

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Council 27 January 2005  
**AUTHOR/S:** Finance and Resources Director

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### MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2005/2006

#### Purpose

1. To consider the recommendations of the independent panel on Members' remuneration and determine the rates of allowances for 2005/2006.

#### Effect on Corporate Objectives

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|-------------|---|
| 2. Capacity | A reasonable level of allowances will assist Members in the performance of their duties |
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#### Background

3. Members' Allowances Schemes run from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. The current scheme has operated from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004.
4. Last year the independent panel recommended, and Council agreed on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2003, that there should continue to be an annual review by the panel. The panel also suggested that, subject to further discussion, the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Licensing Committee should be increased to £2,000 p.a. from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005.
5. The panel, comprising Ruth Rogers (chairman), Jonathan Barker and Valerie Bright, met on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2005 and was provided with notes on the matters Council has asked at times over the year that it should look at, together with comparisons with neighbouring authorities and with other members of the Council's "audit family".

#### Considerations

6. The panel recommends that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005:
  - a. The basic allowance should be increased by 5% from £3,607 to £3,787
  - b. The expenses element should be increased from £530 to £750 ( to include an element for travel/carers expenses for attendance at parish council meetings)
  - c. The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Licensing Committee should be increased to £3,000, but from 8th February 2005, when the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 have come into force
  - d. Other Special Responsibility Allowances should be increased by 5%
  - e. Travel and ordinary subsistence allowances should remain the same as rates for officers
  - f. The maximum hourly Carers' Allowance should be increased from £13.75 to £14.51, the current County Council Social Services unreduced home care charge
  - g. Attendance at the Chairman's Reception and similar functions should be eligible for travel allowances (in the absence of a specific decision these have been allowed in 2004/05)

- h. The panel should continue to review the scheme annually

### Options

7. Council, before making any amendment to the allowances scheme, must have regard to the recommendations made to it by the independent remuneration panel. It is not, however, bound to accept those recommendations.
8. The major options that could be considered are different rates of general increase and of travel allowance. The draft estimates for 2005/06 provide for an inflation increase of 2.5% generally, but the increase for salaries is 3% and draft provision has been made for an increase of 3.5% for Members' allowances. Some authorities pay mileage allowances only up to the rate regarded by the Inland Revenue as not producing a profit – 40 pence a mile.

### Financial Implications

9. The budget for Members' allowances (basic and SRAs) for the current year is £329,000. An increase of 3.5% would result in a budget of £340,520, and of 5% £345,450. It is likely that the budget will be slightly over-spent this year.
10. The budget for Members' travelling, subsistence and refreshments for the current year has been revised to £34,000 from the original £24,000 to meet inescapable commitments. The proposed draft budget for 2005/06 is £34,850, an increase of 2.5%. The nationally agreed rates for officers from 1<sup>st</sup> April are not yet known.
11. The effect of the panel's recommendations for SRAs would be:

	Current £	2005/06 £
Leader	10,821	11,362
Deputy Leader	8,116	8,521
Cabinet members	7,214	7,575
Chairman of Council	3,607	3,787
Vice-Chairman of Council	1,591	1,671
Scrutiny and Overview Chairman	3,090	3,244
Scrutiny and Overview Vice-Chairman	1,545	1,622
Development Control Chairman	4,120	4,326
Development Control Vice-Chairman	2,317	2,433
Licensing Chairman	1,000	3,000
Standards Chairman	400	420
Employment Chairman	400	420

### Legal Implications

12. There are no legal impediments to varying the recommendations of the panel.

### Staffing Implications

13. None

### **Risk Management Implications**

14. If allowance rates are not maintained at a reasonable level, potential candidates for election to the Council may be discouraged and existing members may be forced to resign.

### **Consultations**

15. Relevant portfolio holders and the Chief Executive were invited to comment to the panel. Any response from the required public notice of the recommendations will be reported at the meeting.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

16. Council is asked to determine:
  - (a) The rates of basic allowances, expenses and special responsibility allowances from 2005/06
  - (b) Whether travel and subsistence rates should remain in line with those for officers
  - (c) Whether the maximum hourly carers' allowance should be increased to £14.51
  - (d) Whether social events such as the Chairman's reception should be eligible for travel allowance

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Report of the Independent Members' Remuneration Panel meeting of 14/01/15

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