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REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Interim Report of the Independent
Remuneration Panel

October 2013

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003, the County Council is required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations to the Council about the allowances to be paid under its Scheme of Allowances. Whilst it is ultimately for the County Council to decide its Scheme, under the Regulations it must have regard to the advice of the Panel before making any changes.
- 1.2 Surrey's IRP consists of three members, Katherine Atkinson, Janet Housden and Cathy Rollinson, who between them have considerable experience in the areas of public and private sector management, human resources, consultancy services, education and charity work. They all live in Surrey, have no connections with Surrey County Council and are independent of any political party.
- 1.3 The IRP is currently undertaking a detailed review of the County Council's existing Members' Allowances Scheme, with a view to submitting its full report and recommendations to the Council in March 2014. In the coming months the IRP will undertake further consultation with Members which will help inform its final recommendations. The results of the South East Employers' annual allowances survey will also be published shortly, which will provide up-to-date data on the allowances paid by relevant comparator councils.
- 1.4 The purpose of this interim report is to make a recommendation specifically in relation to the role of Cabinet Associate.

2 CABINET ASSOCIATES

- 2.1 Four Cabinet Associates were appointed by the Leader in May 2013, and the role profiles were agreed by the County Council at its meeting in July 2013. As the Scheme of Allowances has not been amended since 2010, this role is not currently recognised within the Scheme and the Cabinet Associates do not receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA). As part of its on-going review, the IRP is planning to hold discussions with each of the Cabinet Associates early in the New Year, by which time they will have been in post long enough for a realistic assessment of their workload and level of responsibility to be made. The IRP will also interview the relevant Cabinet Members as part of this process.
- 2.2 The guidance on the Regulations for Local Authority Allowances, published by Central Government states that *'Special responsibility allowance (SRA) may be paid to those Members of the council who have **significant** additional responsibilities, over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor. These special*

responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the authority's functions.'

- 2.3 When considering the level of the SRA which is appropriate for the Cabinet Associate role, the IRP wishes to take into account the responsibility levels of all the roles within the Scheme which attract an SRA, so that the Scheme as a whole is seen as coherent and fair. The IRP did not, therefore, feel that it was appropriate to make a definitive recommendation about the level of the SRA at this stage, prior to the completion of its review in early 2014 and before sufficient time had elapsed to allow an evidence-based assessment of the role to be made. However, the IRP recognises that Members have been undertaking the roles since May 2013 and would not, in the absence of a formal recommendation from the IRP, receive any financial recognition prior to March 2014 when the review of the Scheme has been completed.
- 2.4 From the findings of its review so far, it is clear that the role of Cabinet Associate does involve significant additional responsibility, and the IRP will be recommending payment of an SRA when it reports in March 2014. In the light of this, the IRP feels that it is fair, pending the outcome of the full review, to recommend that a one-off payment of £5,000 for the financial year 2013/2014 be made to Cabinet Associates with immediate effect, to recognise the workload and responsibility involved with the role. However, it should be stressed that this interim payment is made by exception and without prejudice to the IRP's subsequent recommendations. It should not be seen as a likely indicator of the level of the SRA which will be recommended at that time.

RECOMMENDATION:

That, without prejudice to any recommendations to be made by the Independent Remuneration Panel in its final report in March 2014, an exceptional one-off payment of £5,000 for the financial year 2013/2014 be made to Cabinet Associates with immediate effect.

Katherine Atkinson
Janet Housden
Cathy Rollinson (Chair)

3 October 2013

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