

~~further sum of £335k would be added to the £143k previously reclaimed, resulting in a total of £0.5m being reclaimed in VAT. Officers were thanked for their work.~~

~~The Leader of the Opposition added his thanks to officers for their work on the VAT reclaim, and highlighted a further success around Community Panel funding which had been secured by local councillors and officers.~~

11.C.99

**REPORT OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL – MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES: ADOPTION OF A NEW SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

A report was submitted which sought adoption of a new Scheme of Members' Allowances following consideration of the findings of the Independent Review Panel.

It was noted that further information had been received from HM Revenues and Customs since the report had been written in respect of tax liabilities for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Advice was that there were two options for dealing with tax liabilities as follows:-

- Tax on the Mayors/Deputy Mayor's personal allowance could be claimed by individuals by submitting receipts via a personal dispensation
- 20% could be added to the amount of the personal allowance to compensate for personal tax payable. (It was noted that this was not felt to be the best option.)

It was proposed by Councillor Wiley and Seconded by Councillor Freer that the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel based on objectives (paragraph 7.5 as set out in the report of the Panel) be adopted with the responsibility for obtaining a personal dispensation in respect of tax falling on individual Mayors/Deputy Mayors.

The Leader of the Opposition stated that his group had considered carefully the report of the Independent Panel. He reiterated the independent nature of the recommendations, which had subsequently been considered by the Research and Development Committee and the Executive Committee. All members had also been given the opportunity to express their views to the panel prior to submission of its report. It was noted that, whilst the opposition broadly agreed with the recommendations of the independent panel based on objectives, it might be seen as insensitive to approve an

increase in councillors' allowances when officers in the public sector were currently subject to a pay freeze.

Councillor West therefore proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Bishop, that:-

*"In considering the report of the Independent Review Panel, the Council takes into account the public sector pay freeze which is now in its third year.*

*As a consequence, Council adopts the recommendations as set out in paragraph 7.6 of the report, until such time as public sector pay is unfrozen – when the full recommendations as set out in paragraph 7.5 of the report will be adopted and applied."*

Debate ensued on the amendment and the following issues were discussed:-

- The current Scheme of Members' Allowances and the provision for annual uplift in line with officers' salaries
- Provision in the existing scheme for councillors to forego all or part of their allowance, should they so wish
- The need to attract more people to stand for election, particularly young people
- The Independent Panel had recognised the importance of councillors' work and the time commitment involved
- The potential for councillors' to forego all or part of their allowance in favour of the ward initiatives fund

(Voting on the Amendment: For 9; Against 19)

The Amendment therefore fell.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (i) no adjustment be made to the Mayoral Allowances in relation to taxation issues, with personal tax affairs being dealt with independently by mayoral post holders;
- (ii) following consideration of the comments of the Research and Development Committee, the recommendation of the Executive Committee and the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel (Members' Allowances) a new scheme of members' allowances be adopted from 1st May 2012 as follows:-

1. The basic allowance be increased from £4,856 to £5,236 (including an increase of £137 per councillor contingent on the discontinuation of the council scheme of laptop provision;
2. The Leader's allowance be increased from £11,821 to £13,003;
3. The Deputy Leader's allowance be revised from £8,866 to £8,220 to facilitate an enhanced SRA for the Executive member (Finance);
4. The Executive member (Finance) receive an SRA of £6,086;
5. All other executive members receive an SRA of £4,564;
6. The Opposition Leader receive an SRA of £6,502 and the Deputy Opposition Leader £1,425;
7. The overall allowances budget proposed for the Executive (£54,693) be retained and re-allocated in the event of any increase or decrease in the size of the Executive;
8. The SRA for the Chair of the Planning Committee be increased from £2,589 to £5,178;
9. The SRA for the Chair of the Licensing Committee be increased from £2,589 to £3,884;
10. All other chairs of Committees continue to receive the same SRAs as at present (£2,589);
11. The level of the basic allowances, the SRAs for Executive members and the SRA for the Chair of the Standards Committee be reviewed in 2014 when the impact of the recent legislation will have become clearer;
12. The mayoral allowance be increased from £6,823 to £7,505 and that of the deputy mayor from £1,295 to £1,425;

13. Eligibility for the Local Government Pension Scheme be introduced at Kettering Borough Council;
  14. The Ward Initiatives Fund continue, with appropriate safeguards, with its current budgetary allocations;
  15. The introduction of flexibility in relation to the reimbursement of real costs of child day care or disablement care, should the current rates prove inadequate;
  16. The current basis for updating councillors allowances, linked to officer pay awards, continue.
- (iii) A further review of Members' Allowances be undertaken in 2014 when the impacts of the Localism Act 2011 are more open to assessment.

(Voting: For 20; Against 0; Not Voting 8)

**~~11.C.100~~ DOG-ON-DOG ATTACKS**

Councillor Paul Corazzo asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment the following question:-

*"How many dog-on-dog attacks were reported to the Council in the following years?"*

- (a) 2009-10
- (b) 2010-11
- (c) 2011-12
- (d) 2012-present"

The Portfolio Holder for Environment replied as follows:-

*"The Council does not maintain statistics regarding the reports of dog-on-dog attacks, as these are civil matters between the owners of the dogs involved in the attack."*