

Copeland Borough Council

Independent Remuneration Panel

Review of Members' Allowances - March 2007

Introduction

1. The following is a summary of the proceedings and recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by Copeland Borough Council to advise the Council on allowances for Members. The Independent Remuneration Panel has been set up to conform to the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
2. The Council is required to take account of the advice of the Panel in determining its Scheme of Members' Allowances, and to make a new Members' Allowances Scheme for the forthcoming year before 31 March.

The Panel

3. The Panel comprised the following members:

Judith Crisp, a Partner at Bleasdale & Co, Solicitors, Whitehaven.

John Head, Director, Home Appliances Ltd.

Shirley Williams, External Affairs Manager, British Nuclear Group.

Terms of Reference

4. The terms of reference agreed by the Council on 13 September 2005 require the Panel to conduct a full review of Members' remuneration for the period 2007/8 to 1010/11.

Approach and Recommendations

5. The Panel has taken into account relevant information including comparative allowances from other local authorities in Cumbria and the recently agreed role descriptions for Councillors.

6. The Panel has also taken into account the potential implications for the Council of the provisions in White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities" and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill currently before Parliament. The Panel understands that there may shortly be significant changes to the Council's decision-making framework as a result of these provisions.
7. The Panel believes that it would be inappropriate to make recommendations for amendments to Members' Allowances until any such changes have been made and embedded and their implications for the Council and Members have become clear.
8. The Panel therefore RECOMMENDS that
 - (1) all allowances (Basic Allowance, all Special Responsibility Allowances and Travelling and Subsistence Allowances) are increased by 4.2% (the rise in the Retail Prices Index from January 2006 to January 2007) for the 2007/8 year.
 - (2) all allowances for the years 2008/9, 2009/10 and 2010/11 are annually index-linked to the Retail Prices Index, and index-linked increases are implemented each year, commencing in May 2008 as follows:

On the variation date which shall be the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2008 and at yearly intervals thereafter, allowances will be increased automatically. The increase in allowances shall be the increase, if any, between the Retail Prices Index for the month 15 months before the date of the first variation and the Retail Prices Index for the month 3 months before the variation date.
 - (3) the Panel be asked to conduct a further review of all allowances as soon as possible after the changes referred to in paragraph 7 have been made, and further amendments to allowances introduced part-way through 2007/08 if necessary.