



MEETING: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday 22nd January, 2009

TIME: 4.00 pm

VENUE: Town Hall, Bootle

Member

Councillor
Brady
Fairclough
M Fearn
Hill
Papworth
Storey

Substitute

Councillor
Maher
Moncur
Booth
D Rimmer
Bigley
Cuthbertson

Independent Members: Mr N Edwards (Chair), Mr E Davies (Vice-Chair)
and Mr J. Fraser

Parish Council Members Mrs B O'Brien and D Warren

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Steve Pearce
Head of Committee and Member Services
Telephone: 0151 934 2046
Fax: 0151 934 2034
E-mail: steve.pearce@legal.sefton.gov.uk

If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members and Officers are requested to give notice of any personal or prejudicial interest and the nature of that interest, relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the relevant Code of Conduct.

3. Minutes

(Pages 3 - 6)

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2008

4. Elected Member and Officer Media Protocol

(Pages 7 - 16)

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Communications)

5. Member Allowances - Independent Remuneration Panel

(Pages 17 -
76)

Report of the Legal Director

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT SUBJECT TO CALL IN.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT ON THURSDAY 20TH NOVEMBER, 2008

Present:-

PRESENT: Councillors Brady and Storey

Independent Members Mr N Edwards (Chair), Mr E Davies (Vice-Chair)
and Mr J. Fraser

Parish Councillors Mrs B O'Brien and D Warren

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Booth (Substitute Member), Fairclough, M. Fearn, Hill, Papworth and D. Rimmer (Substitute Member).

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 October 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

17. ENFORCEMENT OF HIGH STANDARDS OF MEMBER CONDUCT

The Legal Director reported that the Assistant Chief Executive (Communications) had produced a draft local member protocol for dealing with queries from the media and circulated it to the three Group Leaders for consideration. It was intended that the draft protocol be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee for endorsement prior to its submission to the Council for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE- THURSDAY 20TH NOVEMBER, 2008

18. COMMUNITIES AND CONTROL: REAL PEOPLE, REAL POWER - CODES OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES - CONSULTATION

The Committee considered the report of the Legal Director on a consultation paper issued under the Government White Paper 'Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power, by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which invited views on proposals to revise the current Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members. The Paper primarily sought views on how the Code should relate to Members Conduct when acting in their non-official capacity and proposals to change the general principles which govern the conduct of Local Authority Members.

The report set out draft responses to the specific questions set out in the Consultation Paper, which would need to be submitted to the DCLG by the closing date of 24 December 2008 and the Committee discussed the content of the proposed response to the Consultation Paper.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the Consultation Paper be noted, and
- (2) the Legal Director be authorised to submit the response set out to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

19. SEVENTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Legal Director reported on her attendance at the seventh Annual Assembly of Standards Committees held at Birmingham on 13 to 14 October 2008 and indicated that the key issue discussed at the conference was the local ethical regime for the conduct of local Councillors.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

20. MEMBERS' SELF-MANAGED WEBSITES - IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The Committee considered the report of the Legal Director which provided details of the proposals to provide Members of the Council with the facility to create and publish their own self-managed websites on the Council's website, via the 'Modern.gov' Committee Management System and sought approval to the implementation of an Acceptable User Policy for the use of the facility.

The report which had previously been considered by the Members ICT Steering Group, indicated that it was expected that only a small number of Members would use this facility based on the experiences of other Local

Authorities, but it would enable the Council to meet IEG Democratic Revenue Priority Outcome R6: 'Provide every Councillor with the option to have an easy to manage set of public web pages (for community leadership purposes) that is either maintained by them or that they can maintain themselves'.

The responsibility for the content of the website would lie with the individual Member and any breach of the Acceptable User Policy could be reported to the Standards Committee. The Members' ICT Support Officer would provide training to Members on the production of their web pages, following the agreement of the Member to operate their website in accordance with the policy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the draft Acceptable User Policy be endorsed and submitted to the Council for approval.

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REPORT TO: Cabinet Member – Performance and Governance
Standards Committee,
Cabinet
Council

DATE: 21 January 2009
22 January 2009
5 February 2009
26 February 2009

SUBJECT: Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol

WARDS AFFECTED: All

REPORT OF: Assistant Chief Executive (Communications)

CONTACT OFFICER: Craig Galloway
Tele 0151 934 2721

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To seek approval for a set of media protocols governing the Council's work with the media.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

The Standards Committee and subsequently Full Council requested that the Assistant Chief Executive (Communications) produce a protocol to assist Members and Officers to deal with queries from the media and to organise training sessions on the protocol in due course.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Standards Committee recommend the Council to adopt the Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol.

That the Cabinet Member – Performance and Governance and the Cabinet endorse the content of the Protocol.

That the Council adopt the Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol.

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: No

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Following the Council meeting

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ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: To continue with the current arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework: N/A

Financial: N/A

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2006/ 2007 £	2007/ 2008 £	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: The protocol complies with the constitution of the Council, Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, Local Government Act 2000, LgiU Guide to Local Authority Publicity.

Risk Assessment: N/A

Asset Management: N/A

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

3 Leaders, Chief Executive, Legal Director, Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) & comparable Metropolitan Authorities/ County Councils

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CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	√		
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability	√		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People	√		

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Sefton Council Constitution, Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, Local Government Act 2000, LgiU Guide to Local Authority Publicity.

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1.0 BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Following a number of issues arising from elected members and officers dealings with the media and subsequent discussions at the Standards Committee, it was felt that there is a general lack of understanding about media relations and the protocols surrounding them.
- 1.2 To this end the Standards Committee and subsequently Full Council requested that a local protocol, which would assist members in dealing with the media, be drawn up.
- 1.3 Consultation was undertaken with the three leaders to better understand and explore potential solutions to the difficulties previously encountered and to set out how the Council's media relations will operate within the framework of the Council Constitution.
- 1.4 These discussions were particularly useful in highlighting a number of areas for inclusion in the document, where it was felt that there could be a lack of understanding including;
 - Who could say what and when?
 - What information on green paper is confidential?
 - When does it become public?
 - Who is allowed to comment on green paper items and in what context?
 - Commenting during call-in periods.
 - Portfolio consultation.
- 1.5 The protocol sets out how the Council's media relations operate and clarify the roles and responsibilities of both elected members and officers.
- 1.6 Research was carried out into what other Metropolitan Authorities and County Councils were doing in this area and the suggested protocols are in line with the outcomes of this exercise.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 2.1 That the Standards Committee recommend the Full Council to adopt the Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member – Performance and Governance and the Cabinet endorse the content of the Protocol.
- 2.3 That the Council adopt the Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol.

ELECTED MEMBERS & OFFICERS MEDIA PROTOCOL

Sefton MBC undertakes to provide a comprehensive flow of information through a range of access channels to ensure:

- Continued public awareness of the services provided by the authority and the functions it performs.
- Advance and ongoing publicity on matters of public interest.
- Those affected by the Council's decisions, policies and priorities are given information to understand them and to have a real and informed say about them.

ELECTED MEMBERS:

Cabinet

The Council's Cabinet executive decision-making and accountability is reflected in the media liaison arrangements. In particular:

- Media statements on Cabinet decisions will be made by the appropriate cabinet member (or their deputy), the leader or deputy leaders of the council or issued on behalf of the entire cabinet.
- Interviews on Cabinet decisions will only be given by the appropriate cabinet member, their deputy or the Council leader/deputy leaders.
- Where the media team are asked to draft media releases or letters on behalf of Cabinet or Cabinet Members, such releases/letters will be of a factual nature and will contain nothing that could be construed as politically motivated or biased.
- The Cabinet will be given relevant support and advice to enable them to play a pro-active role in presenting issues to the media, explaining their work and managing controversial issues covered by the media.
- All official media releases will be issued by the Corporate Communications team in the standard format.

