

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

25 JUNE 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE

SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2008/09

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the Scheme of Members Allowances for 2008/09.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council consider the report of the Independent Panel for the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2008/09 and determines whether it wishes to:
- (i) Accept the recommendations contained in the report in their entirety; or
 - (ii) Accept the recommendations contained in the report in part and substitute its own determination in respect of parts of the report not agreed; or
 - (iii) Refer the report in full or in part, back to the Independent Remuneration Panel for re-consideration, setting out those aspects of the Scheme that it wishes to be re-considered.
- 2.2 That in the event that Council determine a level of allowances not currently accommodated within the specified budget(s), a further report to be submitted to Council in August 2008 requiring a supplementary estimate.

3. Background

- 3.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003, the Council has established an Independent Remuneration Panel in order to make recommendations to the Council in respect of the allowances payable to Members as described in the Regulations. Each year, (usually at the Annual Meeting) the Panel submits to Council its recommended Scheme of Members Allowances for the forthcoming municipal year.
- 3.2 The Panel's report setting out a proposed Scheme of Members Allowances for 2008-09 is included at Annex 1 of this report. The Panel were unable to have its report available for consideration at the Annual Council meeting in May due to the fact that this year they have reviewed the Scheme of Members Allowances in considerable detail.
- 3.3 Council is requested to consider the Panel's report and in particular the recommendations set out in paragraph's 2.1 and 2.2 above.

3.4 Whilst the Council is not obliged to accept the recommendations of the Panel, the Council is required by law to advertise the Council's decision and the level of allowances determined, together with any reasons for any departure from the Panel's recommendations.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 The Council is obliged under the Local Government Act 2000 ("the Act") to have regard to the report of an Independent Panel before considering and setting Members' Allowances.

4.2 The Independent Panel report must adhere to the requirement of the Act.

4.3 Failure to comply with the provisions of the Act could lead to any Members' Allowances set being challenged through litigation.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The budget for Members' Allowances for the current year is Basic Allowances £211,420.00 and Special Responsibility Allowances £171,710 both of which are sufficient to pay for the allowances as set out in the annex for proposed member allowances 2008-09 with an estimated budget saving for the year of £94,470.00. This is partly because no LAA allowances and also reductions in allowances compared to payments in 2007-08.

REPORT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
OF CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL
JUNE 2008

1. **Introduction**

- (a) The Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) met four times during the end of the municipal year 07-08 and once during the start of the municipal year 08-09. This is our report and our recommendations to Cannock Chase Council regarding the review of the Members remuneration/Councillors' allowances. We have taken a different approach this year in establishing the Members' Allowances. Our overriding principle has been to secure clarity in the way the allowances have been set and also to simplify the scheme to encourage public accountability for this expenditure. Previous schemes have become more complicated and as a Panel we have ensured that what is now proposed to the Council is sufficiently clear for the public to have a full understanding of how Members' Allowances are set. We hope that the Council will look favourably on our report and implement its recommendations.

2. **Methodology and Approach to Setting the Allowances**

- (a) This year, the Panel has adopted a more comprehensive review of the baseline information to inform its deliberations regarding the allowances. We have received expert advice from Dr. Declan Hall from the Institute of Local Government at Birmingham University. Dr. Hall is a national lead expert in Members' Allowances and has provided information and a critique to the Panel of its work and a stimulus to encourage a new approach. In addition, we have been given a variety of background documents relating to councillor work, together with extensive comparative data of allowances paid to other similar authorities across the UK, and specifically within Staffordshire and the West Midlands. We have also considered the median rates of pay for full-time workers as applicable in the West Midlands as advised by the Office for National Statistics. The most helpful part of our research in producing this year's report has been the interviews we undertook with a group of Members and Officers. The Panel interviewed 3 Officers (including the Chief Executive) and 6 Councillors from all political parties (including the Leaders of each political group) and used this information, together with the information we already have as a Panel having sat for a number of years advising the Council on Allowances, to come to our view in relation to our recommendations. Throughout the process we were supported by the

Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer for the Council and the Principal Committee Officer.

