

POST ELECTION REPORT 2021

Independent Remuneration Panel

FOREWORD

This report of the Independent Remuneration Panel sets out our conclusions and recommendations on members' allowances for the consideration of Staffordshire County Council (the County Council).

The Panel was established under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 to provide advice and recommendations to the County Council on amounts to be paid under its members' allowances scheme. Members of the Panel are appointed by the County Council and are independent members of the community. The County Council is required to have regard to our recommendations in deciding what to pay councillors. Additionally, the County Council must also publish our recommendations and conclusions, together with the approved scheme.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- **Christina Robotham** (A retired Staffordshire Headteacher)
- **Annie Barrett** (A retired Staffordshire Deputy Headteacher)
- **Anthony Styles** (A retired Police Officer)
- **William Read** (A retired Emergency Planning Officer)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel is required to gather information, to hear and consider evidence and to make recommendations to the County Council on:

- the amount of basic allowance to be paid to members
- those positions that should receive special responsibility allowances (SRAs), and the level of those allowances
- travel, subsistence and certain other allowances

The full terms of reference of the Panel are set out in **Appendix A**.

Introduction

Our prime role is to assess and recommend the allowances to be made available to elected members.

In formulating our recommendations, we have borne in mind:

- that the successful delivery of the various roles of members depends on a sense of corporate social responsibility and public service and that members are motivated to a significant extent by a sense of public good.
- the current economic climate and the continuing substantial financial constraints on the services which the County Council provides.

Nevertheless, those who decide to stand for election should not be required to make unreasonable sacrifices in their private lives. In this context, we continue to recognise that there is a substantial gap between the level of financial remuneration provided nationally to elected councillors and the commitment they are expected, or believe that they need to make, both in terms of time and responsibility, to fulfil the increasingly demanding roles in public life.

Proposals considered and recommendations

Following the 2021 County Council Elections and Annual Council Meeting we have met with the Leader and the Leader of the Opposition and discussed changes to the Members' Allowance Scheme as a result of the change of political balances within the County Council.

We note the creation of the following Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs):

- Vice-Chairman (Scrutiny)
- Vice-Chairman (Overview)

We note the removal of the following SRAs:

- Opposition Select Committee Vice-Chairman
- Community Cabinet Support Members
- All Party Working Group Chairmen

The IRP are supportive of these changes to the Members' Allowances scheme. Over the next few months, we propose to fully review the Members' Allowance Scheme, the Basic Allowance and the expenses paid to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the County Council with a view of reporting our findings back to the County Council in due course.

We would like to express our thanks to the Members and Officers of the County Council for all their help and support in producing this report.

**CHAIRMAN and Members of the
Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To meet annually, on agreed dates prior to the commencement of the County Council's financial year, and at such other times as required on agreed dates, as the County Council propose to amend, revoke or replace their Members' Allowance Scheme.
2. In their considerations, to have particular regard to (i) the previous reports and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (ii) the DETR's Guidance on Members' Allowances; (iii) the relevant Regulations referred to in the Guidance and those Regulations made in respect of the provision of pensions and pensionable remuneration for certain members of local authorities (iv) information submitted by the Chief Executive; and (v) such other information commissioned by the Panel, through the Chief Executive relevant to the Panel's Terms of Reference.
3. To make recommendations to the County Council as to the amount of basic allowances that should be payable to its elected members.
4. To make recommendations to the County Council about the categories of members who should receive a special responsibility allowance and as to the amount of such an allowance.
5. To make recommendations as to whether the County Council's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and if it does make such a recommendation, the amount of this allowance and the means by which it is determined.
6. To make recommendations to the County Council on which of their members, by designation, should be entitled to pensionable remuneration.
Quote from Constitution: As of 1 April 2014 new councillors will not be able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Any members who have joined the scheme before 31 March 2014 will be allowed to continue their membership for their **current** term of office (renewal on re-election will not be permitted).
7. To make recommendations to the County Council on travel and subsistence allowances for members and the level, or levels, of "meetings allowance" for appointed and co-opted members of County Council Committees.
8. To note, in their considerations and recommendations, that the County Council must have due regard to the recommendations of the Panel in any decision to maintain, amend, revoke or replace their Members' Allowance Scheme, but that ultimately, the determination of the Scheme is a matter for the County Council.
9. To note that the Panel's reports and recommendations, as made from time to time, will be publicised, as soon as reasonably practicable, in at least one local newspaper, be made available for inspection by the public at County Buildings and be published on the County Council's website.

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