



Report to Council

Date: 15 March 2006

Author: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Subject: Independent Remuneration Panel

The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel has prepared a report to Members with regard to the level of members' allowances to be paid with effect from 1 April 2006.

The report of the Panel is attached for consideration by members.

It is **recommended** that:

Members consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and make a scheme of allowances for the year 2006 - 2007.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Panel welcomes the appointment of two additional Independent Members - Mr John Flowers and Mr Paul Mullins. Both Mr Flowers and Mr Mullins were able to attend the meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which made the recommendations contained in this report.
- 1.2 The Panel has adopted the process of carrying out a more comprehensive review of members' allowances every three years with intervening annual reviews.
- 1.3 The last in depth review was carried out in 2004 and the Panel considers that it would be appropriate for this to be repeated next time for the purposes of a report to the Council containing recommendations for allowances for the year 2007/08.
- 1.4 The last report of the Independent Remuneration Panel in 2005, considered the position of the members of the Licensing Panels and concluded that until such time as it became clear what the workload of these members was likely to be, we could not make any recommendation as to an appropriate allowance.

We propose to deal with this matter in this report.

2. The Process

- 2.1 The Panel considered evidence of allowances paid to members of District Councils within the Audit Commission family of authorities - authorities of a similar size with comparable functions. Further information was also available as to national average allowances paid to members of Shire District Councils.
- 2.2 We note that there has been no substantial change to the structure of the Council and that it continues to operate with the Leader's role alternating between the two main party leaders on an annual basis.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The Panel noted that the allowances paid to members of the Council were broadly in line with the averages for Shire District Councils.
- 3.2 The allowances considered from the Audit Commission family of authorities showed considerable variation. However, the Basic Allowance paid to members at Gedling represented the median value of allowances paid.

- 3.3 The Panel conclude, therefore, that the Basic Allowance remains comparable with most similar authorities. We do consider, however, that the level of allowances should be adjusted annually to maintain their value.
- 3.4 The Panel noted that the pay award made to Council employees had been previously settled and would amount to an increase of 2.95% for the year 2006/07. Our view remains that members allowances can be fairly increased by reference to this pay award.

Recommendation 1

That Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances and Co-optees' Allowance be increased by 2.95% (rounded) from 1 April 2006.

- 3.5 In our previous report we noted that the transfer of the liquor licensing function to the Borough Council was likely to result in a greater workload for members of the Licensing Panels. The transfer of the function, in the event, after a period of training, resulted in a period of about 6 months ending in January 2006, when members of the Panels were asked to make themselves available to consider contested applications for liquor licences.

- 3.6 The Panel consider that the time and responsibilities of the members of the Licensing Panel are such that this should be recognised by the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance.

The workload for the year 2005/06 has, we consider, been exceptional, dealing as it did, with the transfer of all existing licences within the Borough.

- 3.7 The workload for the coming year is likely to be less, since the Panels will be dealing only with applications for new licences to which there are objections or reviews of existing licences.
- 3.8 The Panel recognise that not all members of the Licensing Panels will have been able to make an equal contribution to the work, however, allowances are to be paid on an annual basis and are not attendance allowances. We consider that it is a matter for the Parties involved to consider when appointments are made to the Licensing Act Committee the appropriateness of their appointees.

Recommendation 2

That an amendment be made to the Scheme of Allowances to allow for a Special Responsibility Allowance of £500 per annum to be paid to members of the Licensing Act Committee for the year 2005/06, backdated to 1 April 2005.

That from the year 1 April 2006, the Special Responsibility Allowance for these members be £250 per annum.

