

**Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire
District Councils**

Annual Report and Recommendations for 2011-12

Bromsgrove District Council

December 2010

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Recommendations

The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends to Bromsgrove District Council the following:

- (i) That the Basic Allowance and the Special Responsibility Allowances remain unchanged for 2011/12 as set out in Appendix 1, subject to any consequential changes arising from a review of the Council's governance.**
- (ii) That the Council's Scheme of Allowances be amended to delete the existing provision with regard to the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances to Vice-Chairmen and from 2011/12 any such payments be determined on an informal basis.**
- (iii) That travel allowances for 2011/12 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance and that subsistence allowances remain unchanged.**
- (iv) That the Childcare and Dependant Care Allowances remain unchanged.**
- (v) That the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended to include the following provisions with regard to the use of public transport and taxis for 'approved duties':**

"Councillors may claim actual expenditure incurred on tolls or parking fees, in addition to travelling allowances. Proof of expenditure must be provided.

The rate for travel by Taxi Cab shall not exceed:

- (a) In cases of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available, the amount of the actual fare and any reasonable gratuity paid, and
- (b) In any other case, the amount of the fare for travel by appropriate public transport.

Claims for travel by public transport must not exceed the ordinary standard class fare (or any available cheap fare as incurred).

If you are using your private vehicle for attendance at Council meetings, Committees, etc you should advise your insurance company and ensure that you have the necessary cover in place for such business journeys."

Basic Allowance 2011/12

Basic Allowance is based on:

- The roles and responsibilities of Members; and
- Their time commitments – including the total average number of hours worked per week on Council business.

The Panel, in view of the severe wider economic situation, considers that its overriding duty is to arrive at recommendations that are fair and reasonable. The Panel must always be aware of its responsibility to command public confidence in its decisions. For this reason the Panel considers that there should be no increase in the basic allowance for 2011/12.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) 2011/12**General Calculation of SRAs**

Appendix 1 to this report sets out the current allowances for 2010/11. The Panel considers that because of the exceptional circumstances this year there is no justification for recommending an increase to these for 2011/12. The Panel will be reviewing the level of Special Responsibility Allowances in detail during 2011 for 2012/13.

The Panel was informed that a review of the Council's governance was to be undertaken which could potentially impact on the number of SRAs payable. However, at the time of the Panel's deliberations no further details were available. The Panel has also been made aware of developments in shared services and will continue to be updated on such initiatives and changes.

Deputy Leader of the Council – the Panel considers that generally the work of the Deputy Leader does not involve substantial additional responsibility to that of the role of a cabinet member and we considered recommending that the Special Responsibility Allowance is reduced to the same as that for a cabinet member. We recognise that the formal position may be changing with the implementation of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act from May 2011.

Rather than recommend change currently, we intend to research and review the role and responsibilities of the Deputy Leader during 2011 to establish whether there is any substantial additional responsibility that justifies continuing to recommend the higher payment.

Vice-Chairmen – the Panel has previously been reluctant to recommend Special Responsibility Allowances for Vice-Chairmen unless it receives evidence of the position incurring significant additional responsibility above other members of the relevant Committee. We did not consider on the evidence we received that this was the case. In order to achieve a consistency of approach across all district councils within the County we are therefore not recommending that allowances continue to be paid for Vice-Chairmen of Committees.

If there is a significant call on a Vice-Chairman then our view is that it is a matter for the Council whether they receive any payment. For example, if a Chairman is unable to act for a period of time and the Vice-Chairman takes on their responsibilities, then the Chairman may consider foregoing a proportional element of their special responsibility allowance to pay the Vice-Chairman.

Mileage and Expenses 2011/12

The Panel note that Bromsgrove District Council has used the HMRC flat rate for payment of mileage for Councillors (currently 40p per mile) and recommends that this continues.

The Panel is satisfied that the current levels of subsistence allowances are set at an appropriate level and recommends that these continue.

The Panel notes that the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances provides that Childcare and Dependant Care Allowances are payable to cover reasonable and legitimate costs incurred in attending approved duties and recommends that this provision continues.

It has been drawn to the Panel's attention that Bromsgrove's Scheme of Members' Allowances is currently silent with regard to travel by public transport and taxis. The Panel therefore recommends that the Scheme be amended to address this anomaly.

Allowances to Parish Councils

The Panel notes its continuing role as Independent Remuneration Panel for Parish Councils within the Districts covered.

The Independent Remuneration Panel

The Members' Allowances Regulations require Local Authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations to the authority about allowances to be paid to Elected Members and Local Authorities must have regard to this advice. This Council's Independent Remuneration Panel is set up on a joint basis with the other 5 District Councils in Worcestershire, the decision having been taken during 2010 to follow the principle previously established by having a joint Panel in the South of the County. Separate Annual Reports have been prepared for each Council.

