

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES
SCHEME**

2009/10

**REPORT OF THE
INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION
PANEL**

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NOVEMBER 2008**1. FOREWORD**

1.1 This report has been produced by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Gloucestershire, which is appointed by the County Council and consists of independent, drawn from the community. The Panel's role is to make recommendations to the Council on the level of allowances paid to Members.

1.2 The Members of the Panel:

- Philip Lowery A former adviser to the Social Services Committee, representing the voluntary sector. Trustee of GEAR.

- Quentin Tallon Cheltenham TUC, with broad experience of trade union and other negotiations and also work in the voluntary sector.

- William Alexander Former Group Personnel Manager for a major UK joinery company. Parish Councillor since 1979. Member, Valuation Tribunal Service.

- Fiona Miles Until recently worked as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Respiratory Medicine at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, having worked within the NHS since 1970. Is actively involved with WI and RSPB in Gloucestershire. In the past has been Treasurer & Secretary to Play Groups and Royal College of Nursing Specialist Group and is currently Chair of the Respiratory Specialist Nurse Group for the South West Region.

- Sidney Pritchard Part-time Consultant. Retired Local Government Officer. Served for 42 years in all, in posts ranging from Treasurer through Strategic Director to Managing Director. Board Member Gloucestershire Housing Association and Gloucestershire Probation Area.

1.3 The Panel's recommendations relate to the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are in keeping with statutory provisions namely –

1.3.1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government Act 2006

1.3.2 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("The Allowances Regulations") and

1.3.3 The Local Government Pension Scheme and Discretionary Compensation (Local Authorities Members in England) Regulations 2003 (the "Pensions Regulations")

The Panel is very grateful to the County Council Officers of the Legal & Democratic Services Unit, who have greatly assisted us in reaching our conclusions by virtue of advice and also in the production of this report.

William Alexander
Chairman of the Panel

2. OBJECTIVES AND KEY PRINCIPLES

In making these recommendations, the Panel continues to take into account:

2.1 Councillors should

be drawn from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible and reflect the diverse communities of the county and

not be deterred for financial reasons, from serving local democracy

and that the Council must be representative of and accountable to the local community.

2.2 Members' Allowances should endeavour to recompense Members in some measure for the work they do as councillors and be linked to a broad, but explicit, definition of the duties and responsibilities of certain key roles.

2.3 An assessment of the quality of representation, skills and amount of time required of Members in the exercise of their responsibilities.

2.4 Membership of a local authority is a voluntary public service and the level of allowances should reflect that, but at the same time provide reasonable recompense for the time commitment and duties involved, after allowing for an element of public service and relevant comparison with other public bodies.

2.5 The substantial time, which the average Councillor spends on casework, local community work and other Council work.

2.6 The additional duties and responsibilities of key office holders;

2.7 Emerging "best practice" being adopted by other local authorities in the South West

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel's recommendations are that with effect from 1 April 2009 and until 31 March 2010:

3.1 **Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances** - An increase of 2.1% should be made to the Basic Allowance and that Special Responsibility Allowances are increased accordingly. This increase would result in the following being payable (08/9 figures are included to help illustrate increases):

	08/9	09/10
Basic Allowance	£8,800	£8985
Special Responsibility Allowance		
Leader of Council (BAx3)	£26,400	26,955
Cabinet Members (BAx2)	£17,599	17,970
Chairperson of the Council (BAx1)	£8,800	8,985
Vice-Chairperson of the Council (BAx0.33)	£2,904	2,965
Chairperson of Planning Committee (BAx0.66)	£2,904	5,930
Chairperson, Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (BAx0.66)	£5,808	5,930
Chairperson, Overview and Scrutiny Committee (BAx0.66)	£5,808	5,930
Member of Adoption Panel (BAx1.33)	£11,704	11,950
Group Leader (BAx0.66) (provided group has minimum of 4 members)	£5,808	5,930
Audit Committee Chairperson (BAx0.66)	£5,808	5,930

NB Chairperson of Planning Committee has been increased from a factor of 0.33 to 0.66 to bring in line with Chairperson of Overview & Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee.

