

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

DECEMBER 2012

1. Introduction

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 members, 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. Member of the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) of the Criminal Justice Board.
- 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 RSPB in Gloucestershire. In the past has been Treasurer and Secretary to Play Groups and Royal College of Nursing Specialist Group. Trustee of Gloucestershire Chest Fund.

1.3 The panel's recommendations relate to the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 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')

2. Report

- 2.1 The panel met on 8 March, 23 April, 28 June and 6 November 2012. Interviews with 12 councillors were conducted on 7, 18 and 19 June and 3 and 6 July 2012.
- 2.2 The Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel together with Simon Harper, Lead Democratic Services Adviser, attended the annual meeting of the Chairmen and Lead Officers of County, District and Unitary Authorities for the South West Region at Yeovil on 21 June 2012.
- 2.3 The interviews stated above were held as the first tranche of information gathering towards a major review of remuneration which will, we hope, be presented in December 2013 for consideration by the Constitution Committee for the year 2014/15. We think that following the May 2013 election the newly elected council will have more pressing matters than remuneration to consider. The panel would, however, like the opportunity to speak to councillors in the Autumn of 2013 once the new council has settled in.
- 2.4 The panel understands that the mileage allowance payable to Council staff is being brought in line with the HM Revenues and Customs rate. We strongly recommend that the same rate is payable to councillors from 1 April 2013.
- 2.5 The panel has over a number of years recommended that the Council offers councillors the opportunity to join the Local Government Pension Scheme based on the basic allowance. The Council has not accepted that recommendation but we believe that this opportunity should still be available.
- 2.6 The panel, particularly following the recently carried out interviews, recognise the value of the commitment of county councillors to the people of Gloucestershire and congratulate them on their untiring efforts in this cause. We note that councillors representing some of the more rural divisions travel significant distances to parish and town council meetings and this is an important part of their representative role. We recommend that in future the costs of travelling to and from parish and town council meetings should be formally recognised in the allowances scheme.

- 2.7 We are pleased that two new members, Richard Blamey and Gwyn Morgan, have been appointed to the panel and we look forward to working with them in the future.
- 2.8 The panel wishes to record its gratitude to Sharon Clutterbuck and Julie Hill for their past assistance to the work of this panel and also to Simon Harper who currently advises us.

3. Recommendations

- a) That no change be made to the Basic Allowance for 2013-14.
- b) That the level of special responsibility allowances in the scheme remain unchanged for 2013-14.
- c) That Gloucestershire County Council revert to the Inland Revenue's authorised mileage allowance rate current at the time with effect from 1 April 2013.
- d) That travelling allowances are payable to councillors on journeys to and from parish and town council meetings within their division.
- e) That, in line with recommendations made in previous years, councillors are given the opportunity to join the Local Government Pension Scheme based on the basic allowance.

William Alexander

Philip Lowery

Fiona Miles

Quentin Tallon