Initially the South Worcestershire Panel has carried out the work for the 6 Districts, while the Councils reviewed the size and operation of the Panel. The members of the Panel have been:

- Rob Key, the Chair of the Panel – Rob has 42 years' experience of working in District Councils in a variety of operational and management roles, including senior positions at Worcester City, Wychavon District and Wyre Forest District.

He was an Independent Chair for the Strategic Health Authority for Continuing Care and sits on County Council Appeals Panels for School Preference Appeals and Service Complaints.

- Elaine Bell, JP, DipCrim – Elaine has been a Magistrate for 14 years, Day Chair of Adult and Family Courts; Chair of the Bench Training & Development Committee; past member of the Magistrates Advisory Panel (interviewing and selecting for appointment to the Bench). She is also a Governor of the Lloyds Educational Foundation; Member of the Sytchampton School Appeals Panel; Hon Treasurer of Ombersley and Doverdale Tennis Club and a Past Governor of Ombersley Primary School.
- Bill Simpson – Bill spent 30 years in Further Education culminating in 11 years as Principal of Pershore College. He then entered the private sector as Director of two national Horticultural Societies. He served as a magistrate for 9 years until retirement. He is Chairman of several charities including *Thrive* between 2001 and 2008.
- Reverend Prebendary Michael Vockins OBE – Mike is Honorary Curate of three rural parishes, Rural Dean of Ledbury and one of the original members of the Independent Remuneration Panel. He is former Chief Executive of Worcestershire County Cricket Club and currently Secretary of a sporting charity.
- Mel Nock OBE, BA Joint Hons, Dip IPD – Mel is currently Vice-Chair of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and Chair of the Governance, Finance and General Purposes Committee. He is Executive Chair of EIL Malvern. Previously Mel was Chairman of a GKN division and Regional Director with a Regional Health Authority moving on to become Assistant Managing Director. Mel established his own HR consultancy in the 1990's specialising in remuneration and organisational change. He has also served as a member of the Lord Lieutenant's (South Worcestershire) Advisory Committee on the appointment of magistrates.

The Panel could not begin work on this year's report until the end of the summer. We appreciate that this has meant we have not been able to review each Council in as much detail as we would like. Our early understanding of the current situation across the Worcestershire Districts shows some differences between the level of allowances paid for similar roles. We have not been able to investigate the detail behind this in the time available to us this year. We have agreed that we will begin our research for our next Annual Report early in 2011 so that we can undertake an in depth review and complete our proposals by December in order to tie in with each Council's budget-making process.

The Panel has been advised and assisted by:

- Steve Taylor from Worcester City Council, who retired during the year, and was replaced by Chris Watkins;
- Sheena Jones from Wychavon District Council;
- Joanne Lowman from Malvern Hills District Council;

- Karen Firth from Bromsgrove District Council;
- Penelope Williams and Diana Glendenning from Wyre Forest District Council;
- Steve Skinner and Trish Buckley from Redditch Borough Council.

The Panel wishes to acknowledge its gratitude to these officers who have provided advice and guidance in a professional and dedicated manner.

Rob Key

Chairman of Independent Remuneration Panel

Bromsgrove District Council – Allowance Recommendations 2011-12

Appendix 1

	Multiplier of Basic Allowance	Agreed Allowances for 2010/11 and Recommendations for 2011/12
Basic Allowance:		3,676 ¹
Special Responsibility Allowances:		
Leader	3	10,927
Deputy Leader (plus SRA as a Portfolio holder)	0.7	2,573
Portfolio holders	1.3	4,796
Chairman of Overview Board	0.87	3,197
Chairman of Scrutiny Board	0.87	3,197
Chairman of Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board	0.44	1,559
Chairman of Planning Committee	1	3,676
Chairman of Performance Management Board	0.87	3,197
Chairman of Standards Committee	0.5	1,848
Chairman of Licensing Committee – per meeting	0.06	213
Chairman of Audit Board	0.29	1,066
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups – payment on completion of task	0.06	213

¹ This figure takes into account a public service discount of 34.11%

Members of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups – payment on completion of task	0.03	107
Chairman of Appointments Committee – payable per meeting	0.03	107
Chairman of Electoral Matters Committee – payable per meeting	0.03	107
Chairman of Appeals Committee – payable per meeting	0.03	107
Chairman of Standards Sub-Committee – payable per meeting	0.03	107
Chairman of Licensing Sub-Committee – payable per meeting	0.03	107