

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT
REMUNERATION PANEL**

**FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT
2008/09 AND 2009/10**

Introduction

This is the fifth annual report of the District Remuneration Panel for the Epping Forest District. The report summarises the Panel's work during the years 2008/09 and 2009/10 and indicates further matters for review in the future.

Legal Background

We were established under the Local Government Act 2000, which requires the Council to establish a Remuneration Panel to advise on payment of allowances and expenses to District Councillors.

Remuneration schemes agreed under these arrangements are subject to public notification and copies of remuneration schemes once agreed must be available to the public for scrutiny as must the payments actually made at the end of each financial year.

Membership

The Panel currently comprises only two independent members, namely:

David Jackman
Stephen Lye.

Recruitment exercises have been undertaken in an attempt to fill the vacancy on the Panel but to date these have been unsuccessful. We understand that the Council will carry out another review exercise shortly and we are hopeful that will result in the Panel being back to full strength with three independent members.

2008/09

No matters were brought forward for review by the Panel in 2008/09.

2009/10 Review

Details of our review undertaken and our recommendations for implementation follow.

Recommending:

Basic Allowance

(1) That, having regard to the small difference between the current amount in the adopted scheme (£4,300 per annum) and (a) the average amount paid to similar councils in the same region (£4,505 per annum) and (b) the amount (£4,524 per annum) achieved by applying the current Minimum Adult Weekly Wage of £5.80 per hour to a 15 hour week, no change be made to the amount of Basic Allowance;

(2) That members entering into an agreement under the Council's Connectivity Scheme continue to receive as supplement to the Basic Allowance a sum of £500 per annum in their first year in office and £250 per annum in each subsequent year of their term of office;

(3) That the Council be encouraged to review its level of implementation of the Basic Allowance, currently £3150 per annum, as this is clearly considerably less than the amounts paid to councillors in similar authorities in the same region and it is considered there is a danger of undervaluing the role which may make it more difficult to attract potential candidates to stand for election in future;

(4) That in view of the Government's decision to reject the recommendation of the Councillors' Commission to authorise Standards Committees to suspend and clawback part of the Basic Allowance where a member fails to fulfil their role, no steps be taken to introduce voluntary clawback;

(5) That the Council continue to consider steps which could be taken to make members more accountable including the Member Development Programme promoted by the Improvement and Development Agency;

(6) That as part of the Panel's next review, consideration be given to inclusion in the scheme of a supplement to the Basic Allowance to be paid to members attending a specified number of meetings/training sessions;

Special Responsibility Allowances

(7) That, subject to (8) below, in view of the similarities in the amounts of Special Responsibility Allowances in the Council's current adopted scheme and those of similar authorities in the same region as the Council, no change be made to the amounts of Special Responsibility Allowances;

(8) That, in view of the infrequency of meetings of the Complaints Panel and the Staff Appeals Panel, the Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairmen of those Panels and the Housing Appeals and Review Panel be changed to an amount of £110 per meeting held;

(9) That having regard to the increased number of meetings of Licensing Sub-Committees and the nature of business undertaken at those meetings, the Council be asked (a) to note the disappointment of the Panel that steps have not been taken to change the arrangements for the election of Chairmen of those Sub-Committees as it is considered that a significant responsibility is currently not being recognised; and (b) to give further consideration to the election of these Chairmen which would enable the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances;

(10) That in view of the changes made to Portfolio Holder responsibilities at the Council meeting in June 2009 it is considered that it will be premature to make any recommendations regarding the tiering of allowances to Cabinet members based on workload and responsibilities and that the Council be asked to indicate to the Panel when they would wish the Panel to pursue tiering based on proposed Paired Comparison Role Evaluation/Member's SRA role description/budget summary sheets/manpower summary;

Co-optee Allowances

(11) That no change be made in the allowances for co-optees but that the Panel explore further the allowance paid to the Chairman of the Standards Committee and the other independent members on that Committee who chair Sub-Committees of the Standards Committee with a view to making

recommendations during the next review of the scheme in order to recognise the new local assessment regime and the increased workload arising therefrom;

Travelling Allowance

(12) That the scheme be amended to include payment for Parish/Town Council representatives at meetings of the Local Highways Panel;

Subsistence Allowance

(13) That no change be made to the scheme in respect of Subsistence Allowance;

Carers' and Childcare Allowances

(14) That having regard to the average amounts in the schemes of similar authorities in the same region as this Council and to the ONS Annual Survey of Earnings, the scheme be amended to provide for the payment of Carers' and Childcare Allowances at a rate of £8.39 per hour subject to the conditions contained in the current scheme;

Member Role Accountability Statements

(15) That Overview and Scrutiny be asked to refer the Member Role Accountability Statements which have been revised in order to reflect the changing role of members to the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel with a view to recommendations being made for their adoption after consultation with the Remuneration Panel and the Standards Committee.

