

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

Report of Panel on Members' Allowances

June 2011

1. Introduction.

1.1 The Independent Panel on Members' Allowances was appointed by the Council to make recommendations on Members' Allowances in accordance with the relevant Regulations and the Government's statutory guidance. The Panel now consists of Sir Rodney Brooke CBE DL (Chair), Dave Fortune, Matthew Knight and Carolyn Lord.

1.2 The Panel issued its first report in May 1999. It updated its recommendations in October 2002 following new Government guidance. The Council adopted those recommendations with modifications. In subsequent reports the Panel has made further recommendations which again have been accepted, in some cases with modifications.

1.3 The political composition of the Council has changed as a result of the 2011 elections. The Labour Group (already forming the administration of the Council), now has an overall majority. There are proposals for minor alterations in the running of the Council with consequences for the Members' Allowances Scheme. These are

- Redefinition and enhancement of the current role of Deputy Executive Member and splitting the more broad duties into the new role of Executive Support Member
- Recognising the role of the Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Working Group

2. DEPUTY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS/SUPPORT EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

- 2.1 Under the previous executive arrangements, there were eight positions of Deputy Executive Members. These positions provided a broad range of generic support to Executive Members.
- 2.2 Under the new arrangements it is intended that this generic support will continue to be provided across all Executive Members but by nine newly titled Support Executive Members. It is envisaged that this would continue to attract the existing Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) of £4,793.58. It is the view of the Administration that for this support to be effective it would need to be provided by a total of nine Support Executive Members.
- 2.3 In addition to the above, the Administration believes that it is necessary to provide the Lead Executive Member for Children's Services with specific support with relation to the following functions:
- Social Service functions, so far as these functions relate to children, or young people leaving care.
 - The authority's role as local education authority and the provision of services so far as they relate to information, advice, and guidance under the Learning and Skills Act 2000.
- 2.4 The proposal is that each one of these functions would be carried out by the redefined role of Deputy Executive Member.
- 2.5 The present scheme of members' allowances also provides for two advisory members of the Executive Board. The Council does not intend to fill these posts. The Panel believes that they should therefore be deleted from the Scheme. The overall effect of the present proposals is that the number of Deputy Executive Members reduces from eight to two; there are nine new posts of Support Executive Members; and the two posts of two advisory members of the Executive Board are eliminated.

2.6 The functions of education and children's social services consume the majority of the Council's budget and the Panel fully accepts that they demand a much greater time commitment and responsibility than other portfolios. The continuation of two Deputy Executive Members and the payment to them of the present special responsibility allowance seems entirely reasonable. The Panel therefore **recommends that the Members' Allowances Scheme be amended to provide for**

- **the creation of nine posts of Support Executive Members and that they be paid the same Special Responsibility Allowance as that previously paid to the Deputy Executive Members, viz £4,793.58;**
- **the deletion of the two posts of Advisory Members of the Executive Board; and**
- **the continuation of two posts of Deputy Executive Members in respect of education and children's social services respectively, and that they each be allocated a Special Responsibility Allowance of £11,386.98, to recognise the workload and responsibility involved. This figure is half the Special Responsibility Allowance allocated to each member of the Executive Board.**

3. CHAIR OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP

3.1 Leeds has an adopted Climate Change Strategy (Vision for Action) and in December 2009, the Executive Board agreed a Leeds Climate Change Action Plan which mandated a 40% reduction in CO₂ emissions from the Council's operations. The full Council passed a resolution in January 2010 to extend this target to the whole City. The Council, at its meeting of 14th July 2010 proposed the establishment of an all-party Climate Change and Environmental Working Group. The function of the Group is to help achieve cross party consensus to develop and promote initiatives across the Council which will contribute to the achievement of the carbon reduction targets set out in the climate change action plan.

3.2 The Panel understands the need for action on energy reduction and the need to procure it across the council's services. It believes that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of this Group should be similar to that paid to the Chair of an Area Management Committee. Accordingly it **recommends that a Special Responsibility Allowance of £8,988.19 be paid to the Chair of the Climate Change and Environmental Working Group.**

3.4 Throughout its deliberations, the Panel has kept in mind the current problems facing public expenditure. The Council is, of course, well aware of the problems and public perceptions: it decided to forego the annual updating of members' allowances due in October 2010 and October 2011. Structural changes following the elections have resulted in an annual saving in the Members' Allowances Scheme of £11,864. The present proposals will result in a saving of £2,676 in the Scheme. In addition the Council has asked that members in receipt of a special responsibility allowance exceeding £7,000 should accept a 3% cut in that allowance. If uniformly accepted this will result in a further annual reduction in members' allowances of £16,000.

3.5 National guidance recommends that not more than 50% of members of a Council should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA). Fewer than 50% of Leeds members will receive an SRA under the proposals in this report.

4. Implementation

The Panel **recommends that the proposals in this report be implemented with effect from the start of the 2011-12 Municipal Year.**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Members' Allowances Scheme be amended to provide for

- (a) the creation of nine posts of Support Executive Members and that they be paid the same Speciality Responsibility Allowance**

as that previously paid to the Deputy Executive Members, viz £4,793.58;

- (b) the deletion of the two posts of Advisory Members of the Executive Board;
- (c) the continuation of two posts of Deputy Executive Members in respect of education and children's social services respectively, and that they each be allocated a Special Responsibility Allowance of £11,386.98
- (d) a Special Responsibility Allowance of £8,988.19 be paid to the Chair of the Climate Change and Environmental Working Group.
- (e) the proposals in this report be implemented with effect from the start of the 2011-12 Municipal Year

Rodney Brooke (Chair)

Dave Fortune

Matthew Knight

Carolyn Lord

June 2011