- (b) We are confident that this process has been robust and has extensively explored the nature and role of being a District Councillor within Cannock Chase and has captured both the inevitable administrative burden placed on Councillors coupled with their own public service ethos of standing for public office.
- (c) Having undertaken the research and interviews referred to, the Panel considers that a more transparent method of determining Members' allowances should relate to the number of hours each Councillor should apply to their role as a Councillor (depending on their role) and to multiply this by an hourly rate. We have made an assumption that a Councillor's work does not cease any week of the year and therefore have applied a multiplier of 52 weeks to the hourly rate and number of average hours worked. The Panel were of the view that hours spent beyond an average of 7 hours per week, for the purposes of calculating the basic allowance, should be considered as the voluntary public service aspect of public office.
- (d) Having considered various options to determine an hourly rate, we concluded that the hourly rate set should represent a figure relative to salaries paid in the West Midlands. We therefore concluded that the hourly rate of £10.77 used to calculate the 2007-08 allowances continued to be appropriate given that the median salary hourly rate for full-time workers in the West Midlands in 2007 was £10.63. The formula proposed for the Basic Allowance is as follows:-

$7 \text{ (Average number of hours per week)} \times \text{£}10.77 \text{ (hourly rate)} \times 52 \text{ (weeks of the year)} + \text{consumables} = \text{Basic Allowance.}$

The attached Appendix details the application of the formula to each allowance.

3. [Basic Allowance](#)

- (a) Legislation requires the Council to pay a basic allowance to all Members of the Council.
- (b) We are of the view that an element of the Basic Allowance should continue to be paid in respect of consumables, such as IT peripherals including ink cartridges and paper, the provision of indemnity insurance for work on outside bodies (which Councillors should make their own arrangements for the necessary insurance) and postage and stationery including business cards and envelopes. This element of the allowance should be increased in line with retail prices to £1,224.35.

The basic allowance recommended in 2008-09 payable to Councillors amounts to £3,870.28 (plus the consumables element of £1,224.35) which amounts to £5,144.63.

4. Special Responsibility Allowance

- (a) In addition to the payment of a basic allowance, certain councillors are entitled to a special responsibility allowance. The Panel recommends that (as suggested in the Government Guidance) only one special responsibility allowance be paid to any one councillor.

5. Leader of the Council

- (a) We conclude, following our investigations, that the Leader of the Council will on average undertake an additional 28 hours per week (including work done on the LAA) to those hours used to calculate the basic allowance in acting as Leader of the Council.
- (b) We recommend that the special responsibility allowance for the Leader should total £15,681.12.

6. Cabinet Member

- (a) We have concluded that Cabinet Members will on average undertake an additional 6 hours of work per week (in addition to their basic allowance) and the allowance for being a Cabinet Member should amount to £3,360.24.

7. Leader of the Opposition

- (a) We have determined that the Leader of the Opposition will undertake half the responsibilities of a Cabinet Member (i.e. 3 hours) and therefore their special responsibility allowance will amount to £1,680.12

8. Shadow Cabinet Members

- (a) Shadow Cabinet Members are recognised as having an important role within opposition as part of a healthy local democracy. We are of the view that the Shadow Cabinet Members will on average work 1 hour less per week than the Leader of the Opposition and their additional responsibility allowance will amount to £1,120.08.

9. Scrutiny Committee Chairman

- (a) The role of scrutiny is fundamentally important within the executive decision making process for local government. We are of the view that the Scrutiny

Chairman will on average work an additional 4 hours per week and the allowance should amount to £2,240.16.

- (b) As a consequence, the Performance and Partnership Scrutiny Sub-Committee should not attract a special responsibility allowance as this forms part of the Scrutiny function.

10. [Chairman of the Fundamental Service Review](#)

- (a) The fundamental service review forms an important part of the Scrutiny role and is tailored at looking at crosscutting issues. We are of the view that this will require on average an additional 2 hours per week and the allowance will amount to £1,120.08.
- (b) We recommend the continuation of the current practice of paying 50% of the allowance at the commencement of the review and the remainder on completion.