Report:

Background:

1. The present legislative framework for Members' Allowances Schemes is contained in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. Councils are required to establish and have regard to the recommendations of Local Remuneration Panels in setting and reviewing their allowance schemes. There are no national limits set. However, whilst acknowledging the value of local flexibility and independence provided by Remuneration Panels, the Government feel that it is important that Panel decisions are informed by good practice elsewhere.
2. The Government's "Guidance on Consolidated Regulations on Local Authority Allowances" outlines the main statutory provisions and gives non-statutory advice. A summary is given below:

(a) Basic Allowance:

Each local authority must make provision for a basic, flat rate allowance payable to all members; the allowance must be the same for each councillor and can be paid as a lump sum or in instalments;

(b) Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs):

Each authority may make provision for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances for those councillors who have significant responsibilities; the Panel recommends the responsibilities and the levels of allowances;

(c) Co-optees' Allowance:

Each authority may make provision for the payment of an allowance to co-optees for attending meetings, conferences and seminars;

(d) Childcare and Dependant Carers' Allowances

Local authorities may make provision for the payment of an allowance to those councillors who incur expenditure for the care of children or dependent relatives whilst undertaking particular duties;

(e) Travel and Subsistence:

Each authority may determine the levels of Travel and Subsistence Allowances and the duties to which they should apply;

(f) Pensions:

Each local authority may specify which councillors, if any, should be eligible for inclusion in the Local Government Pension Scheme and which allowances (basic and/or special responsibility) should be pensionable;

(g) Indexation:

Each local authority may determine that allowances should be increased in accordance with the specified index and can identify the index and set the number of years (not exceeding four) for which it should apply;

(h) Backdating:

Each local authority may determine that, where amendments are made to an allowances scheme, the allowances as amended may be backdated.

3. The Epping Forest District Council's Members' Allowances Scheme was initially approved by the Council in December 2002 following consideration of a report from this Panel. The scheme has since been reviewed several times by the Panel with recommendations being considered by the Council.
4. Since 2002, the Council, for budget reasons, has not paid the full amounts of allowances recommended by the Panel as set out in the Council's adopted scheme. At its meeting in May 2008, the Council decided to implement Basic Allowance at a figure of £3,150 per annum (approximately 73%) of the amount of Basic Allowance set out in the scheme - £4,300 per annum.
5. Similarly the Council implemented Special Responsibility Allowances at amounts less than those included in the approved scheme.

Benchmarking

6. In undertaking this review we have taken account of a survey of local authority allowances and expenses conducted in Spring/Summer 2008 on behalf of the Local Government Association and the Improvement and Development Agency. A total of 324 (83.9%) of 386 authorities responded. It should be noted that this Council's figures used in the survey are the amounts actually paid at the time and not the full amounts included within the Council's adopted scheme.

Current Scheme

7. The Council's current scheme includes all of the key elements which the regulations allow, including admission of councillors to the Local Government Pension Scheme, Child and Carers' Allowances, Travel and Subsistence expenses.