Overview and Scrutiny

The work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny committees is an integral part of the Council's political arrangements and for the purposes of ongoing media relations:

- Media statements and interviews on Overview and Scrutiny matters will be made by the relevant chair or their substitute.
- Where a minority report is released by a member or members of a Overview and Scrutiny committee, media statements will be the responsibility of those issuing the report.
- Where the media team are asked to draft media releases or letters on behalf of Overview and Scrutiny committee, such releases/letters will be of a factual nature and will contain nothing that could be construed as politically motivated or biased.
- All official Overview and Scrutiny media releases will be issued by the Corporate Communications team in the standard format.

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- Members of the Overview and Scrutiny committees will be given relevant support and advice to enable them to play a pro-active role in presenting issues to the media, explaining their work and managing controversial issues covered by the media.

Full Council

- Media statements on policy and other matters which are the remit of full council will be made by the leader of the Council or the Deputy Leaders.
- Media enquiries on such matters will be referred to the leader/deputy leaders.
- Leader/Deputy Leaders will be given relevant and appropriate support and advice to enable them to deal effectively with the media.
- The Leader and Deputy Leaders will be supported in making the best use of the media to promote his or her special role as ambassador for the Council.

COMMENTING ON CONFIDENTIAL, NON-CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS.

Reports made on green paper contain exempt information. Information contained within the report has met the criteria as set out in the schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Once this criteria has been met the report, the information contained within the report and any discussions undertaken during the meeting regarding the report are strictly confidential and MUST NOT be disclosed.

The minute of the meeting is the official public record and members if required can comment or quote upon the details of the minute.

If the report is an executive decision (Cabinet or Cabinet Members committees) the call-in procedure is relevant. This means that the decision does not come into full force until after the expiry of the call-in period. This is the same for both confidential and non-confidential reports.

If during the call-in period a councillor is required to make a comment on the published minute they should make it clear that the minutes are subject to call-in and if this happens the decision could change.

In an ideal world it is safest not to comment until after the expiry of the call-in period.

Political Group Press Releases

Corporate Communications has no involvement with political groups press releases, as these are a matter for the individual parties. If a press officer receives an enquiry based on a press release sent out by a political group they will refer the journalist or reporter to the Group Leader or Deputy Leader for a response. However, they will give answers to purely factual questions, which may emerge from such releases as clarification.

Individual Councillors

The work of individual councillors is recognised as an important contributor to the Council's community leadership role.

- Each local group/party has its own protocol for dealing with the media and publicity. Councillors should, in the first instance, consult with their leader, deputy leader or party whip for guidance or support on media issues.
- Whilst it is legitimate for the Council to publicise local issues, the Council will not involve itself in any publicity, which ‘personalises’ such issues and therefore appears to be designed to affect support for a political party.
- Advice and guidance will be available to councillors on promoting local issues through the media.

OFFICERS

The Council needs to have the capacity to maintain its reputation through good media management.

The general policy of the Council in working with the media will be of openness and accessibility of information. The Corporate Communications unit is responsible for handling all enquiries and requests from the media on behalf of Sefton MBC.

These protocols are to ensure that this work is carried out consistently and that everyone is aware of where responsibility lies.

All our communications will comply with relevant legal requirements and conform to the Code of Conduct on Local Government Publicity.

Corporate Communications will provide a professional, efficient service to the media and monitor satisfaction with the service. The aim is to treat the media outlets fairly and professionally and provide a range of services including; writing and issuing all press releases, organising interviews and photo-calls, monitoring media coverage, giving advice on media handling and preparing and distributing press cuttings.

Press officers will never knowingly mislead or give false information to a journalist or reporter and rely on colleagues to ensure that the information provided is accurate.

All media outlets are aware that Sefton Council will only accept dealing with the media through the Corporate Communications unit. Even if journalists or reporters choose to ignore this and make a direct approach to an officer, they should be told their enquiry will not be dealt with and redirect them to the Corporate Communications unit.

- All media liaison will be carried out via the Corporate Communications unit.
- All of the Council’s media contact will be professionally managed to meet the communications needs of the Council and the media.
- All incoming calls, requests and enquiries from the media will be fielded initially by Corporate Communications staff who will respond on behalf of the Council where appropriate.
- All media enquiries, releases and statements will be logged on an operational database which will record response times, what was said, which officer gave the information to the media team and who has approved the response or release.

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- Designated press officers are empowered to make statements on behalf of the Council, presenting the agreed position and helping build and protect the Council's reputation.
- Interviews with media outlets arranged by Corporate Communications will normally be undertaken by officers at Director/Assistant Director level. On non-contentious issues where it is deemed to be more appropriate for this to be done by someone with specialist technical knowledge, directors may delegate; but only to named individuals who have undergone media training.

Underpinning all aspects of this protocol is the general principal, enshrined in government legislation, that the council will not involve itself in any publicity which appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.

In addition to this general principal is the detailed Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, issued by the Secretary of State, which highlights factors to be borne in mind when taking decisions on publicity.

Details of the code of practice can be obtained through the corporate communications unit. For the purposes of guidance for councillors and officers paragraphs 39, 40 and 41 are particularly relevant and are reproduced below.

Individual Councillors;

39. Publicity about individual councillors may include the contact details, the position held in the Council (for example, member of the executive or chair of Overview and Scrutiny committee), and their responsibilities. Publicity may also include information about individual councillors' proposals, decisions and recommendations only where this is relevant to their positions and responsibilities within the council. All such publicity should be objective and explanatory, and whilst it may acknowledge the part played by individual councillors as holders of particular positions in the Council, personalisation of issues or personal image making should be avoided.

40. Publicity should not be, or liable to misrepresentation as being, party political. Whilst it may be appropriate to describe policies put forward by an individual councillor which are relevant to his/her position and responsibilities within the Council, and to put forward his/her justification in defence of them, this should not be done in party political terms, using political slogans, expressly advocating policies of a political party or directly attacking policies and opinions of other parties, groups or individuals.

Elections, referendums and petitions;

41. The period between the notice of an election and the election itself should preclude proactive publicity in all its forms of candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election. Publicity should not deal with controversial issues or report views, proposals or recommendations in such a way that identifies them with individual members or groups of members. However, it is acceptable for the authority to respond in appropriate circumstances to events and legitimate service enquiries provided that their answers are factual and not party political. Members holding key political positions should be able to comment in an emergency or where there is a genuine need for a member level response to an important event outside the

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authorities control. Proactive events arranged in this period should not involve members likely to be standing for election.

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Meeting: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 22 January 2009

Title of Report: REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES –
INDEPENDENT REMUNERATIONAL PANEL

Report of:

Mrs C J Elwood
Legal Director

Contact Officer:
(Telephone No.) 0151 934 2032

This report contains	Yes	No
CONFIDENTIAL Information/		√
EXEMPT information by virtue of paragraph(s).....of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (If information <u>is</u> marked exempt, the Public Interest Test must be applied and favour the exclusion of the information from the press and public).		√
Is the decision on this report DELEGATED?		

Purpose of Report

To advise Members of the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel and to make recommendations to Council.

Recommendation(s)

That Members consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and make recommendations to Full Council in relation to the review of the Members Allowance Scheme.