11. [Policy Development Committee Chairman](#)

- (a) We have considered representations regarding the ongoing work of former Select Committees, which are now considered to be Policy Development Committee. We are satisfied that Chairmen of these Committees will undertake on average an additional 2 hours per week which will result in a special responsibility allowance of £1,120.08 for each chairman.

12. [Chairman of Planning Control Committee](#)

- (a) The Planning Control Committee meets every three weeks and has a regular schedule of meetings and site visits. We are of the view that this will result on average in an additional 4 hours per week for the Chairman and therefore the special responsibility allowance for Planning Control Committee Chairman should be £2,240.16.

13. [Licensing and Public Protection Committee Chairman](#)

- (a) In previous years, the allowance paid to the Licensing and Public Protection Committee Chairman has been higher as there had been an anticipation of an increase in workload for the committee with the advent of liquor licensing and other such changes. It appears that this has not proven to be the case and therefore it is considered that the allowance payable should be amended to reflect the reduced average number of hours per week spent by the chairman undertaking his/her functions. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the Licensing and Public Protection Committee Chairman will on average allocate an additional 2 hours per week which will amount to a Special Responsibility Allowance of £1,120.08.

14. Audit and Governance Committee Chairman

- (a) The Audit and Governance Committee role continues to be complex and regulatory in nature. We therefore recommend on average an additional 2 hours per week allowance payable as a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Chairman of the Committee. The proposed Special Responsibility Allowance for the Audit and Governance Committee Chairman totals £1,120.08.

15. Grant Aid Committee Chairman

- (a) We are of the view that the nature of this Committee accords with the general principles of being a councillor and that the responsibilities of the chairman are such that they still do not warrant the payment of a special responsibility allowance. Therefore we continue to recommend that no such allowance is paid for this Committee chairman.

16. Standards Committee

- (a) Independent Chairman and Statutory Co-optees. The Standards Committee Chairman's workload (who is required by law to be an appointed Independent Member – as a co-optee) may increase in the forthcoming year as the District Council determines the assessment of complaints made against Councillors, a role previously undertaken by the Standards Board for England. Nevertheless, we consider it premature to increase this allowance and therefore recommend that the level of allowance remain at £378.00, as in the previous year. However, we recommend that a review be undertaken in 12 months time as to whether or not in real terms, the workload of the Chairman has significantly increased. We also recommend that the co-opted Independent Members Allowance on the Standards Committee be £220.00 as in the previous year.

17. Chairman of the Council – Civic Allowances

- (a) We recommend Civic Allowances (not a Special Responsibility allowance) for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council remains as in the previous year as follows:-
 - (i) Chairman £8,765.00
 - (ii) Vice-Chairman £3,441.00

18. Local Area Agreement

- (a) As part of our review for 2007-08 much emphasis was made on the increase in time commitments for Councillors as a result of the Local Area Agreement. Our

research has indicated that what was anticipated as increased work under the Local Area Agreement has not manifested itself as such in practice. In addition, as the Council has reconfigured its Portfolio Holders and Committees to be aligned to the Local Area Agreement, much of the work is embedded within the mainstream work and responsibilities of being a Councillor. In concluding the recommended allowances for this report, we have included what we deem to be appropriate for the time spent under the Local Area Agreement.

19. IT/PC Allowance

- (a) The current scheme of IT/PC allowance provides that a Councillor may, if they so wish, elect to receive a payment on acceptance of office to purchase a pc (to the required standard) and that they also receive a monthly figure to meet the cost of broadband connection etc. We are of the view and recommend to the Council that this should continue, however, Councillors should be required to produce a receipt for the expenditure incurred in purchasing the equipment. The amount payable should be fixed irrespective of whether the receipt for the equipment is greater or less than the allowance payable. Such receipts should be a VAT receipt and should specify the IT equipment purchased.
- (b) Where more than one councillor occupy the same household (such as husband and wife or partner) we are of the view that there should be no reduction in the allowance as it is likely that each respective individual will require their own access to IT facilities and each be required to supply separate receipts.

20. Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

Members of the Council shall be entitled to Membership of the LGPS in accordance with a scheme made under Section 7 of the Superannuation Act 1972, and both the basic allowance and the special responsibility allowance may be treated as amounts in respect of which such pensions are payable in accordance with the scheme.

