

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
COUNCIL
4 APRIL 2012
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE
SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2012
KEY DECISION – (NO)

1. Purpose of Report

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

2. Recommendation(s)

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| <p>2.1 That Council consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of Members' Allowances for 2012 and approve a Scheme of Members Allowances to be effective from 1 April 2012.</p> |
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3. Summary (inc. brief overview of relevant background history)

- 3.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 ("the Regulations") the Council established an Independent Remuneration Panel ("the Panel") to make recommendations in respect of the allowances payable to Members under the Constitution.
- 3.2 The Panel met to receive and examine evidence relating to the allowances on 26 January, 13 February and 27 February 2012. The examination was detailed and thorough. The Panel's Report is set out at Annex 1.
- 3.3 The recommendations and reasoning of the Panel are detailed in their Report annexed to this report. In brief the recommendations are that:-
- i) The voluntary 10% reduction in the Special Responsibility Allowance claimed by the Leader of the Council should be consolidated in the Scheme;
 - ii) With the exception of (i) above the Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, Computer Allowances should remain unchanged;
 - iii) The Travel and Subsistence Allowances should aligned with those for the officers and adjusted annually to keep them in line with those paid to officers;
 - iv) The allowances be fixed for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2012.

- 3.4 A proposed Councillors' Allowances Scheme incorporating the Panel's recommended changes is set out in Annex 2 to this report.

4. Key issues and Implications

- 4.1 The Council is required by Regulation 19 to have regard to the recommendations made to it by the Independent Remuneration Panel in setting its Members Allowances Scheme. The Council is not bound to accept the Panel's recommendations but must not dismiss them without proper consideration.
- 4.2 Irrespective of the date of the report and decision, the years to which the Allowances Scheme runs are 1st April to 31st March.

5. Conclusions and Reason(s) for the Recommendation(s)

- 5.1 The Panel has had a number of meetings and has sought the views of members in coming to its conclusions..
- 5.2 Following the decisions of the Council with regard to amendments to the Councillor's Allowances Scheme, Regulation 16 requires the decision to be published and made available to the public and the publicity is to contain a statement confirming that the Council has complied with its duty under Regulation 19 to have regard to the recommendations of the Panel

6. Report Author Details

Alistair Welch, Monitoring Officer and Solicitor.

SCHEDULE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Section 1

Contribution to Council Priorities

None

Section 2

Contribution to Promoting Community Engagement

None

Section 3

Financial Implications

A Scheme in accordance with the Panel's recommendations would be within the resources allocated in the Budget.

Provision of £352,830 and £360,920 exists within the 2012-13 and 2013-14 approved budgets for Members Allowances reflecting provision for inflation. The proposal of the Panel would therefore result in savings of £9,060 and £17,150 respectively.

Section 4

Legal Implications

The Council is required by Regulation 19 to have regard to the recommendations made to it by an independent remuneration panel.

Irrespective of the date of the report and decision, the years to which the Allowances Scheme runs are 1st April to 31st March.

Section 5

Human Resource Implications

There are no direct human resource implications to this report.

Section 6

Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

Not applicable

Section 7

Human Rights Act Implications

Article 1 of Part II The First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998 may apply to recommendation quoted in i) if there is any illegality in the backdating.

Section 8

Data Protection Act Implications

There are no data protection implications to this report.

Section 9

Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications to this report.

Section 10

Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no equality and diversity implications to this report.

Section 11

List of Background Papers

Section 12

Report History

Council Meeting	Date

Annexes to Report

The Members' Remuneration Panel report

The amended Councillors' Allowance Scheme

CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Panel held three meetings on Thursday 26 January, Monday 13 February, and Monday 27 February, 2012 in the Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock

The Panel consisted of Mrs. E. Nelmes, Mrs. M. Roberts and Mr. J. Derry. Also present at the meetings of the Panel were Mr. A. Welch, Monitoring Officer and Mr Steve Partridge, Democratic Services Manager.

Consideration was given to the Scheme of Members Allowances.

The Panel held their first meeting on Thursday 26 January and were given the background to the current members allowance scheme, including the last Report of the Independent Panel in 2010 and the minutes of the Council meeting which considered the Report. They requested that in order to assist them with developing a scheme of Members' allowances for the forthcoming year; they would like to undertake interviews with the leaders of the political groups and the chairman of the Standards Committee of the Council. They also wanted to give all members the opportunity to make representations to the panel and it was agreed that an invitation would be sent to all members by email to submit any views they had in writing to the Panel. They also requested comparative information for other councils and information about the allowances and expenses actually paid to members in the last year.

