

Item no.

Report to: **District Council of Easington**
Date: **9 March, 2006**
Report of: **Head of Democratic Services and Administration**
Subject: **Independent Remuneration Panel Report**
Ward: **All**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the payment of allowances to Members and a proposed amendment to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

2. **Consultation**

In preparing this report I have consulted with the Leader of the Council, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee and the Chairs of the Licensing Sub-Committees.

3. **Background**

- 3.1 The Panel was first established in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 and is required to produce reports in relation to the remuneration of Members.

The Panel comprises of the following members:-

S. Allen - Former Director of Finance, Durham City Council
Professor R. Hudson - Director of Durham University
Canon K. Woodhouse
H. Pattison - former Public Relations Officer ASDA

4. **Position Statement**

- 4.1 The Panel were asked to meet and produce a report in relation to the following issues:-

- (i) **To consider the annual increase in the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances for 2006/7**

In their report dated 17th September, 2003 the Panel agreed that basic and special responsibility allowances be increased by the RPI Index for October each year until 2008.

In line with that report the Panel is required to meet each February to consider any changes to the Council's structures which would warrant

the levels of basic allowance and/or special responsibility allowances to be re-evaluated.

(ii) **To review the allowances payable to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee and the Chairs of the Sub-Committees**

In its report dated 21st February, 2005 the Panel recommended that SRAs be paid to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee and the Chairs of the Licensing Sub-Committees.

Members will recall that the Panel had reached this decision on the basis that they had been advised that the volume of work anticipated for the Sub-Committees was potentially high because of the number of licensed premises in the District (350) and personal licences (279). Notwithstanding this, the Panel acknowledged that there was some uncertainty as to the actual amount of work involved and decided that the situation should be reviewed after one year of operation.

(iii) **To consider an Amendment to the Members' Allowances Scheme**

In accordance with a recommendation from the Council's Internal Audit Section following an audit of Members' Allowances, the Panel were asked to consider a proposed amendment to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

4.2 The Panel met on 6 February 2006 and their findings and recommendations in relation to these issues are set out in the attached report (Appendix 1)

5. **Implications**

(i) **Legal**

The proposals contained within the report meet the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

(ii) **Policy**

The proposals contained in the report meet with the established policy of receiving recommendations in relation to Members' Allowances from an Independent Remuneration Panel.

(iii) **Financial**

Savings will be realised if the recommendations of the Panel relating to the payment of SRAs to Members of the Licensing Committee/Sub-Committees, are accepted.

Provision has been made within the budgets for the 2.7% increase in the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances for 2006/7.

(iv) **Risk**

A risk assessment has been completed and necessary actions required to manage the risks have been implemented.

(v) **Communications**

The Panel's recommendations will be communicated to all Members of the Council and are available for public inspection.

6. **Corporate Implications**

(i) **Corporate Plan and Priorities, Equality and Diversity, E-Government and Procurement**

There are no implications. This report has been produced in accordance with statutory requirements.

(ii) **Sustainability**

The proposed amendment to the Members Allowances Scheme 'to encourage Members to travel together or with an Officer where possible' will contribute to the Council's environmental improvement principles.

7. **Recommendations**

Members are requested to give consideration to the recommendations of the Panel as outlined in Section 7 of their report.

8. **Background Papers/Documents Referred to**

Independent Remuneration Panel Reports dated 17 September 2003 and 21 February 2005
Members Allowances Audit
Information from local authorities in the County on Licensing Sub-Committees