

**CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

19 November 2008  
(6.00pm-6.37pm)

**PRESENT:** Councillors Boyce (Chair), Blackhurst (as alternate for Cllr Rosenstiel), Hart, Pitt and Ward.

**FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**08/CIV/50 MINUTES**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2008.

**08/CIV/51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Herbert and Rosenstiel.

**08/CIV/52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**08/CIV/53 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

**08/CIV/54 INDEPENDENT PANEL REPORT ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR 2009/10**

Mike Arnold from the Independent Panel introduced the Panel's report. He made the following points:

1. Budget constraints meant there was little scope for an increase in allowances.
2. All parties had said that the basic allowance was not enough.
3. The relevance of various Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) including those for Vice Chairs (except for Area Committees) had been questioned by members, so the Panel had reviewed those and transferred part of the available funds to the Basic Allowance.
4. The Panel were recommending transferring some allowance from the Executive to the Basic Allowance to be used to contribute to incidental expenses such as Broadband.

Members from both parties welcomed the report and Councillor Hart spoke on behalf of the Labour Group saying they particularly welcomed more in the basic allowance and the fact that membership of area committees was included in the basic allowance. She requested that, if changes to the proposals were made at the meeting, then they should be considered again at a future meeting of Civic Affairs.

The Chair asked whether, when a Vice Chair 'acted up' for a whole committee cycle (attending the briefings & chairing the actual meeting), could they claim the Chair's SRA instead of the Chair for just that cycle?

The Director of Customer and Democratic Services agreed to obtain legal advice about whether allowances were paid to the post or to the person.

Members then commented as follows and suggested some changes:

1. The principle of no special allowance for Vice Chairs other than the Vice Chair of Planning Committee and the Area Committee Vice Chairs was supported.
2. The City Council Lead members on the Cambridge Traffic Management Area Joint Committee and the Joint Development Control Committee had considerable work to carry out even when they were not Chair, so they should have a special allowance. The label in the spreadsheet needed to be changed. If the city lead member was also Chair they should only be entitled to one SRA to cover both roles.
3. When the Chair of the Housing Management Board was a tenant (as would be the case in 2009/10), the Vice Chair Councillor should also have an SRA because of attending briefings etc.
4. With regard to Standards Committee (which has an independent Chair and Vice Chair), the majority spokesperson would need to respond to any relevant questions raised in full council and so should have a larger multiplier (the 0.19 allocated) than the minority spokes (0.15 suggested).
5. If the allowance to the Executive were to be top sliced it should be by a percentage that meant they did not suffer a cut in their gross allowances.
6. In order to make it more clear to the public that there were 7 Labour Spokes persons shadowing each of the Executive Councillors, it was suggested that the Panel add another line on the spreadsheet to show this.

7. The reference to “Other Members” on Licensing Committee, Planning Committee and the Joint Development Control Committee was also not clear as it masked the ratio between the SRAs for the principal positions.
8. The multipliers for the Chair and the Minority Spokes 1 on Licensing Committee were the same and this should not be the case.

The Panel recommendation that the Conservative member have the 0.19 multiplier of the basic allowance was supported by the Labour Group but not the Liberal Democrat Group who said that the first, third and fourth points made by Councillor Howell were party political matters and should be funded by the party. They also thought that some points were also true of other members in split wards.

The Chair thanked the Panel for their work and confirmed that two members of the Panel would be appointed in the near future due to the retirement of two members.

**Resolved** (unanimously)

- 1) that the Chair, Councillor Herbert and the Democratic Services Manager meet with Mr Cockburn from the Independent Panel to sort out the spreadsheet errors and resolve the issues raised above
- 2) that a revised scheme be brought to a future meeting of Civic Affairs in time for the scheme to be considered at a Council meeting before the start of the next municipal year.

**Chair**