Basic Allowance

8. Basic Allowance is payable to all members to reflect the time and effort required to attend meetings, site visits and to deal with constituent problems and queries. It should also cover any incidental costs, e.g., telephone calls, paper, envelopes. It should also be borne in mind that the allowance recognises that there is a voluntary element to the work undertaken by members and that it does not set out to fully recompense all work undertaken.
9. The 2008 national survey provided the following averages for Basic Allowance:
 - (a) average - £6,099 per annum (ranging from £4,194 in shire districts to £9,978 in shire counties) and with regional variations from £5,040 in the East of England to £9,739 in Greater London;
 - (b) average for the 36 of the 37 similar councils in the same region as Epping Forest District Council which completed the survey - £4,505 per annum.
10. As advised earlier, this Council's adopted scheme provides for a Basic Allowance of £4,300 per annum with current implementation being £3,150 per annum. In addition members signing an agreement under the Member Connectivity Scheme receive £500 per annum in their first year of office and £250 in subsequent years.
11. Originally when recommending a Basic Allowance of £3150 per annum in 2002, we took account of the sums being paid by other similar authorities at that time and applied the then Minimum Adult Weekly Wage of £4.10 per hour to a 15 hour week. Applying the current Minimum Adult Weekly Wage of £5.80 per hour to a 15 hour week gives a figure of £4,524 per annum.
12. Having regard to the small difference between the current amount in this Council's adopted scheme, the average amount paid to similar councils in the same region and the amount achieved by applying the current Minimum Adult Weekly Wage to a 15 hour week we see no reason to recommend any change in the amount of Basic Allowance.
13. When we reviewed the Council's scheme in 2007/08 we recommended Member Connectivity payments of £500 for the first year in office and £250 for subsequent years. Members receive this allowance after signing an agreement to provide IT equipment at home to enable them to view Council agenda and minute documents and to cease receiving paper copies of such documents for committees etc., of which

they are not a member. The vast majority of members have embraced this scheme and as a result, there has been a substantial reduction in the amount of printing costs attributable to agenda and minutes. We see no reason to recommend any change in the amounts for Member Connectivity.

14. We have discussed the Council's level of implementation of the Basic Allowance, currently £3150 per annum, and we are recommending that this be reviewed by the Council as this sum is considerably less than the amounts paid to councillors in similar authorities in the same region. Whilst we appreciate the need for restraint in setting the Council's budget, we are of the opinion that by paying a Basic Allowance considerably less than similar authorities, there is a danger of undervaluing the role and that this will make it more difficult to attract potential candidates to stand for election in future. Accordingly, we invite the Council to review the level of implementation.
15. We have previously discussed the possibility of withholding an element of the Basic Allowance if a member fails to achieve a set percentage attendance in relation to meetings/training sessions.
16. Some authorities have introduced voluntary clawback arrangements if members fail to achieve a set percentage of attendance. The Councillors' Commission which was established in 2006 with the task of finding ways and encouraging able, qualified and representative people to come forward for election reported in 2007. One of their recommendations was to authorise local Standards Committees to suspend and clawback part of the Basic Allowance where members fail to fulfil their role. However, this recommendation was rejected by the Government.
17. When we last reported in 2008 it was recommended that in order to maintain public confidence in the performance of councillors, the attendance records of members should be published. We understand that attendance records for meetings are now available for public inspection on the Council's website. The current statistics do not indicate a major problem in relation to attendance with 33 members having an attendance record of 80% or above. Training attendance is poor in comparison but only certain courses are defined as obligatory.
18. We have been informed that some of the Council's members recently met with representatives of the Improvement and Development Agency, including Kent County Councillor Kevin Lynes, to discuss member development in the light of the poor response to member training. The discussion included steps which could be taken to make members more accountable and Councillor Lynes spoke enthusiastically about the Members' Annual Report system introduced by Kent County Council in recent years. This scheme requires each Council member to produce an annual report which is initially signed off by the appropriate Group Leader after a one-to-one appraisal. Poor performance is addressed at these sessions which remain confidential between the Group Leader and the member. The reports are then submitted to the Remuneration Panel and the Standards Committee and the latter includes reference to them in its annual report to the full Council. Clawback of allowances has never been considered by Kent County Council and it is not proposed as it is considered the publication of the reports is sufficient to show a degree of accountability. We recommend that this Council continues to consider steps which could be taken to make members more accountable including the Member Development Programme promoted by the Improvement and Development Agency.

19. We understand that Group Leaders wish us to pursue a possible revision of the scheme which will assist in improving member attendance at meetings and, in particular, training sessions. We propose, therefore, as part of our next review to consider the possibility of a supplement to the Basic Allowance (similar to the current Connectivity payment) to be paid to those member attending a set number/percentage of meetings and training sessions. We accept that there may be difficulties in drawing up a workable scheme and that account will need to be taken of members' other commitments, e.g. duties as a member of another local authority.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

20. The Council's scheme identifies SRAs in common with other authorities, e.g., for Leaders, Cabinet Portfolio Holders, Chairmen of Committees, Panels. The amounts recommended by us in 2008 resulted from multipliers being applied to the recommended amount of the Basic Allowance.

