

Report Of The

**Kirklees Council
Members'
Allowances Independent
Review Panel**

29th October 2009

Carl Whistlecraft
Assistant Head of Policy and Governance Service
Town Hall
Huddersfield
Tel. 01484 225774

1. Panel Membership

The members of the Independent Review Panel are as follows:

Andrew Taylor (Chair)
Ian Brown
Chris West
Lynn Knowles
Stephen Thornton

Apologies : Fiona Weston

The meeting of the panel took place on Thursday 29th October 2009

The following officers attended the panel meetings:

Carl Whistlecraft, Assistant Head of Policy and Governance Service
Lindsay Foody, Service Administration Manager, Policy & Governance Service

2. Terms of Reference

The Panel's terms of reference are:

- a. To advise council on what would be the appropriate level of remuneration for councillors having regard to the:
 - Roles councillors are expected to fulfil.
 - Varying roles of different councillors.
 - Practice elsewhere and other local authorities.
- b. To consider schemes of Members' Allowances for Town and Parish Councils as and when required.
- c. To make recommendations and provide advice to the council on any other issues referred to the Panel by regulation or by the council.
- d. Council retains its power to remove a discredited Panel member.
- e. The Panel can appoint its Chair from amongst its members.

The last meeting of the Panel took place on 20th November 2008 and its subsequent recommendations were considered by Full Council in March 2009. As part of that process the Panel undertook a root and branch review of the Allowances Scheme. It is for this reason that this meeting of the Panel focussed on considering the level of basic and special responsibility allowance (SRA) allowance to be paid in 2010/11 and consequent updates / changes required to the scheme.

3. The Rate of Allowances for 2010/11

The Panel gave detailed consideration to the issue of setting a rate for the basic allowance and SRAs for the period 2010/11. Whilst once again wishing to acknowledge the important role played by all councillors, both in their wards and as part of special responsibilities undertaken, the Panel were mindful of the current climate within which their deliberations were taking place. The Panel recognised the need to balance the fundamental principles underpinning the scheme with an acknowledgement of the wider economic climate and its implications on local people and the public sector as a whole. In light of this **the Panel recommends:**

- **That from the 1st April 2010 the rate attached to the basic allowance is maintained at the rate agreed for 2009/10 - £12,566 per year.**
- **That from the 1st April 2010 the rate attached to the special responsibility allowances within the scheme are maintained at the rates agreed for 2009/10**

The Panel wished to place on record its intention to revisit and review this issue at its next meeting in 12 months time.

In consideration of the current SRAs the Panel noted potential changes to the role of Chair of Appeals Panel in light of the previously envisaged volume of appeals associated with single status. The Panel noted that it was likely that the Panel would not be considering such appeals in the future, although would be expected to consider appeals that were already ongoing. **The Panel recommends that the role profile for the Chair of Appeals Panel be updated in light of such changes and that the SRA be reviewed at the next meeting of the Panel.**

4. Minor / Consequential Changes to the Scheme

The Panel considered a number of issues relating to the scheme including:

a. Travel and Subsistence

- Car mileage and daytime subsistence payable for approved duties, as set out in Regulation 8(1) of the 2003 Regulations,

The Panel recommends that such duties outside the district should continue to be paid at the same rates for officers determined by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

b. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

- Provision for payment of dependants' carers' allowance in respect of such expenses of arranging for the care of their children or dependants

as are necessarily incurred in carrying out duties set out in Regulation 7(1) of the 2003 Regulations.

The Panel recommends that there is an increase in the rate of dependants' carers' allowance from the 1st April 2010 of 1% to be paid at £5.63 per hour

c. Co-optees Allowances

The Panel noted that the wording of the scheme with regards to the payment of Co-optee Allowances was in need of clarification and **recommends that amendments be made to paragraph 13.1 and 13.2 of the scheme to clarify that the allowances are payable to any co-optee who is not a Councillor of Kirklees Council**

d. Education Appeals Panel Members

The Panel noted that the wording of the scheme with regards to the payment of Allowances to members of education appeals was in need of clarification and **recommends that amendments be made to paragraph 14 of the scheme to clarify that the allowances are payable to any member who is not a Councillor of Kirklees Council**

NOTE: Stephen Thornton declared a prejudicial interest in this item and did not take part in the discussion.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The Panel will hold its next meeting in the Autumn of 2010 unless there is a need to convene before that time.