

Kirklees Metropolitan Council

report of

**The Independent Review Panel on
Members' Allowances**

meeting on

30 November 2005

Membership of the panel, which met on 30 November 2005 is as follows:

Professor Andrew Taylor - (Chair of the Panel) Department of Politics, University of Sheffield

Mr Christopher Dicks OBE - Former Managing Director of Huddersfield Newspapers and Past President of Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

Mr Stephen Thornton - Former Managing Director, Advance Wipers Ltd, Dewsbury

The following officers attended the panel meeting:

Michael Butler	- Head of Democratic Support Service
Dahalia Hendrickson	- Members Services Co-ordinator
Vanda White	- Members Allowances Co-ordinator
John Quarmby	- Decision Support Unit
Carl Whistlecraft	- Corporate Development Unit
Julie Fothergill	- Corporate Development Unit

The Independent Review Panel met on Wednesday 30 November 2005 to give further consideration to issues identified and discussed by the panel on 19 November 2004 and 29 July 2005. As such the report of those meetings contains much of the background information to a number of the decisions now made by the panel and recommended to the council for approval. The reports of those meetings should therefore, be read in conjunction with this report.

1. **Licensing panels**

The panel received a further update on the workload of the licensing panels during the period 6 July to 27 October 2005. The panels had been established to deal with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 including arrangements for consideration of liquor licensing and late night refreshment houses.

The panel had previously recommended that as a temporary measure and up to March 2006, the chairs of the licensing panels should receive a special responsibility allowance and that each member of the panel should receive £36.55 per day split into half day sessions (2 x 4 hours).

The panel **RECOMMENDS** that the special responsibility allowance should continue (which is referred to elsewhere in this report) together with £37.62 per day split into half day sessions (2 x 4 hours) with effect from 1 April 2006. The panel will review this matter at its next scheduled meeting in June 2006.

2. **Payment of education appeal panel members**

The panel considered the payment of an allowance to members of schools admission and exclusion panels on 19 November 2004 and 29 July 2005. (**NB:** each panel consists of three lay persons one of whom acts as chair - elected members cannot hear these appeals).

The panel concluded that an allowance should be paid and **RECOMMENDS** that an allowance of £110.81 for a full day meeting and £63.36 for meetings lasting less than 4 hours be payable to members of these two panels with effect from 1 April 2006. The allowance to replace the existing system of panel members submitting claims for individual expenses.

3. **Pensions for councillors**

The panel had on 29 July 2005 considered extending the local Government Pension Scheme to include the special responsibility allowance. Following review the panel **RECOMMENDS** that pension provision be extended for members to include the special responsibility allowances payments with effect from 1 April 2006.

4. **Member development**

Angie Dickinson, Elected Member Development Officer of the Corporate Development Unit attended the meeting for this item.

The panel, at its meeting held on 29 July 2005, had received information on proposals for enhanced member development. As a follow-up the panel had invited Angie Dickinson to the meeting to update panel members on progress to date and expectations for the future. The panel, had earlier, been advised of proposals to introduce a personal development review for elected members. Angie advised that the approach to the PDR process for members had been agreed by group business managers and that work had taken place with group leaders and group business managers to tailor the relevant documentation to accord with group needs. Each group had its own development review information pack. Members from all groups had been identified to take part in the first tranche of PDR's (before Christmas 2005) which would be led by either the leader or business manager. To date, eight such reviews had been carried out with a further six being booked before Christmas 2005 and ten awaiting confirmation of dates which hopefully would take place before the New Year.

A project team of officers had been established to support the development of the member development framework. This group would also be working with members to develop the induction programme for new members. Work was currently underway to develop induction arrangements in respect of positions of special responsibility and details of the pilot had been considered by the Group Business Managers sub-committee on 29 November 2005.

Angie advised that the council was keen to seek accreditation from the University of Huddersfield for the member development framework. The panel welcomed and supported this initiative and requested further information at its next meeting.

Members thanked Angie for the update report and were pleased to see that members were now following up suggestions by the panel of the need for some form of continuous development to be undertaken by members. Training and development for members had originally been proposed by the panel in 1999. The panel noted that the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) had issued a charter for member development and that a number of local authorities had signed up to similar charters, the basis of which was to improve the performance of local authorities, through the development of elected members. The panel noted that the Elected Member Development Officer was a two-year seconded post. The panel would support any proposal to continue with the post after the period of secondment as member development is viewed by the panel as a continuous process and not one which should cease at the conclusion of the secondment.

5. **Presentation by group opposition leaders**

(Councillor Robert Light, Leader of the Conservative Group and Councillor Mehboob Kahn, Leader of the Labour Group attended the meeting for this item)

At the meeting held on 29 July 2005 the panel had agreed to invite the above two members to the next meeting for joint discussions on the workload and responsibilities of opposition group leaders. The panel had regard to the revised role profile for opposition group leaders when considering this matter.

The members presented additional details of the responsibilities set out in the role profile and made specific reference to:

- * Group leadership
- * A knowledge of major issues affecting the council
- * Specific engagement in 'budget' issues leading up to the council's budget meeting
- * Development of individual members and support to those members
- * Development of policy issues for group consideration
- * Joint working with communities and partner agencies
- * General and specific support to individual group members and resolving conflicts
- * Leadership and governance
- * Attendance at meetings of all group leaders to discuss current issues and future policy development
- * Devolving of certain work to deputy group leaders as appropriate
- * Meetings with directors about service provision
- * Their roles as members of the Local Government Association
- * The promotion of Kirklees as a local authority at both a local and national level
- * Influencing the regional agenda.

Following a general discussion on the presentation by Councillors Light and Khan the panel sought further information about:

- (i) the split between their role at a local level and at a national level and
- (ii) staffing arrangements to assist the groups generally and support to them as group leaders.

