

**Copeland Borough Council**

**Independent Remuneration Panel**

**Review of Members' Allowances - 2008-2009**

**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 for 2008-2009.

**The Panel**

3. The Panel comprises 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.
4. The Panel held one meeting to conduct this review, which was attended by Judith Crisp and John Head.

**Terms of Reference**

5. 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 2010/11.
6. An interim report in March 2007 recommended that all allowances be increased by the Retail Prices Index in each of the years 2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. This recommendation was accepted by the Council.
7. This report therefore deals with residual matters relating to Special Responsibility Allowances for the Executive Members and Deputy Leader(s) and other issues which have arisen since the 2007 Report.

### Deputy Leaders and Executive Members

8. The Panel notes that since the 2007 Report the Council's Constitution has been changed so as to allocate responsibility to the Leader of the Council to appoint Executive Members and determine their portfolio responsibilities. This change reflects the main statutory provisions in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
9. The Panel considers that it would be consistent with these responsibilities to authorise the Leader of the Council also to decide the remuneration of the Executive Members (other than the Leader), and whether there should be a single level of remuneration for Executive Members or more than one, and if the latter, what the different levels should be. The Panel considers that this discretion to determine remuneration should be within a pre-determined overall limit. The Panel recommends that this limit should be calculated by reference to the Executive structure at the time of their last report (1 Deputy Leader and 6 other Executive Members), and adding annual RPI increases previously agreed. This if accepted would result in the following as a cash limit for 2008/2009:

1 X Deputy Leader's Allowance @ £8258.00	£8258.00
6 X Executive Member Allowances @ £6178.65	£37071.90
<b>Total Remuneration for Executive 2008/2009</b>	<b>£45329.90</b>

### Independent and Parish Members of Standards Committee

10. The Panel notes that there are independent and parish members of the Council's Standards Committee. These positions currently attract no allowances other than for travelling and subsistence. The Panel notes that the workload and frequency of meetings of the Standards Committee is likely to increase in 2008/2009 due to recent legislative changes and recommends that SRA's should be introduced for the independent Chair, other independent members and the parish members of the Standards Committee at a level similar to those applying in other local authorities in the county. The Panel recommends £400 for the independent Chair and £200 for the other independent and parish members.

### **Eligibility for Travelling and Subsistence Allowances**

11. The Panel has considered the meetings and events for which travelling and subsistence allowances are payable under paragraph 4 of the Scheme and have concluded that there is an anomaly in this part of the Scheme in that informal meetings on Council business in which Councillors may be involved are not eligible for re-imbusement under the present scheme. The Panel believes that Councillors should not be out-of-pocket as a result of needing to attend bona fide meetings in connection with their duties. The Panel therefore recommend that a further category of duties is added to those in the Scheme, to the effect that meetings or events concerning Council services which a Member attends at the request or invitation of a Chief Officer or authorised representative are eligible for payment of travelling and subsistence.

### **Special Responsibility Allowance for Coalfield Duties**

12. The Panel has considered a request from a Member of the Council to consider recommending a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for his duties as the Council representative on the Coalfields Alliance.
13. The Panel is not aware of any formal decision of the Council to accord special responsibilities in respect of Coalfields Alliance duties, over and above the normal duties of a Councillor as a representative of the Council on an outside body. In the absence of a formal decision, the Panel is not able to recommend the payment of a SRA in this case.

### **Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Allowances**

14. The Panel are recommending that the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Allowances are included in the Members' Allowances' Scheme and increased in accordance with RPI increases in 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11 as per the formula in the Panel's 2006 report.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

- (A) that the Council authorises the Leader of the Council to determine the remuneration of Executive Members (other than the Leader) and the different levels of remuneration, if any, for Executive

**Members, subject to an overall limit as described in paragraphs 8 and 9 above.**

**(B) that Special Responsibility Allowances of £400 for the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee and £200 for the other Independent and Parish Members of the Standards Committee be introduced from the 2008/2009 year.**

**(C) that the Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended at paragraph 4.1 to include the following additional category of duties to be eligible for payment of travelling and subsistence allowances:**

**"Meetings or events concerning Council services which a Member attends at the request or invitation of a Chief Officer or authorised representative."**

**(D) that the Council takes no action on the request for payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance for Coalfields Alliance duties.**

**(E) that the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Allowances be included in the Scheme and increased by RPI as set out in paragraph 14 above.**