

**Allowances for Members' of  
Durham County Council**

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**Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to confirm the outcome of the review of County Council allowances which took place from June to September of 2010.
2. The meetings in 2010 addressed the following issues:
  - Whether the allowances recommended by the Panel and agreed by the Members 2009 should be reviewed for 2010.
  - Whether there should be an allowance for Cabinet Support Members.
  - Whether there should be an allowance for Regulatory Committees.
  - Whether mileage allowances should be revisited.

**Basic Allowances**

3. The Panel was of the view that there should be no change in basic allowances. This recommendation was reached having considered the current economic climate, the comparator authorities and the pay freeze in the public sector at a time of widespread possible redundancies. The Panel was of the view that there was no evidence that Durham County Council was out of line with other authorities. This was evidenced by a significant base review carried out in the previous year.

**Cabinet Support Members' Allowances**

4. The Panel considered role descriptions that had been supplied and had formed the view that Support Members' Post was a development opportunity rather than a post with added stakeholder value and in the absence of a business case for extra allowances, the Panel did not think it was appropriate to recommend extra allowances in the current climate.

**Planning and Licensing**

5. The Panel considered the information on the number of active meetings for the area Licensing and Planning Committees and also information on activities and allowances from other authorities including unitary authorities such as Northumberland, Cornwall and Shropshire and also a

wide range of other authorities. The Panel concluded that they would not recommend a change in the allowances for Chair and Vice Chairs of Planning and recommended that the Council consider merging the Statutory and General Licensing Committee.

### **Mileage Allowances**

6. The Panel decided that there should be no change in mileage Allowances having regard to the current economic climate and pressure on Council to make substantial savings.
7. The Panel therefore concluded that it does not recommend any revisions to the Members Allowance Scheme recommended after Local Government Reorganisation.
8. The Panel considered making recommendations in relation to Parish Councils but it was considered that a blanket recommendation could lead to a proliferation of allowances where they had previously been none. The Panel therefore decided to await the receipt of business cases from the parish councils before making any recommendations.

**Lady M Calman  
John Cuthbert  
John M Hitchman  
Professor Ray Hudson  
Gill Stephenson  
Andrew Sugden  
Kate Welch**