21. Carers Allowance

- (a) We recommend the Council reimburse Councillors for costs actually incurred in providing care for:-
 - (i) Children under the age of 14, which would be reimbursed at actual cost subject to a maximum hourly rate equivalent to the minimum wage applicable to the age of carer; and
 - (ii) Persons over the age of 60 and people with disabilities or learning difficulties would normally be reimbursed at the same level as for children except that where professional care is required the hourly

limit should increase to the rate chargeable by the County Social Services Department for the provision of a Community Care Worker.

- (b) The person to be cared for should be someone who normally lives in the claimant's household who cannot be left unsupervised. In addition the carer employed should not be someone who normally lives with the claimant. The allowance is payable for approved duties only as defined in the Members Allowances Regulations 2003.

22. Future Increases

- (a) We recommend that future increases in allowances should be based upon changes in the average number of hours worked per week by the relevant Councillor, co-optee or Chairman and/or the hourly rate. We do not endorse an automatic increase in the allowance paid based on an increase in inflationary costs.

23. Travel and Subsistence Allowance

- (a) We recommend that travel mileage reimbursement should continue to be payable at the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) rate (2008/09) and public transport at cost, payable on production of a receipt (in practice no change is recommended this year).

24. Suspension or Partial Suspension of Members

- (a) Where a member or co-optee is suspended or partially suspended from responsibilities or duties as a member of the Council in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the part of the allowance payable (including travel and subsistence allowances) in respect of the period of suspension or partial suspension may be withheld by the Council.
- (b) Where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which the member is concerned is:
 - (i) suspended or partially suspended from responsibilities or duties as described above;
 - (ii) ceases to be a Member of the Council; or
 - (iii) is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowances in respect of that period,

the Council may require that such part of the allowance as they relate to any such period be repaid to the Council.

25. Concluding Remarks

We recommend to the Council our report and the scheme as specified, which should be effective from 1 July 2008. We suggest the new approach presented in this report be reviewed in 12 months time, but consider that the practice of interviewing Officers and Elected Members as carried out in this review should continue. The particular details of the current scheme and the proposed scheme are attached as appendices to this report for ease of reference. We would wish to express our sincere thanks to Philip Lloyd-Williams and Matthew Challoner for their diligence and support throughout this process.

26. Chairman's Concluding Remarks

I have had great pleasure in being Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Cannock Chase District Council for the last four years. I would like to thank the Council for its support and courteousness towards me and pay particular tribute to my fellow Panel members. The ongoing work of being a Councillor and faith in local democracy in local government in the modern world is dependent on appropriate remuneration. The work of a panel of this nature is important and vital for good governance and a healthy democracy for our District.

Members of the Panel: Mr. M. Mellor (Chairman)
 Mr. J. Derry
 Mrs. E. Nelmes
 Mrs. M. Roberts

Proposed Members Allowances 2008/09

	No. of Hours Per Week	Hourly Rate	Multiplier	Consumables Element	Total
Basic Allowance	7.0	£10.77	52	£1,224.35	£5,144.63
Special Responsibility Allowances					
Leader of the Council	28.0	£10.77	52		£15,681.12
Cabinet Member	6.0	£10.77	52		£3,360.24
Leader of the Opposition	3.0	£10.77	52		£1,680.12
Shadow Cabinet Members	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Scrutiny Committee Chairman	4.0	£10.77	52		£2,240.16
Perform. & Part. Scrutiny Sub-Cttee Chairman	0.0	£10.77	52		£0.00
Fundamental Service Review Chairman	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Policy Development Cttee Chairmen:					
Children & Young People	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Access to Skills & Economic Dev	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Housing	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Healthier Communities & Older People	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Environment	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Safer & Stronger Communities	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Planning Control Cttee Chairman	4.0	£10.77	52		£2,240.16
Licensing & Public Protection Cttee Chairman	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Audit & Governance Committee	2.0	£10.77	52		£1,120.08
Grant Aid Cttee Chairman	0.0	£10.77	52		£0.00
Standards Cttee Chairman (co-optee)					£378.00
Chairman of the Council					£8,765.00
Vice Chairman of the Council					£3,441.00

Recommended Members Allowances for 2007-08

Report to Cannock Chase Council

by the Independent Panel for the Assessment of Members Allowances

Independent Panel for the Assessment of Members Allowances

Introduction

The Local Government Act 2000 requires each Council to have regard to the report of an Independent Panel before setting a scheme for the payment of allowances to its members.

