

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Independent Remuneration Panel has agreed that it wishes to continue to review and make recommendations on the Council's Scheme of Allowances on an annual basis. Accordingly, the Panel held a series of meetings during January to March 2005 to undertake the review for the 2005/06 financial year.

During our review we were supplied with comparative information as to the level of allowances agreed by a number of similar authorities including other District Councils within the County and other Councils within the Audit Commission 'family' group.

We also interviewed the Leader of the Council and the Leaders of the largest Opposition Groups and we would like to take this opportunity to formally thank these Members for their time and contributions. We received mixed representations from these Members which ranged from support for no increase in allowances to a suggestion that allowances be increased by 25%.

We have noted that since our last review, the Council, recognising that it needed to improve its performance significantly, has entered a Voluntary Engagement with the Government. We have been particularly mindful of these circumstances when considering whether we wished to recommend any increases in allowances payable under the Council's Scheme. We have also noted the budgetary pressures facing the Council and the savings that have been made in other areas of the Council's expenditure.

We have noted the current political composition of the Council and have given particular consideration to the question of the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances for the Leader of the Opposition and Leaders of Opposition Groups.

We have also considered the question of whether there should be any limit as to the number of Special Responsibility Allowances payable to any one Member.

With regard to the recent transfer of liquor licensing from the Magistrates Courts to local authorities we have noted the potential impact this may have on the time and effort required of those Members serving on the Licensing Committee/Sub-Committee. We considered it premature to make any recommendation regarding a Special Responsibility Allowance payable to such Members. We will review this matter in January 2006 when we will be able to take into account the additional workload imposed on individual Members of the Licensing Committee/Sub-Committee. The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Licensing Committee will continue.

We have concluded that we should unanimously

RECOMMEND

- (1) That the level of allowances payable under the Council's Scheme be increased by 2.95% for the 2005/06 financial year, which is considered to be the maximum appropriate increase given the Council's Voluntary Engagement with the Government, and is in line with the agreed national local government pay award.
- (2) That the Council's Scheme be amended to delete the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Opposition and to amend the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Leader/Co-ordinator of each Opposition Group so that the

amount payable is £120 for each Group Member (with no minimum requirement for the size of the Group), as illustrated below:

No. of Members	SRA payable to Leader of Opposition Group
6 x £120	£720
5 x £120	£600
4 x £120	£480
2 x £120	£240

- (3) That the Council's Scheme be amended to state that there is no limit on the number of Special Responsibility Allowances payable to any one Member.
- (4) That besides the changes referred to above, there be no further changes to the Basic Allowance or to the balance between that allowance and the different Special Responsibility Allowances payable during 2005/06.

Independent Remuneration Panel
10th March 2005

Mr. J. Browne

Mr. A. Finn

Mr. P. Sandhu

Mr. J. Topping