Corporate Objective Monitoring

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1.	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2.	Creating Safe Communities		√	
3.	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
4.	Improving Health and Well-Being		√	
5.	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6.	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
7.	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8.	Children and Young People		√	

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Financial Implications

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2006/ 2007 £	2007/ 2008 £	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				21,800
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				21,800
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Departments consulted in the preparation of this Report

Legal

List of background papers relied upon in the preparation of this Report

Report to the Independent Remuneration Panel

1.0 Background

- 1.1** The three Members of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel met on the 3rd December 2008 to review the Council's current Members Allowance Scheme. The report to the Panel is attached in full at **Annex 1** to this report. The report of the Panel setting out their findings and recommendations is set out at **Annex 2**.

- 1.2** Members are requested to consider the report and make recommendations to Full Council on the 26th February 2009.

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ANNEX 1

<u>Meeting:</u>	Independent Remuneration Panel
<u>Date of Meeting:</u>	3rd December 2008
<u>Title of Report:</u>	Member Allowances
<u>Report of:</u>	Caroline Elwood – Legal Director Paul Edwards – Finance Director
<u>Contact Officer:</u>	Caroline Elwood – 0151 934 2032 Paul Edwards – 0151 934 4082

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1** All Councils must establish an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) which has responsibility for making recommendations to the Council in relation to the level of allowances paid to Elected Members. The Council has 66 Members all of whom receive a Basic Allowance, which is currently £8,850 for 2008/09. In addition a certain number of Members receive a Special Responsibility Allowance for additional responsibilities (for example, as a Cabinet Member or Chair of a Committee). The Allowance varies dependent upon the position and specific responsibilities which are carried out but is calculated based upon a multiplier of the Basic Allowance. As an example the Leader receives a Special Responsibility Allowance of £26,550 in addition to his Basic Allowance which is based upon a multiplier of 3 x the Basic Allowance of £8,850. In a small number of instances Members receive a daily rate for undertaking ad hoc duties by way of a Special Responsibility Allowance. Details of the current scheme are set out at paragraph 2.1.
- 1.2** The Panel last met on 14th June 2007 and the information provided to the Panel together with the report and findings of the Panel is attached at **Appendix A** as background information. The report was accepted and approved by Full Council at its meeting on 6th September 2007.
- 1.3** At their meeting in September 2007 the IRP undertook a full and comprehensive review of the Members Allowance Scheme and recommended that:-
- (i)** **The Basic Allowance** be reviewed and increased to a figure which is comparable to the Merseyside average (currently £8,850 for 2008-09) with future increases linked to the Local Government Annual Pay Settlement (using scp 33).
 - (ii)** **Special Responsibility Allowances** should continue to be calculated based upon a multiplier of the Basic Allowance.
 - (iii)** **Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority** – since the WDA itself has no authority to make payments to their Board Members it was recommended that if a Sefton Spokesperson was appointed as Chair (as is currently the

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case) then he/she should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance equivalent 100% of the Basic Allowance (ie. £8,850)

- (iv) **One Vision Housing Board (OVH)** – although it was recognised that following the transfer of the Council's housing stock those Elected Members serving on the new One Vision Housing Board were making a considerable commitment it was felt that this was a matter for OVH to address and not the Council itself.
- (v) **Standards Committee – Independent Chair** – it was noted that there was no common approach to the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances for Independent Chairs of Standards Committees and it was recommended that the Chair continue to receive travel and subsistence allowance only but that position be kept under review given the new role of the Local Standards Committee to become responsible for the sifting and investigation of complaints.
- (vi) **Travel & Subsistence Scheme** – it was agreed that the Council should no longer continue to make separate payments to cover travel expenses for duties undertaken by Members within Sefton but that an enhanced level of Basic Allowance would reflect the discontinuance of separate travel expenses.
- (vii) **Dependent Carers Allowance** – it was agreed that this allowance should remain and increases be linked to the minimum hourly wage.
- (viii) **Further Review** – it was recommended that a further full review of the scheme should be undertaken prior to the beginning of the Municipal Year for 2010/11.

2.0 THE CURRENT SCHEME

2.1 Members Allowances

The current Members Allowance Scheme for 2008/09 is set out below:-

In order to recognise additional time and expenses incurred by Councillor's who have significant additional responsibilities in carrying out their duties for Sefton Council, subject to paragraph 4, the following Special Responsibility Allowances shall be paid:

Leader of the Council	£26,550	
Party Leaders (with Cabinet position)	£22,125	
Other Members of the Cabinet	£17,700	
Chair of Planning Committee	£8,850	
Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny Committees	£4,425	
Chair of Licensing and Regulatory Committee	£8,850	
Chair of Audit and Governance Committee	£4,425	
Party Spokespersons for Cabinet & Planning Portfolio	£4,425	
Waste Disposal Authority - Spokesperson	£2,213	
Waste Disposal Authority - Chair	£8,640	
Members of Licensing Sub Committee	£35.00	Daily Rate
Members of Planning Visiting Panel	£35.00	Daily Rate

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Members of Adoption Panel
Members of Fostering Panel

£35.00 Daily Rate
£35.00 Daily Rate

2.2 Mayoral Allowances

The allowances paid to the Mayor and Deputy are linked to the Scheme of Members Allowances and for the Municipal year 2007/08 the following shall be paid:

Mayor	£13,275
Deputy Mayor	£ 4,425

NB. It will be noted that all Special Responsibility Allowances are based upon a multiplier of the Basic Allowance.

3.0 SCRUTINY & REVIEW CHAIRS

- 3.1** There are currently four Chairs of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees who each receive a Special Responsibility Allowance based on a multiplier of 50% x the Basic Allowance (ie. £4,425). This can be contrasted with the Chair of both Planning and Licensing Committees both of whom receive a Special Responsibility Allowance based on a multiplier of 100% x the Basic Allowance (ie. £8,850).
- 3.2** Historically the Planning Committee always met twice within the normal cycle of Committee meetings and meetings were lengthy and at times dealt with sensitive and controversial issues. There was also a need for the Committee to make site visits on a regular basis, all of which was taken into account when the Members Allowance Scheme was revised in May 2002 resulting in a higher Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of the Planning Committee.
- 3.3** The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of the Licensing Committee was reviewed in October 2005, after the Council took over the responsibility for issuing liquor licenses from the Magistrates Court. This led to a greatly increased workload for the Committee and its Sub-Committees as a result of which the Special Responsibility Allowance was increased in line with the figure for the Chair of Planning on the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 3.4** Scrutiny Committees were originally established in 1998 prior to the formal introduction of the Leader and Cabinet System. Originally they tended to concentrate undertaking best value reviews, meeting once a cycle and tending to be conducted as if they continued to be 'an old style Committee'. Overview & Scrutiny Committees were formally introduced under the Local Government Act 2000 with a view to scrutinising the work of the Council's Executive (Cabinet) and undertaking in depth reviews in relation to policy issues or other matters of local concern. Chairs of the Committees received a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% x Basic Allowance following recommendations from an external consultant.

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- 3.5** It has taken some time to embed the scrutiny function within Sefton Council. In 2006 Dr Stephanie Snape of the Local Government Centre, Warwick Business School, was asked to undertake an external evaluation of the overview and scrutiny arrangements. The report was hard hitting in its assessment of the difficulties with the scrutiny function at Sefton. This had been previously highlighted within external inspection reports such as the CPA and JAR. Dr Snape found that generally scrutiny had a low status within the organisation, which was affecting the performance of the function. The report identified a distinct 'hierarchy' of roles within Sefton that was viewed generally by Members which were as follows:-

"Member of Cabinet, Chair of Planning, Chair of Licensing, Cabinet Spokesperson, Chair of Area Committee and finally, at the bottom, Chair of Scrutiny and Review".

(However it should be noted that the Chairs of Area Committees are not paid a separate Special Responsibility Allowance)

Dr Snape's report made a number of very detailed recommendations which were subsequently considered by a Cross Party Working Group resulting in a detailed improvement plan. (see **Annex B** for the detailed improvement plan).

