

Meeting of the Council – 13th July, 2009

Report of the Standards Committee

Members' Allowances Scheme

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a recommendation of the Standards Committee in respect of the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2009/10 and future years.

Background

2. The Standards Committee at a meeting held on the 30th April, 2009, considered a joint report of the Interim Director of Finance and the Interim Director of Law and Property on the Members' Allowances Scheme arising from receipt of a report of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances attached as an Appendix to that report.
3. The joint report submitted to that meeting and the Appendix to that report are attached as Appendices to this report together with an extract from the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 30th April, 2009, containing the recommendation of that Committee with regard to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2009/10 and future years.
4. If Council accepts the Recommendations of Standards Committee as set out in paragraph 8 of this report, the Basic Allowance payable to all members for 2009/10 will be £ 8,464. In addition, Special Responsibility Allowances would be payable as set out in Table 1 below. Where a member holds more than one office qualifying for a Special Responsibility Allowance, only the higher or highest of those allowances would be payable.

TABLE 1 - SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

	Cabinet/Chairman £	Deputy/Vice £
Leader of the Council	19,080	
Deputy Leader		9,009
Cabinet Member	5,301	
Select Committees (incl. Audit)	3,180	1,062
Area Committees	3,180	1,062
Development Control Committee	5,301	1,857
Other Committees	3,180	1,062
Opposition Leaders	3,180*	1,062*

*Applicable only where the political group is ten or more elected members in number.

Finance

5. The budget for members' allowances for 2009/10 is £739,000.00. The allowances set out in paragraph 4 and Table 1 above have been calculated so as to be met within this budget, in line with the recommendations of Standards Committee. As a consequence of the recommendation in paragraph 8(c), the actual total cost of Special Responsibility Allowances may vary from year to year, depending on the number of members who are appointed to more than one office.

Law

6. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations, 2003 set out the arrangements for setting Members' Allowances or amending an existing scheme. In making an amendment to the existing scheme, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of a local Independent Remuneration Panel and any members of the scheme must be published in accordance with Regulation 16.

Equality Impact

7. This report complies fully with the Council's policies on equality and diversity and there are no implications for services to children and young people.

Recommendation

8. That the Council be recommended that:-
 - (a) The budgetary provision for Members' Allowances in 2009/10 be contained within the budget of £739,000.00 as indicated in paragraph 7 of the joint report submitted.
 - (b) All Special Responsibility Allowances be held at their current, that is, 2006 level.
 - (c) Savings, from resolution (b) above and by the removal from the current Members' Allowances Scheme of the provision whereby one half of the second (or next highest) allowance is paid in those instances where a member holds more than one office qualifying for a Special Responsibility Allowance, be used to fund an increase in Basic Allowance, payable to all members of the Council.
 - (d) That the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances paid in 2009/10 be varied with effect from the 1st April, 2010 until the 1st April, 2013, in line with agreed pay increases for Local Authority staff.
 - (e) That the remaining bullet points in paragraph 6 of the joint report submitted, that is bullet points 5-12, be adopted, being provisions, with one exception, already within the Council's existing Members' Allowances Scheme; the additional provision being as follows:-
 - Consideration is given to the provision of a suitable mobile communication device (Blackberry type) to all Members who request such.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Smith', written in a cursive style.

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The Bishop of Dudley (Independent Chairman)