

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

23 JUNE 2014

REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER

PAYMENT FOR PARISH REPRESENTATIVES WHEN DEALING WITH PARISH COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To enable the Committee to consider a payment for Parish Representatives when involved in complaints against Parish Councillors at a Governance Sub Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **To recommend to the Full Council that the Welland Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to consider an allowance for the Parish Representatives when they are involved in a Governance Sub Committee meeting.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The involvement of Parish Representatives is included within the Localism Act when dealing with complaints against Parish Councillors. Three Parish Representatives are appointed on an annual basis by the Melton Branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils.
- 3.2 It is understood that Parish Representatives were allocated an allowance when they were appointed to the previous Standards Committee. However this involved voting rights and a commitment to an annual cycle of 4 meetings plus ad hoc sub committee meetings concerning complaints against Members which were dealt with at 3 or more stages. Therefore involvement by the Parish Representatives during the existence of this Committee could be as much as a Borough Councillor hence an annual allowance was paid to each Parish Representative of £448.
- 3.3 The current Complaints Process requires that a Parish Representative is involved on Parish Councillor complaints only and at both of the Sub Committee stages. This is a less onerous role than previously however it is recognised that consideration of the papers, attendance at the Sub Committee, providing a view and attending relevant training sessions requires time and effort and the Parish Representative could be in a position where there is loss of earnings for the time spent on this area of Council business. Also this public service is important to the Council and its Complaints Process as to not have this representation at a Sub Committee when dealing with a Parish matter could make a decision subject to challenge.
- 3.4 It is noted that the Independent Persons receive an allowance similar to that previously allocated to those on the Standards Committee. However their role in the Complaints process is greater as they are consulted at both stages of all complaints and in the majority of cases, a written opinion is supplied as part of the

Sub Committee's papers. They also provide support to the Subject Members.

- 3.5 The Committee is requested to consider the way forward for a financial reward for the Parish Representative's role when involved in a Sub Committee. It is therefore proposed that the Welland Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to consider introducing such an allowance. It is noted that travel and subsistence expenses are not affected by this report.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Strong Corporate Governance is important in order to ensure high standards of conduct are maintained.

5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There may be financial implications in the future should an allowance be recommended by the Welland Independent Remuneration Panel.

6.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

- 6.1 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the scheme may provide for the payment of an allowance for each co-optee in respect of attendance at conferences and meetings.

7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

- 7.1 There are no specific community safety implications in this report.

8.0 **EQUALITIES**

- 8.1 Equalities Screening Assessments have been completed which outline the Council's responsibilities with regard to matters within the report under legislation regarding the Localism Act and Members' Allowances.

9.0 **RISKS**

- 9.1 The impact of the changes and implementation to meet the requirements of the Localism Act will need to be managed to minimise any risk to the Council's reputation or otherwise.

10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 10.1 There are no climate change implications in this report.

11.0 **CONSULTATION**

- 11.1 There has been consultation with one of the Parish Representatives.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

- 12.1 None.

Date: May 2014

Appendices: None

Background Papers: Localism Act 2011
Minutes of Council Meeting held on 18 July 2012
Minutes of Council Meeting held on 17 July 2013
Previous Minutes of Standards Committee
Previous Minutes of Governance Committee

Reference: Cttees, Council & Sub-Cttees/Governance/2014-15/230614/Parish Rep Payment