This report has been compiled by such a Panel, constituted by Cannock Chase Council, with the following terms of reference:

- To act as an Independent Panel for the assessment of members allowances and related matters in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.
- To prepare reports to the Council recommending:
 - a) Schemes of members allowances, and,
 - b) How those schemes should be maintained in future years
- To consider and report on items referred to the Panel from time to time by the Council on allowances payable to councillors or related matters.

The Panel

The Panel is constituted as five members, reflecting the interests of the public, the voluntary sector and businesses in the District. Four of the members who undertook the task in the previous year remained as members for a further year. These four were supplemented by one new member, nominated by Chase CVS. The Panel met on three occasions during April and May 2007 to consider the level of allowances which should be paid from May 2007.

The Panel were addressed at their first meeting by Councillor Neil Stanley, Leader of the Council, who explained the issues raised by the Staffordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the Local Government White Paper and answered the Panel's questions. Councillor Stanley left the meeting following his presentation and took no part in the Panel's deliberations.

The issues considered by the Panel are set out below.

Questionnaire Returns

A questionnaire was sent to all members of the Council seeking information on the time they spent on their activities as a Councillor, in the same way as in previous years. A blank questionnaire is included at Annex 1 to this report.

The Panel were again disappointed at the number of returns received from back-bench members, and requested that a further reminder was sent to those members who had not sent back their information. As a result of this, 28 returns were ultimately able to be taken into account.

The replies received are summarised at Annex 2.

The Panel asked for it to be emphasised to members of the Council yet again that these returns are key documents that form the basis for much of their work. The quality of the Panel's recommendations relates directly to the efforts that Councillors make in sending complete and accurate information to them. Response to the Panel's requests for information has not, generally, been good. A much better response is needed in future years for the Panel to carry out its job effectively,

Rate of Remuneration

The Panel decided that it would retain the previous practice of determining three rates of remuneration, to enable the setting of basic allowances, cabinet members' allowances and committee chairmen's allowances.

For some time the Council's allowances scheme has been based on the Local Government Association's standard "daily rate" for use in the calculation of members' allowances. This rate is based on the national average white collar rate of pay and, updated to current prices, is £132.88.

In considering the applicability of the rate to the Council, the panel decided that 100% of this rate should be used for the cabinet members' allowance, with the committee chairmen's rate at 65% of the figure and other members at 60%. This is equivalent to £17.96, £11.67 and £10.77 per hour respectively.

Paid Hours

Government guidance states that "It is important that some element of the work of members continues to be voluntary – that some hours are not remunerated."

The Panel decided to review the percentages used last year to determine the time which should be paid within each element. These revised percentages are set out in the table below.

Activity	Basic	Chairman	Cabinet
Attending Member Meetings	65%	65%	65%
Preparing for Member Meetings	60%	40%	60%
Travelling to Member Meetings	0%	0%	0%
Attending Outside Body Meetings	15%	15%	15%
General Ward Work	60%	40%	30%
Civic & Other Functions	20%	20%	20%
Receiving Briefings From Officers	50%	40%	50%
Attending Conferences & Seminars	15%	15%	15%
Other Council Related Work	35%	35%	35%

Expenses Allowance

The Panel noted that an element of the current basic allowance continues to be in respect of expenses incurred by members, particularly in respect of telephone calls and rentals, fax machine costs and the provision of indemnity insurance for work on outside bodies. It was determined to continue this expense element, and to set it at £1,175 for 2007-08, an increase in line with retail prices.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

The application of the rates of remuneration above to the paid hours and the addition of the expenses allowance results in the following proposed allowances:

