be possible in 2009/10. This will save £11,160 per annum. The additional SRAs can therefore be funded from the existing budget and still allow for a small saving to be made in the overall Members Allowances budget in the current year.

Responsibility for implementation of the changes being proposed by the working party rests variously with the Council, Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Panels, the Leader and, to a lesser extent, other panels. For convenience they are collectively being recommended by Cabinet to Council for approval or otherwise.

The Cabinet therefore

## **RECOMMEND**

**that the recommendations contained in paragraph 28.1 of the working party's report (pages 57 – 61 inclusive of the Council's agenda pack) be approved, subject to the following changes –**

**recommendation (b) – approved in principle but deferred for one year and reviewed again at that time;**

**recommendation (e) – approved, with a starting time of 6.30 p.m.;**

**recommendation (h) – approved for a trial period of one year, but with co-optees not being permitted to vote and not in receipt of a co-optee's allowance;**

**recommendation (o) – approved, subject to the deletion of the reference to an 'annual' refresh of the LSP;**

**recommendation (p) – refusal of the recommendation;**

**recommendation (w) – approved, subject to the meeting time remaining at 4.00 p.m. with committee flexibility to change;**

**recommendation (aa) – deferral recommended for further consideration by the working party relating to membership and to consultation with the Employees Liaison Advisory Group,**

**recommendation (dd) – approved, subject to negotiation with partners,**

**recommendation (ee) – approved, subject to negotiation with partners,**

**recommendation (hh) – approved, with the exclusion of significant partnerships where other arrangements apply,**

**recommendation (rr) – special responsibility allowances be approved for the chairman and vice chairman of the proposed additional overview and scrutiny panel, to be funded from the existing Members Allowances' budget.**

These recommendations are summarised in the attached matrix.

In addition to the above, the Cabinet has decided to retain the working party with its current membership in the forthcoming municipal year to implement the changes, subject to their approval by the Council.

I C Bates  
Chairman