- 3.2. **Withholding of Allowances** - Should the Standards Committee or the Standards Board for England decide that a Member, for whatever reason, be suspended then all allowances – that is Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances – will be withdrawn for the full period of suspension. This applies also to Co-optees.
- 3.3. **Ad-hoc Allowances for Special Circumstances** - are not paid to Councillors or Co-optees whose workload is greater than normal over either a short or long period.
- 3.4 **Childcare & Dependant Carers' Allowance** – enable Councillors to claim the actual cost of providing dependant care, with no maximum amount, subject to appropriate auditing procedures being in place.
- 3.5 **Travel expenses** –reflect, and be changed in line with, the Inland Revenue's Authorised Mileage Allowance Payment rates from time to time. If travelling by public transport, actual cost should be reimbursed and receipts should be provided. Members should be reimbursed for the actual cost of a rail ticket up to the cost of an open standard return.
- 3.6 **Subsistence** – When attending meetings of the Council, or of other bodies, for which Members are entitled to claim travel and subsistence costs, reasonable subsistence costs be reimbursed (on presentation of receipts) if the meeting started or finished between 12.00 and 14.30

and no food was provided. Members may not claim subsistence for meetings taking place at Shire Hall.

If the meeting was, for example out of County, and attendance required leaving home before 07.00 and/or returning home after 20.30 and Members are entitled to claim travel and subsistence costs for the meeting, then reasonable subsistence costs be reimbursed (on presentation of receipts) to cover the cost of breakfast and/or evening meal

- 3.7 **Member accountability** – In terms of transparency and accountability, consideration should be given to some form of activity and attendance record being maintained and publicly available, having regard to particular circumstances that may impact on an individual Member's activities during a given period.
- 3.8 **Pensions** – The Panel noted the report of the Panel that was set up to consider the issue of pensions for councillors and noted that the Council did not approve the Panel's recommendation to introduce pensions for Councillors based on the basic allowance from 1 August 2008. The Panel still consider that eligible Members should be entitled to participate in the Pension scheme, with the basic allowance only to be considered as "pay" for purposes of the pension scheme.
- 3.9 **Co-Optees Allowance** – be paid on the basis of 7 hours per day - £90 per day and £45.00 for a meeting under four hours duration. The maximum allowance payable be based on 12 meetings per annum.
- 3.10 **Claims Time Limit** – of 3 months on expense claims being presented with any claims submitted outside of the time limit not being paid unless agreed by the Chief Executive that the delay was for good reason.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Panel met on 2 occasions (7 August and 4 November 2008). The information considered by the Panel included:-
- The existing Members' Allowances Scheme and the observations made on the Report by Constitution Committee and Council in 2008.
 - Report from the Pensions Panel.
 - Illustrative examples of Members' Allowances paid by other Shire Counties.
 - Information following attendance at a meeting of IR Panel Chairman and Senior Advisors on 17 June 2008.
 - The Panel interviewed five members claiming Special Responsibility Allowances on 23 September 2008 and 30 September 2008. Following these interviews the Panel

concluded that the allowance for the Chairman of the Planning Committee should be brought into line with the Chairmen of the Scrutiny and Audit Committees.

During the interviews the Scrutiny Chairmen maintained that they had differing roles. The Panel noted that the role description for each of the Chairmen was the same, therefore could see no justification in making any change to the level of allowance. In order for the Panel to review the level of allowance the County Council would need to determine roles and responsibilities of respective Chairman.

4.2. BASIC ALLOWANCE

The 2.1% recommended increase is less than the Consumer Price Index percentage increase for the year to November 2008.

5. IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2008/2009 cost £823,680. The recommended increase would cost an additional £20,280.

6. CONCLUSION

The Panel recognises the value of the work, which Members of the County Council do on behalf of the people of Gloucestershire. The Members' Allowances Scheme addresses, as far as possible, any disincentives to serving in local politics and reflects that different demands are made on different Members by virtue of the roles they perform.

In order to recognise and evaluate those demands the Panel will continue to strive to obtain more and better information.

The Panel strongly recommends that its proposals be implemented in full with effect from 1 April 2009.

Philip Lowery

Quentin Tallon

Sidney Pritchard

Fiona Miles

William Alexander