- 3.6** The Member Working Group held on the 5th December 2007 held a specific discussion regarding the perception of Scrutiny and Review Chairmanship in comparison to other roles. It was noted that the level of Special Responsibility allowance had a great impact on the perception of the function, and ultimately affected the performance of the function. It was recommended that in order to acknowledge the importance of the role of scrutiny and review that the Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to examine the Members allowances for Scrutiny and Review Chairmanships. This recommendation was subsequently approved by Cabinet on the 13th December 2007 and Full Council on the 28th February 2008. (see **Annex B** for the detailed improvement plan).

- 3.7** In recent years and particularly following Dr Snape's review the scrutiny function has evolved significantly with a resulting impact upon the workload of the Chairs. Although each Overview & Scrutiny Committee still meets once a cycle much more work is now done in Working Groups undertaking in depth reviews on a variety of topics. These reports have been welcomed and well received by Cabinet. Chairs generally are far more proactive, involved in many issues related to the work of the Committee. This includes the strategic overview of the function through the creation of an Overview & Scrutiny Management Board, and its related activities. Given the important role that is undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny Chairs and the strengthening of that role envisaged in Government White Papers/legislation the authority would need to be able to demonstrate the value placed on its activities during any corporate and service inspections. It is particularly required as overview and scrutiny will in the near future need to act as a critical friend to service providers outside of the Council in monitoring the achievement of the ambitions for the area and will require more innovative and imaginative scrutiny enquiries, providing effective accountability arrangements for partners, wider engagement with service users, and closer relationships with neighbourhood structures.

3.7.1 The level of Special Responsibility allowance demonstrates the value that the Council places upon the function of Overview & Scrutiny, and Dr Snape's review highlighted best practice in other authorities where the Chairmanships of Overview & Scrutiny was comparable to the Chairmanship of Licensing Committees, and in some cases Planning Committees in order to clearly value the function and ensure effective participation and involvement from Members, officers and partners (for example Tameside MBC). This view is evident within the national research commissioned by the LGA and IDeA in 2006/07 which clearly demonstrates that the average allowance of Overview & Scrutiny Chairmanships is comparable, or higher than the chairmanships of Licensing, and sometimes, Planning Committees (see **Annex C**).

3.8 In undertaking research for the Panel 18 other Authorities were contacted and the attached table (**Annex D**) shows that 17 of these pay a higher amount of Special Responsibility Allowance than Sefton. This research also demonstrates the value, placed upon the Chairmanship of Overview & Scrutiny Chairs when compared against the Chairmanships of Planning, and in particular Licensing Committees. Overall the survey showed that the average amount paid to Scrutiny and Review Chairs is £7,482 which equates to 75% of the average Basic Allowance). When looking at Chairs of Planning, Sefton pays £8,850 (which equates to 100% Basic Allowance) the average amount paid across the survey is £8,288 (which equates to 83% Basic Allowance).

4.0 COST IMPLICATIONS FOR SCRUTINY & REVIEW COMMITTEES

Sefton currently has four Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny. To increase the Special Responsibility Allowance to 75% of the Basic Allowance (£6,639) would cost an additional £10,893 including on-costs, to increase the Special Responsibility Allowance to 100% of the Basic Allowance (£8,850) would cost an additional £21,771 including on-costs.

5.0 CHAIRS OF AUDIT & GOVERNANCE

At the meeting of the IRP on the 26th September 2006 it was resolved that 'the allowance to the new Chair of Audit & Governance be approved and linked to the current multiplier payable to Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny (namely half of the Basic Allowance)". Accordingly the Audit & Governance Committee Chair is currently paid the same rate as Overview & Scrutiny Chairs (£4,425). The survey undertaken at **Annex D** shows that the average amount paid to Audit & Governance Chairs is £4,647 (which equates to 43% of the Basic Allowance). Any increase to link the payment to an increased payment to Overview & Scrutiny Chairs would have the following cost implications:-

- SRA increased to 75% (£6,639) would cost an additional £2,723 including on-costs
- SRA increased to 100% Basic (£8,850) would cost an additional £5,443 including on-costs

6.0 JOB AND ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

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As part of its Member Development Programme the Council has developed job and role descriptions for Elected Members. The job and role descriptions for Chairs of Planning, Licensing, Overview & Scrutiny and Audit & Governance are attached at **Annex E** as background information. **Annex F** sets out examples of work undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny Chairs.

7.0 VISITS TO CHILDRENS HOMES

It will be noted that at the previous meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel it was agreed that in order to save administrative time, in future Members would not be paid individual travelling expenses for travel within Sefton Borough. Instead an amount would be incorporated within the increased Basic Allowance which all Members received. Sefton is required to undertake statutory visits to Children's Homes within the borough and these visits are over and above Member's regular commitments. At present only a small number of Members actually undertake the visits. In these circumstances the Leader of the Labour Group has suggested that the Panel should consider providing those Members who do additional mileage an appropriate internal mileage allowance. The details of the visits undertaken since 2006 are attached (**Annex G**)

8.0 STANDARDS COMMITTEE CHAIR

At the last meeting of the Panel it was agreed not to pay a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Independent Chair of the Committee but to keep the position under review. In recent months two additional Independent Members have been appointed to the Standards Committee and with the introduction of the local assessment of complaints against Members the workload has increased. However the new regime only commenced in May of this year and so it is considered that it is still relatively early and that a formal report is not appropriate to the Panel at the present time.

9.0 CONCLUSION

The views of the Panel are sought specifically in relation to:-

- (a) The appropriate figure for the Special Responsibility Allowance for Overview & Scrutiny Chairs.
- (b) The appropriate figure and level of Special Responsibility Allowance for the Audit & Governance Chair.
- (c) Whether it is appropriate to pay travelling expenses to those Members who undertake statutory visits to Childrens Homes.

ANNEXES TO REPORT

Annex A	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel – 14 th June 2007
Annex B	Improvement Plan for Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Annex C	Local Government Analysis and Research 2006/07
Annex D	Survey of Neighbouring and Other Authorities
Annex E	Job and Role Descriptions for Chairs of Planning, Licensing, Overview & Scrutiny and Audit & Governance
Annex F	Examples of work undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny Chairs
Annex G	Visits to Children's Homes 2006/07 – date

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

14TH JUNE 2007

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 We last met as a Panel in September 2006 when we requested Officers to further investigate how other Local Authorities and Public Bodies arrived at the recommended figure for both the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances which are paid to Elected Members. We re-convened on the 14th June 2007 and had the benefit of a full report from the Council's Finance Director, which provided the comparative information we requested. Also present were Paul Edwards – Finance Director, Caroline Elwood – Legal Director and Viv Swale – Claims and Administration Manager. The three Political Groups on the Council had been given the opportunity to make representations to us and Councillor David Rimmer represented the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Ian Maher represented the Labour Group and Councillor Mrs Parry represented the Conservative Group. We heard submissions on behalf of all three Parties.

1.2 This report outlines our recommendations to the Council in respect of the current Members Allowance Scheme.

2.0 BASIC ALLOWANCE

2.1 Sefton Council's Member Allowances Scheme is based on a standard Basic Allowance. In 2000, when the initial scheme was introduced, the allowance was calculated using the LGA's National Daily Rate (NDR) for 1998. Since 2002, with the agreement of the Independent Remuneration Panel, the Basic Allowance has been increased annually based upon the pay award received by a specified level of Officers (ie. SCP 33 on the National Joint Council rates). Nevertheless this has not kept pace with the LGA National Daily Rate and as a result the current Sefton rate has fallen behind and is lower than the national guideline figure for 2007.