The panel thanked the members for attending the meeting.

6. Role profiles

The panel at a meeting held on 19 November 2004 noted that the group business managers had discussed at formal sub-committee level the changing role and responsibilities of members and had, as a result, commissioned the Corporate Development Unit to review the role profiles on which the panel had based the payment of the basic allowance (the ward councillor role profile) and the various special responsibility allowances.

The panel at a meeting held on 29 July 2005 had considered a series of presentations by certain members as part of the review of member roles and responsibilities.

As a result of these discussions the panel had agreed, in relation to the allowances scheme, to remove the 'time' element from the scheme insofar as this relates to the special responsibility allowances and to review those allowances based on workload and levels of responsibility with skills and knowledge requirements being added to the profiles.

The panel considered 'new' role profiles which had been updated following extensive consultation with councillors and key officers which reflected the changing role of councillors and the future needs of the council and local government. As requested by the panel, skills and knowledge for each role had been identified to both meet the requirements of the allowances scheme and support the member development scheme.

The role profiles had three main purposes:

- To provide clarity for both councillors and officers about what is expected of each role
- To provide guidance to the panel for the members' allowances scheme
- To support councillors in their development by providing a checklist to identify their development needs, both for the roles they are currently undertaking and for future roles to support successive planning.

The panel then undertook a full review of the members' allowances scheme taking into account the 'new' role profiles and the expectations attached thereto. The individual special responsibility allowances proposed by the panel are based on the levels of responsibility and workload, skills and knowledge required for each particular role.

A copy of the proposed Members Allowances Scheme for 2006/07 is attached to this report which sets out the recommendations of the panel for the year 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

The proposed basic allowance for ward duties has been increased by 2.95% in line with the pay award to local government employees as has the special responsibility allowance for cabinet members, the daily meetings allowance for licensing panels and the daily allowance for chairs of overview and scrutiny ad hoc panels.

The remaining special responsibility allowances have been calculated taking into account the issues mentioned in paragraph four above.

The panel **RECOMMENDS** the revised members' allowances scheme to council for approval.

8. **Mobile phones for elected members**

The panel received a report which advised that the original allowances scheme recommended that the basic allowance (based on the ward member role profile) included the costs of telephones and mobile phone line and rentals. The scheme had been accepted by the council except in relation to the provision of mobile phones and the resulting cost of line rentals and call charges which had been paid separately by the council for specific elected members (17 in total).

The mobile phone is for use for the members in their specific special responsibility role and **NOT** for ward work. Each member is informed of this before receipt.

9. **Recruitment of an additional panel member**

Consequent upon the resignation of Christine Woods as a panel member, details of the vacant position had been distributed to members of the Kirklees Partnership Board requesting letters of interest from any member wishing to be considered for appointment to the panel. No letter of interest had been received.

As a consequence thereof the chief executive had requested that a 'specification' be drafted for this position and that applications of interest be invited by advertising the vacancy in the local press.

A recruitment panel would be set up to shortlist applicants, deal with interviews and make an appointment.

The panel noted and supported this course of action.

10. **Annual report by members**

The panel have noted recent publicity in the local press about the non completion of annual reports by elected members. The completion of annual reports had been proposed by the panel some time ago. The panel is pleased to note that a majority of members continue to prepare an annual report for inclusion on the council's website. As a consequence the panel is pleased to note that the profile for a ward councillor now includes the wording 'To prepare an annual report to be published every June'.

The panel wishes to draw this matter to the attention of members and expects **ALL** members in future, to prepare such a report.

11. **Conclusion**

The panel is aware that the revised allowances scheme might draw a negative response from certain sections of the community. As such it wishes to reiterate an earlier statement which appeared in its report of a meeting held on 9/10 August 2001:

'This review was not just about money. It was about the radical changes facing local government, modernising the way councillors work, attracting more people to put themselves forward as councillors, increased emphasis and responsibility on councillors to represent their ward, training and support needs of councillors at ward level, the increasing demands and public expectations of councillors, a job specification for councillors, performance monitoring measures, and setting a basic allowance in that overall context together with a range of special responsibility allowances for other roles within the council'.

Professor Andrew Taylor
Chair of the Independent Review Panel.

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2006/2007

Basic Allowance for Ward Duties	£11,741
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Special Responsibility Allowances

The amounts allocated per annum to Elected Members of specific duties, which are additional to the basic allowance are recommended as follows:

	£
Leader of the Council	24,066
Deputy Leader	18,049
Band A	
Cabinet Members	12,033
Band A1	
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10,830
Opposition Leader (30+ Members)	10,830
Band B	
Opposition Leader (10-29 Members)	9,627
Group Business Manager (30+ Members)	9,627
Band B1	
Chairs of Planning Sub-Committees	8,424
Chair of Appeals Panels	8,424
Band C	
Group Business Manager (20-29 Members)	7,221
Members of Overview & Scrutiny Management Group	7,221
Chair of Licensing & Regulatory Panel	7,221
Band C1	
Lead Members of Overview and Scrutiny Panels	6,018
Band D	
Group Business Manager (10-19 Members)	4,815
Chairs of Area Committees	4,815
Band D1	

Opposition Leader (2-9 Members)	3,612
Deputy Group Leaders (10+ Members)	3,612

Band E

Group Business Manager (2-9 Members)	2,406
Chair of Standards Committee	2,406

Band E1

Chair of Council Business Committee	1,203
Chairs of Licensing Panels	1,203

Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Ad-Hoc Panels to receive £37.62 day split into half day sessions (2 x 4 hours) to commence at the start of formal meetings to their conclusion. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Group to place a time allocation on the work of the Ad-Hoc Panel.