(a) Leader of the Council

21. The 2008 comparisons from those who completed the survey give the following for a Leader of the Council:

(a) average - £17,753 (ranging from £11,490 in shire districts to £37,486 in Greater London) (across the regions, the average Leader's Allowance varied from £13,481 in the east of England to £37,486 in Greater London);

(b) average for 33 of the 37 shire district/borough councils in the same region as Epping Forest District Council - £11,547.

22. The Council's adopted scheme provides for a Leader's Allowance of £10,750 per annum (Basic Allowance x 2.5). This allowance is currently being implemented at £7,875 per annum.

23. It should be noted that this Council's scheme recognises that the Leader has a specific Portfolio in addition to her role as Leader of the Council and is entitled therefore to the Leader's Allowance and a Cabinet Member's Allowance. We have previously considered whether one member should be entitled to more than one Special Responsibility Allowance and took the view that it is correct to recognise each role by way of an allowance. In comparing figures in the survey it is apparent that in many authorities, the Leader only receives one allowance as they do not have specific Portfolio Holder responsibility.

24. In view of the similarities in the amounts of Leader's Allowances in the Council's current adopted scheme and those of similar authorities in the same region we are not proposing any change to the amount of this allowance.

(b) Deputy Leader of the Council

25. Having taken account of the views of Group Leaders in 2008, we previously recommended that no provision be made for a SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Council. Our recommendation was adopted by the Council in May 2008 and as the role of the Deputy Leader has not changed since that time, we see no reason to revisit this allowance at the present time.

(c) Cabinet Members

26. The 2008 comparisons from those who completed the survey give the following for Cabinet Members/Portfolio Holders:
- (a) average - £9,710 ranging from £6,083 in shire districts to £22,028 in Greater London (this allowance differed across the regions ranging from £7,684 in the North East to £22,028 in Greater London);
 - (b) average for 31 of the 37 shire/borough authorities in the same region as Epping Forest District Council paying a Cabinet Member's Allowance - £7,388.
27. This Council's adopted scheme provides for a Cabinet Member's Allowance of £6,450 per annum (Basic Allowance x 1.5) with the current level of implementation being £6,300.
28. When we last reported to the Council, we recommended that when undertaking the next review, consideration should be given to recommending different tiers of Portfolio Holder Special Responsibility Allowances having regard to workload and responsibilities. We have been informed that there are currently eight Portfolio Holders on the Council and that the Portfolios have changed since we last reviewed the scheme. As these changes were only made by the Council in June 2009, we believe that it is premature to make any recommendations regarding the tiering of allowances. We still believe that there may be some merit in tiering and we are asking the Council to indicate if they wish us to pursue this proposal based on proposed Paired Comparison Role Evaluation/Member's SRA role description/budget summary sheets/manpower summary.
29. Again, as the amount in the Council's scheme for Cabinet Members is similar to the amounts being paid in similar authorities in the same region we are not proposing any change at this time.

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman

30. The 2008 comparisons from those who completed the survey give the following for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen:
- (a) average - £6,159 ranging from £2,454 in shire districts in Yorkshire and Humberside to £14,358 in Greater London;
 - (b) average for 36 of the 37 shire district/borough authorities in the same region as Epping Forest District Council - £4,500.
31. This Council's adopted scheme provides for an allowance of £4,300 per annum (same as Basic Allowance) with implementation currently being an amount of £3,150. In addition, the Council's scheme provides for the payment of allowances to the Chairmen of the five Overview and Scrutiny Standing Panels - adopted scheme - £2,150 per annum each (amount currently being paid - £2,150 each).
32. Again, the amount provided in the Council's current scheme is similar to the average for the shire district/borough authorities in the same region and we are not recommending any change.

(e) Chairmen of Area Plans Sub-Committees

33. There are no direct comparisons in the 2008 survey. The survey did include allowances paid to chairmen of area committees and forums but these are not necessarily responsible for planning issues alone. Comparing this Council's Area Plans Sub-Committees with those allowances results in the following:

(a) average - £4,269 ranging from £1,000 in a unitary authority to £7,470 in Greater London;

(b) average for the seven shire district/borough authorities in the same region as Epping Forest District Council paying Area Committee/Forum Allowances - £3,097.