2.2 Additional information was obtained from comparator Authorities and submitted to us. This included information from the 2006 Survey of Members Allowances carried out by the Local Government Analysis & Research Centre together with additional information from eleven other Authorities in Merseyside and Greater Manchester, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire & Rescue and Merseyside Passenger Transport Authorities. The annual Basic Allowance paid by

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Sefton was lower than the average paid by other Authorities and having heard submissions from the Council's Elected Members we recommend that the Basic Allowance should be increased to £8,430 which is a figure comparable to the Merseyside average (excluding Sefton). We further recommend that any future increases in the Basic Allowance should continue to be linked to the Local Government pay settlement each year (using SCP 33) and that the revised figure should be implemented with effect from 1st April 2007.

3.0 SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

3.1 The Council pays Special Responsibility Allowances based on a multiplier of the Basic Allowance. Accordingly any review of the Basic Allowance will result in proportionate increases in the Special Responsibility Allowance. At the last meeting of the Panel we had asked Officers to investigate how other Authorities arrived at and calculated the figure for Special Responsibility Allowances since it was apparent that not all schemes used the multiplier based on the Basic Allowance. From the information provided to us and research undertaken at our request it was evident that although some Authorities continued to use the multiplier mechanism other Authorities arrived at a particular figure which they felt in all the circumstances was appropriate to their local circumstances. There appeared to be no common formula or calculation involved. Members made representations to us that they felt the current system was fair and equitable. On balance we felt that the multiplier mechanism was appropriate and should continue to be the basis for calculation of Special Responsibility Allowances within Sefton.

3.2 At our last meeting our attention had been drawn to the fact that one of Sefton's two representatives had recently been appointed as Chair of the Waste Disposal Authority. The WDA have no authority to make payments to their Board Members and Sefton Council pays a Special Responsibility Allowance equal to approximately 25% of the Basic Allowance for its two nominated representatives on the WDA. We noted there was no recognition within the scheme of the additional responsibilities that the role of the Chair brought and we asked Officers to investigate the matter and present a further report to our next meeting. We recognised that the role of the Chair of WDA was a demanding appointment. We were advised that in the previous financial year the WDA had met on six occasions but that the Chair had attended at least 34 meetings. We therefore recommended that if a Sefton spokesperson is appointed as Chair of the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority then his/her Special Responsibility Allowance should be increased from 25% to 100% of the Basic Allowance.

3.3 We were advised that in October 2006 the public sector housing functions of the Council were transferred to a newly formed registered social landlord, One Vision Housing (OVH). Elected Members have been nominated to represent the Council at OVH Board and Committee Meetings. There are approximately six

meetings per month. Due to its charitable status OVH's options were limited to make payments to Board Members and we were asked to consider the possibility of payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to reflect these additional duties. Although we recognised that there is a considerable time commitment involved for Members of the OVH Board we were of the opinion that this was a matter for One Vision Housing to address particularly since they would have other Trustees and Board Members who were not being remunerated either.

4. STANDARDS COMMITTEE – INDEPENDENT CHAIR

4.1 We were advised that in the past an Elected Member had been nominated to Chair the Council's Standards Committee. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill will require the Council to appoint an Independent Member as Chair of the Committee and although the Bill is not yet in force Full Council had agreed at its meeting on the 10th May 2007 to appoint one of the Committees Independent Members as Chair of the Standards Committee. At the same time Council also requested the Panel to consider payment of an allowance for undertaking these duties. In the past the Chair has received a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the Basic Allowance or £3,510. We noted that current proposals were for the role of the National Standards Board to become far more strategic, with Local Standards Committees becoming responsible for sifting initial complaints against local Councillors and also having responsibility for any subsequent investigation and hearing. This was therefore likely to result in an increased workload for the Standards Committee and in particular its Chair.

4.2 We received details of comparative allowances from a number of other Authorities and noted that there appeared to be no common approach towards payment of Special Responsibility Allowances for Chairs of Standards Committees. After detailed consideration our view was that the Chair, as a Co-opted Member, should continue to receive travel and subsistence allowances but we did not recommend paying any further additional allowance at the present time. We felt that people volunteered and gave freely of their time to serve on a number of bodies throughout the community and we had reservations about the payment of an allowance particularly given the need to be seen to maintain independence from the Council. We were however mindful of the likely increase in workload and responsibilities of this post and would like to review the position once the impact of the new legislation can be assessed.

5.0 TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE PAYMENT

5.1 At our last meeting we noted that the payment of travel and subsistence expenses was discretionary. It has been suggested to us that Sefton might consider adopting the approach followed by a number of other local Authorities whereby there is no separate payment for travel within the Borough but that Members

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receive an enhanced level of Basic Allowance which reflects the discontinuance of separate travel expenses. We indicated that we would like to review the position at this meeting. We noted that the processing of travel claims carries an administrative cost. The total payments made for car mileage in 2006/07 amounted to £17,640 of which £15,350 related to travel within Sefton. This was a figure of less than £270 on average for each Member. Given that we are recommending an increase in the Basic Allowance we recommend that the Council no longer continues to make separate payments to cover travel expenses for duties undertaken by Members within Sefton. Although we are recommending that the increase in Basic Allowances should be backdated to the 1st April 2007 we recognise that claims for travel expenses must be submitted on a monthly basis. In the circumstances we recommend that the entitlement to claim travel expenses should cease from the date when our recommendations will be considered by Full Council, ie. 6th September 2007.

6. DEPENDANT CARERS ALLOWANCE

6.1 We noted the scheme provides for a Dependant Carers Allowance, although there have been no claims for this Allowance to date. The current rate is £5.35 per hour with a maximum amount of £60 per week. We felt it was important that this Allowance should remain and we recommended that increases should be linked to the minimum wage hourly rate.

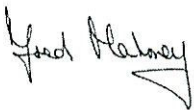
7. FURTHER REVIEW

7.1 We recommended that a full review of the scheme should be undertaken prior to the beginning of the Municipal Year for 2010/2011.

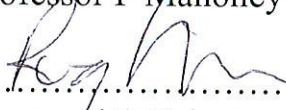
8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 We recommend the above amendments to the Council's current scheme of Members Allowances and that all other details of the scheme remain unchanged.

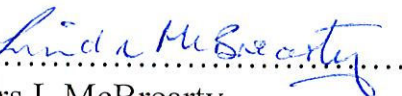
June 2007



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Professor F Mahoney (Chair)



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Reverend R Driver



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Mrs L McBrearty

SCRUTINY & REVIEW AT SEFTON COUNCIL – DR STEPHANIE SNAPE– IMPROVEMENT PLAN				
	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
1	<p><u>Scrutiny in a Hung Authority</u></p> <p>A further review be undertaken of the Cabinet Member system to assess whether this is providing sufficient cross party and non-executive challenge.</p> <p>NB. If it is considered that this is a robust and effective process then:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet Member spokespersons to be viewed as part of the scrutiny system. Scrutiny protocols handbook and constitution to be amended accordingly. The role of Scrutiny & Review be adjusted to focus on in-depth policy development and review investigations. Systems to be developed to ensure effective communication between the Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet Spokespersons (eg, regular meetings, standing agenda item for Cabinet Spokespersons reports etc). 	<p>A Further review to be undertaken in consultation with Cabinet Members and Spokespersons to identify whether the Cabinet Member system is an effective forum for pre-Scrutiny of Executive decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny Protocols and the Council's Constitution, etc to be amended to reflect that spokespersons are part of the Scrutiny Function. Scrutiny Review Committees to focus on policy development and task and finish reviews. Pre Scrutiny no longer to be within the remit of S & R Committees Consideration of mechanisms to ensure appropriate two- way communication between the Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet Spokespersons so that Executive Members are held properly to account. 	<p>The Working Group considered the proposals and recommended that it was essential that the role of Scrutiny/Pre-Scrutiny remains with the Scrutiny and Review Committee's. (Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07). The Member Working Group 05.12.07 agreed to strengthen the communication between Cabinet Spokespersons and S&R Committees and that a further report be brought back for further discussion.</p> <p>Not agreed – see above.</p> <p>Not agreed – see above.</p> <p>The Working Group also agreed that a protocol should be developed to strengthen the communications between Cabinet and Scrutiny. (Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07).</p>	<p>The Scrutiny Team has begun a review of the S&R handbook that will include this protocol. This will be ready for January 2008.</p>