The Panel then met on Monday 13 February and interviewed:-

- Councillor G Adamson (Leader of Labour Group and the Council)
- Councillor M Sutherland (Conservative Group Leader and Leader of the Opposition)
- Councillor D. Davies (Liberal Democrat Group Leader).
- Mr. R. Betteridge (Chairman and Independent Member of the Standards Committee)

The interview took place in private with no officers present.

The Panel then met on Monday 27 February to consider their recommendations in the light of the interviews with members and the other information they had requested.

The Panel was advised by the Monitoring Officer that their report would be submitted to the Council meeting on Wednesday 4 April 2012.

The Panel considered the current scheme and whether there was anything that should be amended, excluding at this stage the amounts of the allowances. The Panel gave consideration to the current scheme and also the opinions of the Members recently interviewed. Following discussions, the consensus of the Panel was for the scheme, apart from the amounts of the allowances should remain unchanged.

The Panel then considered the amount of the allowances. They took into account the views expressed by members during the interviews and the current financial position in local government. They considered that as a general principle were not minded to make any substantial changes to the scheme.

The Panel noted that the Leader of the Council had voluntarily agreed to take a 10% reduction in his allowance and considered that the reduction should be consolidated into the scheme. With that exception they considered that the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances should remain unchanged.

The Panel also considered that the Computer Allowances and Carers Allowance should remain unchanged.

The Panel considered the allowances for travel and subsistence. These allowances are reimbursement of expenses which were affected by inflation. The current scheme quotes rates which were in line with the officers scheme when set, but had not been kept up to date; although it should be noted that Members had suffered no financial detriment as a result, as Payrolls automatically adjusted payments in line with actual current National scheme rates. The Panel considered that these allowances should be aligned with the local allowances paid to officers and should be adjusted annually to keep them in line with those paid to officers.

The Panel then considered how long the scheme should be implemented for. They were advised that the scheme could last for up to four years and that they could recommend an annual increase in line with an index. They considered that in the current period of change in local government the scheme should last no longer than 2 years. They did not consider that an indexed increase was appropriate over the 2 years in the current economic climate. They agreed to recommend that the scheme be set for the period from 1 April 2012 and remain in place until the 31 March, 2014.

The recommendation of the Panel is that the Councillor's Allowance set out in the Appendix to this Report should be adopted by the Council with effect from 1 April 2012 until 31 March 2014.

Mrs. E. Nemes
Mrs. M. Roberts
Mr. J. Derry

(A)	Basic Allowance	£5,339 (including £1,224 for purchase of consumables etc)	Unchanged
	<u>Special Responsibility Allowances</u>		
	Leader of the Council	£18,150	Consolidates Leader's voluntary 10% reduction
	Deputy Leader of the Council	£9,260	Unchanged
	Councillors of Cabinet	£8,025	Unchanged
	Leader of the Opposition	£6,791	Unchanged
	Chairman of Scrutiny Committee	£6,791	Unchanged
	Chairman of Planning Control Committee	£4,322	Unchanged
	Councillors of Shadow Cabinet	£ Nil	Unchanged
	Chairmen of Policy Devt Committees	£1,853	Unchanged
	Chairman of Licensing & Public Prot	£1,853	Unchanged
	Chairman of Audit & Governance	£1,853	Unchanged
	Chairman of the Fundamental Service Review (N/A)	£840	Unchanged
	Chairman of the Standards Committee (Independent Councillor)	£378	Unchanged
	Chairman of the Council's Civic Allowance	£8,980	Unchanged
	Vice Chairman of the Council's Civic Allowance	£3,525	Unchanged
	Independent Councillors Standards Committee and Independent Remuneration Panel)	£220	Unchanged
(B)	Computer Allowances should be maintained at their current level (i.e. £800 on election / re-election; plus £400 p.a. for provision of broadband, software, consumable etc.)		
(C)	Carers Allowances should remain unchanged.		
(D)	Travel (car mileage) rates: Councillors should be paid in accordance with the rates paid to officers, including any local amendments to national rates.		

Other Travel and subsistence: Councillors should be paid in accordance with the rates paid to officers, including any local amendments to national rates.

The travel and subsistence allowances should be adjusted annually in line with those paid to officers.

- (E) All of the above to be effective from 1 April, 2012 for a period of two years until 31 March, 2014.