34. This Council's adopted scheme provides for an allowance of £3,225 per annum (Basic Allowance x 0.75) with an amount of £2,362 currently being paid.

35. Having regard to the survey, we see no reason to recommend any change in this allowance.

(f) Chairman of District Development Control Committee

36. The 2008 survey includes comparisons for a Chairman of a Planning Committee. The survey does not define the responsibilities of a Planning Committee and we consider it likely that some of the figures under this heading are more closely aligned to this Council's Area Plans Sub-Committees which consider the majority of planning applications.

37. However, comparing the District Development Control Committee with the survey figures for Planning Committees results in the following:

(a) average - £5,623 ranging from £3,054 in shire districts in the North East to £12,137 in Greater London;

(b) average for the shire district/borough authorities in the same region as Epping Forest District Council - £4,445.

38. This Council's adopted scheme provides for an allowance of £3,225 per annum (Basic Allowance x 0.75) with an amount of £2,362 currently being paid.

39. Having regard to business transacted by the District Development Control Committee and comparing that with the business undertaken by the Area Plans Sub-Committees, we remain of the view that it is appropriate for the Chairmen of the Committee and the Sub-Committees to receive the same allowance.

(g) Chairman of Licensing Committee and Chairmen of Licensing Sub-Committees

40. No SRA is currently being paid to the Chairman of the Licensing Committee as it only meets twice a year. Following our last report, it was agreed that the payment of SRAs for the Chairmen of Licensing Sub-Committees, which meet on a monthly basis, would be reviewed if and when the Council changes the arrangements for the election of Chairmen by electing them at its Annual Meeting.

41. We have been informed that the Council has not made any such change to date. We have discussed the increased number of meetings of Licensing Sub-Committees and the nature of business undertaken at those meetings including the review of premises licences. We are asking the Council to note our disappointment that steps have not been taken to change the arrangements for the election of Chairmen of those Sub-Committees as we consider that a significant responsibility is currently not being recognised in the Council's scheme.

(h) Group Leaders

42. No SRAs are currently being paid to Group Leaders and when we last reported, the Council decided that payment of these allowances be reviewed in the future if and when the Council becomes balanced again. Accordingly, we have not recommended an allowance for this role.

(i) Other Committees/Panels

43. The Council's current scheme provides for allowances for the Chairmen of the Complaints Panel, Staff Appeals Panel and Housing Appeals and Review Panel of £1,075 each. Implementation is currently at the following rates:

- (a) Chairmen of the Complaints Panel - £270;
- (b) Chairmen of the Staff Appeals Panel - £270;
- (c) Chairmen of the Housing Appeals and Review Panel - £1,075 per annum.

44. We have noted that there have been no meetings of the Complaints Panel and only one meeting of the Staff Appeals Panel in the last year. Meetings of the Housing Appeals and Review Panel normally take place once a month. There are no direct comparisons for these bodies in the survey.

45. In view of the infrequency of meetings of the Complaints Panel and the Staff Appeals Panel, we are recommending that the Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairmen of those Panels and for the Chairman of the Housing Appeals and Review Panel be changed to an amount of £110 per meeting held.

46. The Council's current scheme provides for an allowance of £2,150 for the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and this amount is being implemented. We see no reason to recommend any change in the amount of this allowance.

(j) Co-optee Allowances

47. The allowances for co-optees are currently £1,000 for the Chairman of the Standards Committee and £500 for the other independent members of that Committee, independent members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee.

48. The survey provides comparisons for the Chairman of the Standards Committee as follows:

- (a) average - £2,077 ranging from £1,578 in shire districts to £3,938 in metropolitan districts;

(b) average for the 25 of the 31 shire district/borough authorities in the same region as Epping Forest District Council - £1,726.

49. We note that not all of the co-optees claim this allowance. Whilst we are proposing that no change be made to these allowances we are recommending that we should explore further the allowance paid to the Chairman of the Standards Committee and the other independent members on that Committee who chair Sub-Committees of the Standards Committee. We anticipate making recommendations during the next review of the scheme in order to recognise the new local assessment regime and the increased workload arising therefrom.