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	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
2	<p>Poor Awareness of Role of Scrutiny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify and communicate the system for Scrutiny within Sefton Produce and publish widely a summary of the Scrutiny system. Explore other avenues for increasing understanding and awareness of the role of Scrutiny. Scrutiny awareness workshops to be organised for Cabinet and Senior Managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop appropriate mechanisms to raise awareness of the system within Sefton of Scrutiny so that there is a clear understanding at both Officer and Member level. Use of briefing notes and the intranet to be explored. Workshops to be commissioned to enhance and raise awareness of the profile of the Scrutiny function for all Cabinet Members and Senior Management. Organise Management Networks to increase awareness of the Scrutiny Function. Include information on Scrutiny in Induction Packs for new starters 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p>	<p>Communications Strategy & Plan is currently being developed which will incorporate the development of web pages and dissemination of key issues</p> <p>Arrangement in place for Govern-It session (Jan 08)</p> <p>Induction now covers Scrutiny arrangements</p>

	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
3	<p>Chairing Scrutiny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Party Group Leader to consider the chairing arrangements for Scrutiny. Scrutiny Chairs to be provided with a tailored development package to develop Scrutiny leadership skills. Personal development plans to be in place for each Scrutiny Chair. Scrutiny Chair Role Descriptions to be developed for each Committee. Scrutiny Chairs to produce an annual report setting out their achievements for the year and the goals for the year ahead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Party Group Leaders have been requested to consider this issue for the 2007/08 Municipal Year. Engage with North West Employers to develop tailored development packages for Scrutiny Chairs. Personal development plans are already available for Elected Members under the North West Charter for Member Development. An assessment of leadership skills to be undertaken and built into the Scrutiny Chairs Personal Development Plans. Role Descriptions for Scrutiny Chairs were approved by Council in September 2006. Role Descriptions to be reviewed and revised as appropriate in the light of Dr. Snape's recommendations. Scrutiny Chairs to liaise with Scrutiny Support Officers in producing informative annual reports, setting out the Committee's achievements over the last 12 months and goals for the year ahead. Reports to be widely available on the internet. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 – although it was recommended that PDPs should be rolled out to vice-chairs and other members when possible.</p> <p>It was agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 that current role descriptions are adequate.</p> <p>It was agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 that further development of annual reports would be beneficial. It was also agreed for Chairs to formally present Annual Reports at full council, and submit quarterly updates which members may wish to debate.</p>	<p>Chairing arrangements have been considered and changes have been implemented as a result</p> <p>Training has been offered to Scrutiny Chairs via Member Development Officer – work ongoing to provide PDPs</p> <p>New format annual report was recently produced</p> <p>Further amendments to role descriptions will be made, dependent upon outcome of Working Group recommendations</p>

	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
4	<p>Member Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Leaders to consider the selection / election process for Scrutiny & Review Committees and where possible ensure continuity of membership. • Role Descriptions to be developed for ordinary Scrutiny Members. • An audit of the knowledge, skills and experience of Scrutiny Members to be undertaken annually on a Committee-by-Committee basis to ensure Scrutiny Committees are aware of Member strengths. • The annual audit to be used to help identify Chairs for Working Groups and Member Champions. • Ensure some Working Groups are chaired by ordinary Scrutiny Members. • Experiments to be conducted in developing a small number of individual Member Champions for Scrutiny & Review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party Group Leaders have been requested to consider current arrangements for selection of Membership for Scrutiny & Review Committees in the 2007/08 Municipal Year. • A Role Description for Scrutiny Members was approved by full Council in September 2006. Role Descriptions to be reviewed and revised as appropriate. • Members be requested to assist in the preparation of an audit of the skills, knowledge and experience within each Committee. • Audit details to be made available to assist in identifying key roles for Scrutiny Members. Scrutiny members to be encouraged to chair individual working groups. • Volunteers to be sought to Chair Working Groups • Volunteer Members to be sought to act as Member Champions for Scrutiny & Review on a trial basis. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 – it was noted that continuity would help to improve the effectiveness of S&R.</p> <p>It was agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 that current role descriptions are adequate.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 – although it was noted that this was occurring on a frequent basis.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 – although it was noted that this was occurring on a frequent basis.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p>	<p>Group leaders have given consideration to membership arrangements</p> <p>Further amendments to role descriptions will be made, dependent upon outcome of Working Group recommendations</p> <p>Member Development Officer has been requested to provide an audit of training undertaken by Scrutiny members</p> <p>Volunteers have been identified to chair recent Working Groups</p>

<p>5</p>	<p>Service Committee Mode</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers providing reports to S&R should consider the specific role and nature of S&R. Specifically the Officers should provide one side of A4 which summarises the main issues in the report and explicitly states what is expected from the Committee. No Officer report to go to S&R which asks the Committee to "note the report" or that the report is provided "for information". No general briefings or general reports to go to every Committee without considering the particular role of the Committee. Ensure that agenda, minutes and reports are in an appropriate format for S&R Committee including the development of pro-formas or "model" reports. S&R Committees to experiment with holding meetings in different venues. A pre-meeting briefing to determine the strategy for the meeting (including a questioning strategy) to be held prior to every Committee meeting. The Authority to consider changing the title of S&R Committee to Panel to re-emphasise the change from the Committee culture. Layout of tables for S&R to be given greater consideration and varied according to the purpose of the meeting. Nameplates to be provided and a separate but distinct public seating area with spare copies of the agendas and papers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers writing reports to be mindful of the Scrutiny function and role. Guidance to be produced on the production of Executive Summaries and clear recommendations for Committees. Members and Officers to be advised that Scrutiny and Review is not an old style Committee and should not be receiving information reports on a regular basis. All reports recommending 'to note' be rejected by Scrutiny Officers. Agendas, minutes and reports to be reviewed and drafted in an appropriate house style more appropriate for Scrutiny & Review Committees. Consideration to be given to holding some meetings outside of Bootle or Southport Town Halls. Other venues to be explored. Members to consider whether a pre-meeting briefing would be beneficial, particularly prior to meetings where witnesses are giving evidence. Council be requested to approve the change of title from Scrutiny & Review Committee to Panel as the new look S & R's are launched. Guidance to be available on appropriate layout of meeting rooms for S&R Committees in order to reflect the varying roles of the Committee. Arrangements to be put in hand to ensure nameplates are available and appropriate areas are made available for the public 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 – it was also agreed that S&R Chairs would approve reports before circulation of agendas.</p> <p>Not agreed by Member Working Group 015.12.07, although it was agreed that reports should change the terminology used and officers should replace the term 'to note' with 'to refer'. Scrutiny Officers to liaise with Chairs re: information items.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed in principle by Member Working Group 05.12.07, subject to individual circumstances and requirements.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Not agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07, however it was recommended that Sefton adopt the national terminology of 'Overview & Scrutiny'.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>ADDITIONAL: It was recommended by the Member Working Group 05.12.07 that the council explore the introduction of P.A / microphone systems to enable members of the public to clearly hear the debate.</p>	<p>Communications Strategy & Plan is currently being developed which will incorporate the development and dissemination of guidance</p> <p>List of alternative venues has been compiled</p> <p>Nameplates have been ordered and received and will be introduced at Committees</p> <p>Re-visit of the handbook has begun, but amendments will be subject to any outcomes of the Working Group</p>
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ITEM NO. 17

