

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We believe that the scheme of allowances that the panel recommended in 2001, updated in line with local government pay awards, is still appropriate. We set out the five bands of responsibility with updated figures for the basic allowance and for the five bands.
2. We continue to believe that the roles identified in the 2006 report as attaching to the bands are still, in general terms, appropriate. Consultation has suggested other roles, but most are covered by the 2006 recommendations. We have added to the role descriptions in band one 'community leaders' and 'leaders of a specific major project'. We appreciate that such responsibilities can provide development opportunities for the leaders of the future and are analogous to other responsibilities within band one.

We also recommend the inclusion of 'acting as a member of a committee or sub-committee which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods' and 'acting as a member of an adoption panel where membership requires attendance with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods'.

3. With changes in local government structure and organisation, we accept that some cabinet roles may be more demanding than others. Although it may be sensible for many councils to remunerate cabinet members at the same level, we believe that there is sufficient width in band three to permit councils to recognise different levels of responsibility within the cabinet where this is appropriate.
4. In return for the levels of remuneration which we propose, it is important that councillors account publicly for their activities. We believe that:
 - a. role descriptions should be developed for councillors for all their areas of work;
 - b. the role descriptions should be placed on council websites;
 - c. members should report publicly on their activity through a variety of channels as illustrated in the main report; and
 - d. councils should consider the introduction of an appraisal system for members.
5. Councillors who, without reasonable cause, fail to discharge their duties should not claim the basic allowance. We believe that the legislation requiring only an attendance at a council meeting every six months should be tightened.
6. We endorse the recommendations of the 2006 report in relation to the chair and members of the standards committee.
7. We reiterate our view that only one SRA should be paid to a councillor in respect of duties with the same authority.

8. Although councillors are not employees, we believe that it is reasonable that their special responsibility allowances should not cease in case of sickness, maternity and paternity leave in the same way that employees enjoy such entitlements. We continue to recommend that councils should be able to make arrangements in their schemes in appropriate circumstances to enable this to happen.
9. We continue to recommend that the allowances we recommend should be updated annually in accordance with the headline figure in the annual local government pay settlement. We appreciate that Regulation 10(1) of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 appears to require re-adoption of the scheme at the start of each municipal year. However Regulation 10(4) provides that the scheme will not be deemed amended by virtue only of adjustment of the scheme through indexation. If there is no other change a re-adoption can be achieved by a simple resolution.
10. While we continue to believe that intra-borough travel should be part of the basic allowance, we recognise that there are circumstances where it may be appropriate for a scheme to provide payment for the cost of transport e.g. journeys home after late meetings and for people with disabilities. In the case of dispute, we believe that the standards committee could adjudicate.
11. We strongly believe that there is need for rationalisation in the tax treatment of expenses borne by councillors and recommend that the Local Government Association be asked to pursue that at the national level, or failing that, London Councils attempt to achieve rationalisation on behalf of London.
12. We have consistently recommended that eligible councillors should be eligible for admission to the local government pension scheme and we continue to urge that councils should give their members this opportunity.