

Members' Allowances Scheme

For

**Bristol
City Council 2010/2011**

A Report by the

**Independent Remuneration
Panel**

Mr Michael Cole

Mrs Julie Hart

Mr Peter Leppard (Chair)

Mr David Marsh

Mr Robert Patterson

MARCH 2010

1. Introduction: The Regulatory Context

- 1.1 The Panel was convened under *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)*. These regulations, which arise out of the relevant provisions in the *Local Government Act 2000*, require all local authorities to set up and maintain an advisory Independent Remuneration Allowances Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances. All Councils are required to convene their Allowances Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their allowances scheme and they must 'pay regard' to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 1.2 The Panel was given general terms of reference to make recommendations to the City Council on the appropriate form and level of remuneration:
- For all councillors (i.e. the basic allowance);
 - Special responsibility allowances;
 - Childcare and dependant's carers' allowances for councillors;
 - Travel and subsistence allowances;
 - Allowances for co-optees;
 - Any other issues covered by the 2003 regulations.
- 1.3. The Panel had regard to:
- The roles which councillors were expected to fulfil and the differing roles and responsibilities of particular councillors;
 - The current method of local administration (in Bristol this is the Leader/ Cabinet arrangement);
 - Practice amongst other local authorities in the UK;
 - The current statutory framework for the remuneration of councillors and the scope which the council has to establish and vary its own arrangements, and any commentary on that (from the Audit Commission, Local Government Association, Local Government Management Board and other interested parties);
 - The previous recommendations made and the decision taken by the City Council in respect of the last review.

2. The Panel

- 2.1. Bristol City Council appointed the following to its Independent Remuneration Panel, namely:
- **Michael Cole**, Management Consultant, Justice of the Peace, Head of Branch Operation and Sales Force - Bradford and Bingley Bank (retired).
 - **Julie Hart**, Member Management Team, Lloyds TSB, Management (retired), Company Director.

- **Peter Leppard**, retired, formerly Assistant Director (Planning and Resources). The Open University in the South West. (CHAIR)
- **David Marsh**, immediate past President of Bristol Chamber of Commerce and retired solicitor.
- **Robert Patterson**, Director/General Manager Northcliffe Press (retired).

3. Background.

- 3.1 This is the Panel's fourth report since its establishment in 2006. The Panel's first report, published in May 2007, recommended a new Members' Allowances Scheme following a full review of the various allowances and included a recommendation for a stepped approach to remuneration for the Leader of the Council. The Panel continue to endorse their recommendations from their initial review of the Scheme. The Panel also endorse their recommendation for the payment of inflation increases for 2010/2011.
- 3.2 The Panel considered a number of issues highlighted through attendance at national and regional training. These were:
- Independent Members of Standards Committee
 - The Impact of Income Tax and those in receipt of Benefit
 - Allowances for Childcare and Disability
 - Long Serving Councillors
 - Allowances linked to the performance of duties

4. Methodology

- 4.1 The Panel met on the 8th December 2009.
- 4.2 The meeting was held in private session when both oral and written submissions from Officers were carefully considered before the Panel reached their conclusions.
- 4.3 It was agreed to keep the items listed in 3.2 above under review and include them as items within the next major review for 2011/12.
- 4.4 It was also noted that the arrangements for indexation, and the stepped approach to the Leaders remuneration would continue as previously agreed (Appendix 1).
- 4.5 The Panel endorsed the proposal from the Standards Committee that all Councillors enter in a Voluntary Code whereby they would not be paid an allowance when unable to fulfil their duties as a Councillor due to reasons specified in the agreement (Appendix 2).

Appendix 1

Annual Indexation

Members of the Panel endorse their original recommendation that the following indexation should be applied:

- **Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, Dependent Carers' Allowance and Co-optees' Allowance:** index to annual officer pay increase – this percentage increase is nationally negotiated and related to what local government can afford and also treats Officers and Members equally for annual increase in remuneration.
- **Mileage Rates:** maintain indexation to Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP or Inland Revenue) rates.
- **Subsistence Rates:** continue to index to Officer rates, except where relevant elements are booked directly by Members' Services.

Members of the Panel also endorse their original recommendation that the remuneration for the Leader should be via a stepped approach over a 4-year period.

Appendix 2

Voluntary Code in relation to a Councillor's failure to attend Council meetings

The Local Government Act 1972 states that a Member's failure to attend a Council meeting for six consecutive months (from the date of their last attendance) means that they could cease to be a member of the authority unless the Council accepts a valid reason for their non- attendance.

Bristol City Council further believes that Councillors should not claim an attendance allowance payable to all Councillors during that six month period if;

- a) They are unable to fulfil their duties for extended periods or
- b) They conduct themselves in a way that brings them or the Council into disrepute

Examples of when a Councillor would not be expected to claim his/her allowance include the following;

- 1 Election as an MEP, MP, or appointment to another full time political commitment.
- 2 Holiday exceeding 6 consecutive weeks
- 3 The taking up of a new main residence outside of the UK

I understand that this list is NOT exhaustive and any absence or failure to attend meetings when expected may mean that I should not claim my allowance.

I AGREE not to claim an allowance should I be unable to carry perform my duties as a Councillor. I will take account of any advice received, including that from my Group Whip and/or the Monitoring Officer.

..... Councillor

..... Dated