	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
6	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Direct Officer Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Head of Scrutiny to be appointed at a more senior level. • Return to the three full-time equivalent level of support at least for Scrutiny unit (excluding Committee Clerking support). • Scrutiny unit to be physically separated from the Committee & Member Services and not to be line managed within the Service. • Committee Clerking role and functions to be provided by Committee Clerks from within Committee & Member Services and not Scrutiny Support Officers. • Consideration to be given to the appropriate location of the Scrutiny unit within the officer structure. • Nature of officer support from unit to change and move to research and general policy support. • The skills mix and experience of Scrutiny Officers to be addressed (possibly through training and development). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new post of Head of Scrutiny and commence recruitment. Revenue funding in place for 2007/08 (budget sufficient to appoint from October 2007). • Review of Scrutiny Team to be undertaken with a view to identifying appropriate resources to support the Scrutiny function. • Plans have been made to relocate the Scrutiny Unit within Southport Town Hall. Review of Line Management of the Service to be undertaken. • The resources made available by Council do not permit the Committee Clerking role to be separated from that of Scrutiny Support. Further review in 2007/08, with a view to making bid for growth in 2008/09. • Review of the Scrutiny Support Unit to consider the location of the team within the Officer structure. • Officer Support to focus on research and general policy support, with the caveat that the role of Committee Clerk will need to continue to be performed given existing resources. • The skills mix of Scrutiny Officers to be considered as part of the overall review of the Unit and appropriate training and development to be put in place as necessary. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 – noted that these actions have already been implemented and that resource issues have so far prevented the committee clerking role to be separated from that of scrutiny support.</p>	<p>Head of Scrutiny took up post on 10th September</p> <p>Re-structure of Scrutiny Support Team has taken place</p> <p>The Team Action Plan will contain specific learning & development plan to improve policy research skills of all staff, as well as addressing specific learning needs highlighted in recent PRDs</p>

<p>7</p>	<p>Management of Scrutiny Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committees develop realistic and achievable work programmes based on undertaking a small number of in-depth reviews (no more than two to three per Committee p.a). Other items to be kept to a minimum. Work programmes to be selected through a rigorous criteria based system. • Reason for including an item in a work programme to be set out clearly. Work programmes to be established at the beginning of each Municipal Year. Only urgent and unforeseen items to be included in the work programme after the commencement of the Municipal Year or on early completion of work programme. • Work programmes to be established in draft form through a half day workshop involving the whole Committee. Input to be received and considered from Cabinet, Area Committees, Service Managers and Key Corporate Officers. • Progress on work programmes to be an item on each Scrutiny & Review Committee Agenda. Chairs to debate progress. • In-depth reviews to be undertaken by "Task & Finish" Groups. Reviews to be rigorously managed and monitored. Reviews to be completed within a six month period and tightly project managed. Reviews should produce an evidence based substantive report with concise written recommendations. • Officers within relevant services to be asked to provide information for the review. Requests to be made in sufficient time for Managers to plan their contribution in advance. • advance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and Officers to be disciplined in developing realistic and achievable work programmes based on no more than two or three each Municipal Year. Criteria for selection currently set out in the S & R Handbook to be used as the basis for selection. • Members to clearly state the reasons for including an item within the work programme. No additional matters to be included during the Municipal Year, other than on an exceptional basis. • Commitment required from key officers and Members in establishing the work programme through half-day workshops. This will assist in commitment to an interest in identifying items to be reviewed. • Progress reports to be standing item on all S & R agendas. Chairs to be requested to allow time for debate. • Members and Officers to be rigorous in completing reviews within the six month time frame. Reports to be written in plain English with concise and clear recommendations. Scrutiny staff to undertake Project Management Training (PDR's). • Awareness to be raised amongst Officers within relevant services of the importance of the Scrutiny process and to prioritise requests for information for the review. Lead in times to be sufficient to enable Managers to respond. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p>	<p>Workshop sessions for development of work programmes currently being arranged for March 2008</p> <p>Re-visit of the handbook has begun, but amendments will be subject to any outcomes of the Working Group</p> <p>Committees currently receive updates of working groups' activities</p> <p>Scrutiny Support Team to receive specific Project Management Training (identified through recent PRDs)</p>
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ITEM NO. 12

	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
8	<p><u>Relationship to Service Officers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance to be provided to Service Managers to cover the role of Scrutiny; the type of information needed for Scrutiny; the role of Service Managers in Scrutiny meetings; the role of Service Managers in Working Group reviews; acting as a witness to Scrutiny investigations etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny & Review Handbook to be widely available. Guide to the role of Scrutiny for Officers to be prepared as part of awareness-raising of Scrutiny function. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 – awareness raising was seen as a fundamental issue to be addressed.</p>	<p>Re-visit of the handbook has begun, but amendments will be subject to any outcomes of the Working Group</p> <p>Communications Strategy & Plan is currently being developed which will incorporate awareness raising of Scrutiny function</p>

<p>9</p>	<p>Cabinet Scrutiny Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings to be held between Cabinet and Chairs of Scrutiny at least six monthly to discuss respective forward work plans. Individual Cabinet Members and respective Scrutiny Chairs to consider regular information exchange meetings. Cabinet Members to attend S&R meetings more regularly, both as observers and occasional participants. Scrutiny Chairs to present the findings and recommendations of Working Groups to Cabinet. Cabinet Members to consider selecting issues for Scrutiny Committees to investigate in-depth. A formal procedure for responses to Scrutiny reports by Cabinet be introduced setting out the length of time for a written response to be made to include an explanation for the decision. Cabinet Members to be held to account by Scrutiny. In-depth reviews to call the relevant Cabinet Member for questioning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings to be timetabled between the Cabinet and Chairs of Scrutiny to discuss relevant issues. Arrangements to be made for individual Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Chairs to exchange information. Cabinet Members be requested to attend S&R Meetings more regularly in order to assist in the flow of information between the two Bodies. Scrutiny Chairs to attend Cabinet to present the results and findings of relevant reviews and the recommendations (NB this only happens on an ad-hoc basis at present). Cabinet Members to be involved in the workshop to establish work programmes, as appropriate (addressed elsewhere in the Plan). Scrutiny & Review Handbook and Constitution be amended to establish a formal procedure for responses to reports from Cabinet from individual Scrutiny Committees. Cabinet Members to be requested to respect and appreciate the role of Scrutiny and holding the Executive to account. Awareness raising of the Scrutiny function is addressed elsewhere in the action plan. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07 (quarterly meetings) The Working Group also agreed to hold meetings of the Chairs prior to the quarterly meeting.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07. It was also recommended at the Member Working Group on 05.12.07 that Cabinet Members share work plan issues, in addition to the Forward Plan, with the S&R Chairs in order to facilitate more effective pre-scrutiny.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 24.10.07.</p>	<p>Cross Party Member Working Group – Terms of Reference</p>
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	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
10	<p><u>Scrutiny of Childrens' Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council to urgently address the serious weaknesses exhibited by the Childrens' Services Scrutiny & Review Committee 	<p>The comments in this report are also reflected in the recent JAR Report on Children's Services. Many of the recommendations in relation to the Scrutiny function, as a whole, will address the concerns identified by Dr. Snape. Members of Children's Services Committee are asked to support a style of working which more properly reflects the focus of the Committee and the requirement to move to an effective Scrutiny function.</p>	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p>	<p>A new Chair is now in place</p> <p>Follow up feedback from the JAR has been positive to changes made within the Scrutiny function</p>