Basic Allowance	£5,047
SRA - Cabinet Member	£9,046
SRA - Committee Chairman	£1,512

It is proposed that the special responsibility allowances should be applied as follows:

Cabinet Member x 2	Leader
Cabinet Member	All Cabinet members Chairman of Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Member x 1/2	Opposition Leader
Cabinet Member x 1/4	Shadow Cabinet member
Cabinet Member x 2/3	Chairman of Planning Control Committee
Committee Chairman	Chairmen of Select Committees (except Performance & Partnerships) Chairman of Licensing Committee Chairman of Audit & Governance Cttee Chairman of FSR Panel (per review)
Committee Chairman x 1/4	Chairman of Standards Committee

These proposals represent an increase in special responsibility allowances in a number of areas, most notably the Leader of the Council, to recognise the increased responsibilities of the role and additional commitment required, the Shadow Cabinet, which is recognised for the payment of allowances for the first time, and the Cabinet allowance, which is representative of the growing role of cabinet members as evidenced by the returns received.

Group Leadership

The specific element of the allowance related to group leadership was increased to £100 per group member and the allowance for the deputy leader of any political group with at least 10 members was increased to £30 per member. These increases are in line with inflation.

Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The nature of the allowances payable to the Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman were acknowledged as different in nature from the other allowances payable, due to the very much different role played by these members as civic leaders. These are thus payable as "cash" sums, rather than the more salary-like basis of most other allowances.

It was noted, however, that the "work" of the Chairman has been decreasing, and as a result, allowances have been retained at their current cash level of £8,765 for the Chairman's and £3,441 for the Vice-Chairman.

Independent Members

The payment to independent members with decision-making powers, such as those on the Standards Committee, was increased to £210 per annum in line with inflation.

Local Area Agreement

The Panel considered the changes to the Local Strategic Partnership to enable it to become the District Delivery Board under the Staffordshire LAA. It also noted the Council's proposals that the main LSP board would be attended by the Council Leader, supported by the Deputy Leader and Opposition Leader, and that each block would be attended by a nominated Cabinet member, supported by the Select Committee Chairman and Opposition Spokesman.

In view of the above, the Panel proposed the payment of the equivalent of a Cabinet allowance to the Leader in respect of this responsibility, with a 50% Cabinet allowance each to the Deputy Leader and Opposition Leader. For each LAA Block, it is proposed that the Cabinet members leading the block for the Council should receive a 50% Cabinet allowance, with a 25% allowance each for the Select Committee Chairman and Opposition Spokesman.

Travel and Subsistence

Last year, the Panel made recommendations to the Council regarding travel and subsistence which were not accepted. The Panel originally planned to revisit this issue, but due to the complexities of the changes affecting the allowances scheme, decided to defer consideration to next year.

Members Computers

The panel were asked to consider updating the system for the provision of computers to members by allowing an "allowance" system in certain instances. The Panel supported the proposals, which are set out at Annex 3.

Ongoing Scheme Review

It was the view of the Panel that the current scheme should stand until the annual meeting of the Council in 2008, and be reviewed in full by the Panel before the end of that period in order to recommend any revisions required for the 2008-09 municipal year.

The scale of the changes to the proposed scheme this year have been significant, recognising both the changes arising from the Council's early implementation of some of the requirements of the Local Government White Paper and the implementation of the Staffordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA). Next year's review would be critical to test if the changes projected have actually materialised. It was again emphasised by the Panel that accurate returns from all members would be critical to a successful review next year.

The further issue of membership of the Panel was considered.

Due to the changes to the scheme, the Panel considered that this year's panel should remain together to undertake a full review next year. It was decided to dispense with the principle of rotation for this year only, and ask the whole of the Panel to stand for next year's review. All members of the Panel agreed to do so.

Conclusions

The recommendations of the Panel are contained throughout the report. The Panel noted that their recommendations, if implemented, could be met within the Council's current budget provision, as supplemented by the reserve set aside for the implementation of the White Paper and LAA..

Finally, the Panel would like to thank the Council's Deputy Chief Executive, Les Trigg, and Principal Committee Officer, Matt Challoner, for their assistance and support for the Panel's work.

