

Report of the

**Kirklees MC
Members' allowances
independent review panel**

Friday 16 June 2006

held at
Kirklees MC
Civic Centre III, Huddersfield

Membership of the panel is as follows:

Andrew Taylor (Chair)

Ian Brown

Christopher Dicks

Nasir Hussain

Stephen Thornton

The following officers attended the panel meeting:

Dahalia Hendrickson Members' Services Manager

Angie Dickinson Elected Member Development Officer

Vanda White Members' Allowances Administrator

The Members' Allowances Independent Review Panel met on Friday 16 June 2006 to give further consideration to issues identified and discussed at its meeting on Wednesday 30 November 2005.

Presentation by Councillor Robert Light, Leader of Council

Councillor Light informed the panel that he fully supported its recommendations on the changes to the special responsibility allowances based on the role profiles, and was concerned they were not approved by full council. In his capacity as Leader, he intends to take the full recommendations for approval as a two-stage plan intended:

- ✓ 50% of the increased rates of special responsibility allowances to be implemented by September 2006, backdated to July 2006.
- ✓ The remaining 50% of these increases to be implemented from 1 April 2007.

Councillor Light informed the panel that deputy chairs of planning sub-committees had been appointed to assist with the heavy responsibility/workload of this role. The panel was asked to consider a special responsibility allowance for this new role.

Presentation by Cllr John Smithson

Cllr John Smithson wanted to explain to the panel why his political group had not accepted the panel's recommendations on the changes to special responsibility allowances. The main reason was due to the financial cost. However, he wanted the panel to reconsider the allowances, with consideration being given to reflect the need for succession planning and that spokespersons being compensated within the scheme.

The panel thanked both elected members for their presentations and noted that the amended role profiles had been implemented by the council.

1. Member Development

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

The following information was presented:

- 33 out of 69 councillors have undertaken a personal development review. The skills and knowledge framework within the role profiles has been used as a basis for this task
- As a result of this exercise, several development courses have been identified and arranged in conjunction with other councils in the area notably Calderdale Council. Kirklees is now part of a regional network of councils who are jointly conducting development courses for elected members
- An induction for members undertaking new roles and responsibilities was arranged. "A guide to your role", which gives information on a subject or council procedure as well as explaining the role of a committee or panel
- A comprehensive induction programme for newly elected members was arranged with input by experienced members and officers
- A Post Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Modernisation has been developed in conjunction with the University of Huddersfield. So far nine members have enrolled. The course is due to start later this year
- The Elected Member Development Officer is working with service areas to address gaps in service/member development. The panel was pleased to note this new approach in service/member relationships and interaction in the general field of councillor development
- The council is being assessed for the "Charter for Member Development" accreditation in September 2006.

The Panel thanked Angie for attending the meeting and for providing a comprehensive report on the update of member development as well as other work undertaken to date.

The panel noted the following:

- That the Elected Member Development Officer was half way through her secondment and had made significant progress. The post is due to end in June 2007.

- That the regional training and development activities were impressive and should be commended.
- That the member role profiles are a model for good practice and are often requested by other local authorities for reference.
- That concern was expressed at the reluctance of some council services to adapt their training programmes format
- That over 90% of elected members had completed an annual report for 2004/5 as specified in the role profiles, but they were disappointed that this figure was not 100%.

Recommendation:

- **The panel strongly recommends that the post of Elected Member Development Officer be made permanent after June 2007**
- **That dedicated administration support be appointed to assist the Elected Member Development Officer in her role**

2. Licensing panels

The panel had previously agreed to implement as a temporary measure the payment of a special responsibility allowances for the chairs and members of the Licensing panel in anticipation of an increased workload. The panel received an update report that identified the anticipated increase in workload had not occurred

Recommendation:

The panel noted the report and agreed to withdraw the temporary special responsibility allowances from 1 September 2006

3. Payment for education appeal panel members

At its last meeting, the panel made a recommendation to the council to pay an allowance of £110.81 for a full day meeting and £63.36 for

meetings lasting less than four hours to members of the education appeals panel. The panel received an update report which confirmed that the council approved this recommendation with effect from 1 April 2006.

Recommendation:

The panel noted the report and requested an update at its next meeting to include the financial costs

4. Update on the recommended special responsibility allowances

At its last meeting the panel recommended changes to individual special responsibility allowances to reflect the changing role of councillors and the future needs of the council and local government. The panel also recommended an increase of 2.95% on basic allowance, daily meetings' allowance for chairs of overview and scrutiny ad-hoc panels and licensing panels, in line with the pay award to local government employees.

The panel received an update which informed them that its recommendations were considered by full council on 18 January 2006. The council thanked the panel for its work, but decided not to implement the panel's recommendations until sufficient funds became available. At its meeting on 5 April 2006, the council approved an amended members' allowances scheme for 2006/07, but did not implement in full the recommendations of the panel for increases in allowances. The main features of the implementations with effect from 1 April 2006 were:

- An increase of 2.95% on basic allowance
- An increase of 2.95% on existing special responsibility allowances, including daily meetings allowance for chairs of scrutiny ad-hoc panels and licensing panel members
- Pension provision extended for members to include the special responsibility and basic allowances
- Provision of payment to members of education appeal panels, who are not members of the council. A payment of a meetings'

allowance of £110.81 for a full day meeting and £63.36 for meetings lasting less than four hours.

Recommendation:

- **At its next meeting, the panel will consider a payment of a special responsibility allowance for deputy chairs of planning sub-committees. The panel requested that the council provide a role profile and further evidence on the scale of workload/responsibility for this duty**
- **At its next meeting, the panel would reconsider the special responsibility allowances for chairs of area committees, in view of changes to area committee numbers and sizes**
- **That no change be made to special responsibility allowances for small political groups – ie those with membership between 2 and 9 inclusive**

5. Pensions for councillors

At the meeting held on 30 November 2005 the panel recommended that the council should offer pension scheme membership on basic and SRA payments from 1 April 2006 and the council approved it. The panel received an update report which informed them that out of 69 councillors, 26 are members the Local Government Pension Scheme (38%).

Recommendation:

The panel noted the report and asked for this item to be brought to the next meeting

6. Recruitment of panel member

At the meeting held on 30 November 2005 the panel noted that the chief executive had requested officers to draft a “specification” for the panel

vacancy and that interested applicants be invited by advertising in the local press. The panel noted that:

- ✓ An advertisement was placed in the local press. The council received six applications
- ✓ A shortlist and interview process took place and the recruitment panel agreed to appoint two new members to the panel, namely Ian Brown and Nasir Hussain
- ✓ The council arranged induction for both new panel members
- ✓ The Members' Allowances Independent Review Panel now consists of five members

The panel noted the report

7. Panel terms of reference

The panel was informed that the council intended to draft a set of terms of reference which would include the following headings:

- Membership of panel
- Terms of office
- Selection of chair
- Role and function of panel
- Allowances payable

The panel welcomed and noted this and requested that the council should include the development and training of panel members

8. Selection of panel chair

The panel discussed and agreed that Andrew Taylor should continue as chair. In the event of his absence, the panel would appoint a chair for the duration of that meeting

9. Date of next meeting

The date of next meeting is due to be held on Friday 20 October 2006.