

## Hyndburn Borough Council

### Independent Remuneration Panel Report

#### **Composition**

Mr Frank Whitehead

Ms Rahila Hussain

Mr Laurence Loft

#### **Request Submitted**

The Brief submitted to the Panel asked the Panel to consider and make recommendations in respect of the following:

- Should the Council's members allowances scheme be amended to provide for a special responsibility allowance to be payable to the Leader of each minority group in addition to those payable to the Controlling Group and Opposition Group (For this purpose, the "Opposition Group" would be the second largest group on the Council and, for a special responsibility allowance to be payable, a "group" would have to contain at least 2 councillors) ?;
- Should the Council's members allowances scheme be amended to provide for a special responsibility allowance to be payable to the Deputy Leader of each minority group in addition to those payable to the Deputy Leaders of the Controlling Group and Opposition Group ?
- Should the Council's members allowances scheme be amended to provide for a special responsibility allowance to be payable to the chief whip and secretary of each minority group in addition to those payable to the Controlling Group and Opposition Group ?
- Does the Panel have a view about how any special responsibility allowance payable to minority opposition groups is calculated ?

The Brief to the Panel contained details of the Council's current members allowances scheme and gave details of the allowances paid by the other District Council in Lancashire, in particular in respect of minority opposition groups.

#### **Meeting Date**

The Panel met via Teams on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

The Panel meeting was also attended by Miss J Ellis (Executive Director – Legal & Democratic Services) and Mrs S Gardner (Member Services)

#### **Discussion and Recommendations**

The Panel noted that:

- Some local authorities in Lancashire do not pay any special responsibility allowances to minority opposition groups, but the majority of them did.
- Where Lancashire local authorities did pay special responsibility allowances in respect of minority opposition groups, this took the form of a special responsibility allowance to the leader of the minority opposition group. In some cases the special responsibility allowance to the group leader was only payable where the minority opposition group had a specified minimum number of members. The minimum number of group members specified ranged from 4 to 6.
- No local authority in Lancashire paid a special responsibility allowance to the deputy leader, chief whip or secretary of minority opposition groups.

In making its recommendations the Panel also had regard to:

- the low number of Councillors at Hyndburn Borough Council, for example in comparison to many other Lancashire districts
- the current composition of the Council and its political groupings
- the Council's current members' allowance scheme, which the Panel considered to be generous in comparison to other Lancashire district councils
- the fact that Members were only able to claim one special responsibility allowance.

The Panel made the following unanimous recommendations:

- That the Council's members allowances scheme should provide for a special responsibility allowance to be made to the leader of a minority opposition group;
- That a minority opposition group must consist of at least 5 or 6 Members in order for the leader of the same to be eligible to claim the special responsibility allowance;
- That the Council should decide whether the minimum minority opposition group membership should be set at 5 or 6 for this purpose;
- That a special responsibility allowance should not be payable to the deputy leader, chief whip or secretary of a minority opposition group.
- That the special responsibility allowance for the leader of a minority opposition group should be payable at the lowest level currently provided for the in the Council's members allowances scheme i.e. a multiplier of 0.165 of the basic allowance (currently £765)
- That the cost of the additional allowance, if ever the same became payable, should be met by making a pro rata reduction in the other special responsibility allowances paid by the Council.

Signed ..... *I. Loft* (approval by email - 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021)

Signed ..... Rahila Hussain (approval by email – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021)

Signed ..... Frank Whitehead (approval by email – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021)