M Mellor
Chairman
10 May 2007

Panel Members:

Mr M Mellor
Mr J Derry
Mrs E Nelmes
Mrs M Roberts
Mr D Tiff

INDEPENDENT PANEL FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

The Independent Panel will be meeting again during April to prepare its report, which will be presented to the Annual Council Meeting on 23 May.

I am currently pulling together information to present to the Panel. To this end it would be helpful if you would complete the short form below and return it to me by Friday 20 April. **Please note that I will not be presenting the forms themselves to the Panel, just a summary of the replies received, without names.**

Please do not include in your answers work as a member of a political party, other than the attendance at Group or other party political meetings related to Council work.

Thank you for your help.

Les Trigg
29 March 2007

NAME:	
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In a typical month, how many hours would you normally spend:	Hours per Month
Attending "Member" meetings (eg. Council, Committee, FSR, Cabinet)	
Preparing for Member Meetings (eg. reading papers)	
Travelling to Member Meetings	
Attending meetings of outside bodies as the Council's representative	
General Ward work (eg. surgeries, dealing with issues on behalf of residents)	
Representing the Council at civic and other functions	
Receiving briefings from officers	
Attending conferences and seminars	
Any other Council related work (please give examples below)	

If you have any comments that you would like brought to the attention of the Panel, please write them on the reverse of this note.

Independent Panel for the Assessment of Members' Allowances

Analysis of Questionnaire Results

	Back Bench Members hrs/month	Committee etc. Chairmen hrs/month	Cabinet Members hrs/month	Council Chairman hrs/month	Overall hrs/month
Numbers:					
Maximum Returns	26	7	7	1	41
Actual Number Returned	15	6	6	1	28
Average of Replies:					
Attending Member Meetings	12.9	18.0	29.7	30.0	18.2
Preparing for Member Meetings	11.0	27.0	23.0	20.0	17.3
Travelling to Member Meetings	5.5	7.8	10.0	12.0	7.2
Attending Outside Body Meetings	4.0	3.7	11.5	0.0	5.4
General Ward Work	18.9	22.2	35.2	20.0	23.1
Civic & Other Functions	1.7	10.3	5.5	45.0	5.9
Receiving Briefings From Officers	2.5	7.8	12.0	1.0	5.6
Attending Conferences & Seminars	0.3	4.2	17.0	0.0	4.7
Other Council Related Work	4.0	2.0	14.0	0.0	5.6
TOTAL	60.8	103.0	157.9	128.0	93.1

Annex 2

Members IT Support

The proposed scheme is set out below:

- The Council should retain the current policy of providing "thin client" workstations to those members who require them.
- An alternative scheme should also be offered to those members where this method of access does not meet their needs. This alternative scheme is outlined below.
- Each Member would be asked to choose, following their (re-) election, which alternative they are opting for. This would then be fixed until the end of their current term in office.
- Members elected in May 2006 and May 2007 would be given a one-off option of changing to the alternative scheme if they would prefer it.
- Other Members would not change to the new scheme other than in exceptional circumstances.

The alternative scheme would work as follows:

- Instead of the Council providing a computer and related equipment, Councillors opting for this scheme would be expected to provide their own computers, printers, broadband link, software and consumables. The Council would not provide any equipment at all.
- An allowance would be paid to Members of £1,200 in their year of (re-)election, followed by £400 per annum for each of the following three years. This would be paid as an £800 lump sum on (re-)election followed by monthly payments of £33.33 for the remainder of their current term in office. The payments would be taxable.
- No access would be provided to the Council's internal systems, but e-mails, minutes and agendas would be accessible via the internet.
- Other than initial set-up of the e-mail system and training on e-mail and accessing committee papers, no support would be provided by the Council.
- Members opting for this scheme would need to certify to the Council on an annual basis that they have a PC available to them at all times at home which provides broadband internet access, printing facilities, and a means of reading Adobe Acrobat, Word and Excel files.

Those Members who are also County Councillors would be able to choose to use "thin-clients", the alternative scheme above, or to access their CCDC information via the County computer. If they opt to use the County computer, no allowance would be payable.