(k) Travelling Allowance

50. The Council has chosen to apply the same rates as those paid to officers, in common with other authorities. These are reviewed nationally on an annual basis.
51. We have been informed that the Council has established a Local Highways Panel. The Panel set up at the suggestion of the County Council enables local members to become more involved in the delivery of local highway services. The Panel comprises 11 district councillors and three representatives of parish/town councils appointed by the Epping Forest Branch of the Essex Association of Local Councils. Attendance at meetings of the Panel by District Council appointed members is deemed an approved duty for the payment of travelling expenses to and from meetings. We understand that the question has arisen over the payment of travelling expenses to the parish/town council representatives. As the three members appointed by the Epping Forest Branch of the Essex Association of Local Councils represent all of the parish/town councils in the District and not just the parish/town council to which they are elected, it has been suggested that it would be more appropriate for provision for payment to be made in the District Council's Remuneration Scheme. There is a similar situation with the District Council's Standards Committee which includes three members appointed by the Epping Forest Branch of the Essex Association of Local Councils with travelling expenses being paid to those members under the District Council's Scheme.
52. Although the parish/town council representatives do not currently have voting rights on the Panel we see no reason why they should not be eligible for travelling allowance. We are recommending that the District Council's Scheme be amended to include payment for parish/town council representatives at meetings of the local Highways Panel.

(l) Subsistence Allowance

53. 35 of the shire districts/boroughs in the same region as this Council offer subsistence. This Council's current rates mirror the rates paid to officers which are reviewed annually.
54. We are not recommending any change to the scheme in respect of subsistence allowance.

(m) Carers' and Childcare Allowances

55. The Council's Scheme provides for childcare/dependant carers' allowances payable at a rate equivalent to the current Adult National Minimum Wage (currently £5.80 per hour) with a maximum of four hours imposed on any one claim. The Scheme also provides that allowances are not payable in respect of carers who are members of

the councillor's immediate and close family, i.e. parents, children, spouses, co-habitees or members of the same household as the councillor.

56. The survey of all Councils showed that a 89.5% of authorities offer Carers' Allowance at an average rate of £7.83 and that 73.2% offer a Childcare Allowance at an average hourly rate of £7.03.
57. The average for Dependant Carers' Allowance for the shire district/borough authorities in the same region as Epping Forest District Council is £9.82 per hour with 31 of the 37 authorities making provision.
58. The average for Childcare Allowance for the shire district/borough authorities in the same region as Epping Forest District Council is £8.13 per hour with 25 of the 37 authorities making provision.
59. We note that no member of Epping Forest District Council has yet received this allowance.
60. We have also taken account of commercial rates and data included in the Office of National Statistics Annual Survey of Earnings. The latter quotes a mean figure of £8.39 per hour for caring personal service occupations.
61. Having regard to the average amounts in the schemes of similar authorities in the same region as this Council and to the ONS Annual Survey of Earnings we are recommending that this Council's Scheme be amended to provide for the payment of Carers' and Childcare Allowances at a rate of £8.39 per hour subject to the conditions contained in the current Scheme.

(n) Pensions

62. The Council's current Scheme enables members to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (as do 11 other shire/borough councils in the same region as this Council who completed the survey). The Council agreed to this provision following a previous recommendation of the Panel and this is not an element that the Panel is able to review.

(o) Member Role Accountability Statements

63. When we reported in 2008 the Council asked us to consider any relevant recommendations of the Councillors' Commission adopted by the Government when we next reviewed the scheme.
64. The Council adopted a recommendation included in our last report to review in due course Member Role Accountability statements in order to reflect the changing roles of members. The Government has accepted that people need to know exactly what their councillors do and has welcomed the Improvement and Development Agency's commitment to develop model role descriptions which can be adapted by local authorities.
65. We have considered revised Member Role Accountability Statements for this Council which are based on those of an authority recommended by the Improvement and Development Agency. We believe these statements have merit and we are recommending that the Council ask Overview and Scrutiny to refer these statements to the Constitution and Member Services Panel for consideration with a view to

recommendations being made for their adoption, after consultation with this Panel and the Standards Committee.

(p) Budget

66. We have been advised that the Council does not intend to increase the 2010/11 budget for Members' Allowances.
67. Our role is to recommend levels of remuneration that we consider appropriate. It is for the Council to decide how to utilise its available budget having regard to our recommendations. Accordingly, in making our recommendations we have had no regard to the Council's budget or proposals for the budget.

Recommendations

68. Our recommendations are set out at the commencement of this report.

S A Lye
D Jackman