

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council 31 January 2008
AUTHOR/S: Corporate Manager, Finance & Support Services / Democratic Services Officer

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - (a) consider the recommendations of the independent panel on Members' remuneration for allowances for the period from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009, and
 - (b) confirm membership of the independent panel effective for consideration of the 2009/10 allowances.

This is not a key decision, however, Council is required under Article 2.05 to adopt a Members' allowances scheme and review it annually. The item was first published in the November 2007 Forward Plan.

Background

2. An independent Members' remuneration panel, comprising Ruth Rogers, Valerie Bright and John Bridge, has undertaken an annual review of Members' Allowances levels. The panel met on 14 December 2007.

Considerations

3. The Panel's report with recommendations is attached at **Appendix A**.
4. Ruth Rogers was re-appointed by Council on 23 November 2006 as a member of the Panel for 3 years to 23 November 2009. Valerie Bright's term of office expires following this current review of the scheme, however she has indicated that she would be willing to continue for a further term. John Bridge has resigned from the panel, effective immediately, however Jonathan Barker, Company Secretary of Marshalls has indicated he would be willing to re-join the Panel, effective for consideration of the 2009/10 allowances.

Options

5. Council, before it makes any amendment to the allowances scheme, must have regard to the recommendations made to it by the independent remuneration panel. It is not bound to accept those recommendations.
6. The options are:
 - a. To accept in full the Panel's recommendations
 - b. To reject the recommendations and retain the existing level of allowances
 - c. To make variations to specific elements of the recommendations

Implications

7.	Financial	2.5% has been included in the provisional 2008-09 estimates in order to implement the Panel's recommendations
	Legal	The Council, in setting its Members' Allowances levels, is obliged to have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel established for this purpose.
	Staffing	None
	Risk Management	None
	Equal Opportunities	Members' Allowances levels should reflect the public service element associated with the role of District Councillor, but should not discourage individuals from standing as a Councillors because of unmitigated financial loss and reduced career advancement opportunities.

Consultations

8. As required by regulation, a notice of receipt of the report from the Panel will be published in the press.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

9.	Affordable Homes	N/A
	Customer Service	N/A
	Northstowe and other growth areas	N/A
	Quality, Accessible Services	N/A
	Village Life	N/A
	Sustainability	N/A
	Partnership	N/A

Conclusions/Summary

10. Council is the only body that can decide on the Members' Allowances Scheme. The recommendations of the Panel are set out in the appendix, however they may be varied if Members so wish.

Recommendations

11. Council is recommended to
- (a) Accept the recommendations contained in the independent Members' Remuneration Panel report attached as appendix A to this report, i.e. that
- (i) The basic allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) be increased by 2.5%.
 - (ii) No SRA be payable for the Chairman of Northstowe JDCC.
 - (iii) The Chairmen of the Corporate Governance and Policy Development Committees receive SRAs of £1775 per annum.
 - (iv) The SRA for the Chair of Licensing Committee be reduced to £1775 per annum.

- (v) No change be agreed in the allowance for members of the Standards Committee.
- (vi) The Vice-Chairmen of Council and the Planning and Licensing Committees receive 50% of the Chairman's allowance.
- (vii) An increase of 2.5% be made to the Dependant's Carer's Allowance
- (viii) No increase be made to the remaining Travel and Subsistence allowances
- (ix) The allowance paid to the Panel for expenses be replaced with payment for travelling to the meeting only.

The above allowances to be effective from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009

- (b) Re-appoint Valerie Bright and appoint Jonathan Barker, as members of the Remuneration Panel for a three-year period to 31 January 2011.
- (c) Authorise payment of a Financial Loss Allowance of £20.00 per meeting per member to the Independent Remuneration panel when conducting future annual reviews of Members' allowances.
- (d) Advise the Democratic Services Manager of any issues it wishes to be considered as part of the next review.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

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