	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
11	<p><u>Relationship to the Performance / Improvement Agenda</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the short term Head of Performance to provide information to Scrutiny on performance services to assist in the appropriate selection of work programme items. In the medium term the Council needs to link Scrutiny to the Performance and Improvement Agenda through specialist training for the Performance & Corporate Services Committee; developing a small number of Member Champions; producing clear guidance on how the Scrutiny function links to the Performance and Improvement Agenda; transferring best practice on the relationship from other Authorities, eg, exception reporting and traffic light systems. 	<p>The Corporate Assessment states that the Council provides a successful challenge to Performance; but not within the Scrutiny Function. There is a need therefore to review the relationship/arrangements for scrutiny of performance including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness to be raised amongst Scrutiny Committees of how Performance has progressed within Sefton. The Scrutiny Committees need to be provided with an opportunity to consider how they can bring added value to the performance work within the Council. With this in mind, a Working Group of Scrutiny Champions to be established to consider a mechanism for identifying the exact specification of information for the Scrutiny Committees, in bringing added value and to further enhance and develop the performance function within Sefton. ACE (Performance) to continue to take performance data to Scrutiny, including the 2006/07 Outturn of Performance in accordance with the new criteria developed by the Working Group. Performance Management training to be included in the tailored Scrutiny Members Personal Development Plans. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p>	<p>Performance information is circulated to Committees</p> <p>Current discussion between ACE Performance and Head of Scrutiny on further development</p>

	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
12	<p><u>Working within Financial Constraints and Financial Scrutiny</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Scrutiny reports to state the financial implications of their recommendations and wherever possible different options to be provided in terms of financial implications, eg. increase, neutral cost or savings. Financial issues to be fully considered when selecting issues for Scrutiny work programmes, eg. poor performing services or high spending services. Some Scrutiny work to be focused on VFM studies and identifying savings. Finance Director to provide information on spending of services to aid the selection of issues for Scrutiny work programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members to ensure that Scrutiny reports set out clearly the financial implications of any recommendations. Links to be made to the Finance Department to assist in this process as necessary. Members to have an awareness of financial considerations when selecting topics for Scrutiny Work Programmes so that targeted reviews can be undertaken. Scrutiny Members to liaise with Director of Finance on appropriate topics for VFM studies and identification of efficiencies and savings. Closer liaison to be established with Director of Finance to enable information on service spending to be available at the workshop to select items for Scrutiny programmes (referred to earlier in the Action Plan). <p>During the 2006/07 budget process, Officers were asked to broaden the involvement of Members in the MTFP and it was agreed that all four S&R's would receive briefings. During the consultation on the 2007/08 budget, the Finance Director was thanked for the additional support provided to Members and asked to develop the information further. Scrutiny Chairs are asked to consider the approach suggested by Dr Snape and whether S&R wishes to adopt the following or a more all embracing approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance reports to be targeted to the appropriate S & R Committee. Finance Director to assist in providing additional information and training for volunteers/champions from Scrutiny Members of Performance & Corporate Services to enable them to lead on financial scrutiny work. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p>	<p>Re-visit of the handbook has begun, but amendments will be subject to any outcomes of the Working Group – the handbook will contain guidance on financial issues</p> <p>Finance Dept to be invited to attend work programme sessions in March 2008</p>

	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
13	<p>Public & Partner Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> S&R to develop specific measures to publicise its work more widely amongst partners and the public to ensure they contribute and participate more fully in S&R processes. Initiatives could include development of Scrutiny web-pages; production of information leaflets; inclusion of S&R column in Council newspaper / staff newsletter; production of S&R newsletter; S&R roadshows at supermarkets and shopping centres; co-operation of partners; users and community representatives on Task & Finish Groups; stakeholders analysis to determine who could provide oral or written evidence; expansion of use of expert witness from Universities, other Authorities, Consultancies etc. Scrutiny Support Officers to develop P&R and communication strategy for S&R. Health S&R Committee to include the opinions of service users more fully in their activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Head of Scrutiny to consider how best to raise the profile of Scrutiny more widely amongst the Council's partners and the public. To consider the various initiatives already progressed by a number of Authorities including the development of Scrutiny Web Pages, information leaflets. etc. Assistant Chief Executive (Communication) be requested to develop a P&R and Communication Strategy for S&R for approval by the Scrutiny & Review Chairs to assist in raising the profile of the function. Health S&R Committee to consider best practice from other Authorities on how to include the opinions of Service Users more effectively. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>A Communications Strategy & Plan is currently being drafted by the Head of Scrutiny who will liaise with the Corporate Communications Team - Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 – it was noted that Health S&R do have mechanisms in place to facilitate service users' involvement.</p>	<p>Communications Strategy & Plan is currently being developed which will incorporate awareness raising of Scrutiny function</p> <p>Ideas for simple 'branding' designs have been developed</p> <p>As part of the learning & development plan for the Scrutiny Team all officers will be identifying best practice and making contact with other authorities through established networks and specific visits where appropriate</p>

	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
14	<p><u>Scrutiny Outputs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> S&R Support Officers to develop a robust system for measuring outputs and outcomes of Scrutiny based upon good practice within other Authorities. S&R Committees to work to ensure recommendations from its reports or meetings are SMART. Information on impact and performance to be included in a re-vamped annual report for S&R. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Scrutiny to identify best practice within other Authorities and develop a more robust system for measuring outputs and outcomes of Scrutiny. S&R Committees to be mindful of the need to ensure recommendations within reports or from meetings are not too generalised but are specific, measurable, accurate, realistic and timely Format for annual report to be reviewed by new Head of Scrutiny. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p> <p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07.</p>	<p>Cross Party Member Working Group – Terms of Reference</p> <p>Research outcomes to be presented to the Working Group by the Head of Scrutiny regarding performance measurement</p> <p>New format annual report was recently produced but the Communications Strategy & Plan is currently being developed which will revisit the format</p>

	<u>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>DECISIONS OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
15	<p><u>Structure of Scrutiny and Radical Alternatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny Management Board to be created. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Scrutiny Management Board to be established, comprising the Chairs of all Committees. The intention would be for the Board to meet regularly with Cabinet to ensure an effective Scrutiny/Cabinet relationship. It would also have a role in ensuring there were no gaps or duplications across the work of the four Committees and to ensure that each Committee had a realistic and appropriate work programme. The Board would monitor the implementation of work programmes, share learning and good practice across the four Committees, co-ordinate the production of the Annual Report and ensure that reviews and recommendations are widely disseminated. Need to consider how this will be resourced and the role of and impact on Officers supporting the Board. 	<p>Agreed by Member Working Group 05.12.07 on a trial basis initially.</p>	<p>Cross Party Member Working Group – Terms of Reference</p>

ADDITIONAL:

The Member Working Group held on 05.12.07 held a specific discussion regarding the perception of Scrutiny & Review chairmanship in comparison to other roles. It was noted that S&R Chairs received the lowest members allowance. It was recommended that in order to acknowledge the importance of the role of Scrutiny & Review that the independent remuneration panel be requested to examine the Members Allowances for S&R chairmanships.

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Data Release

Friday, 23 March 2007

Members' Allowances the latest figures according to a Local Government Analysis and Research survey

- In winter 2006, the survey of all 388 local authorities in England was conducted and a total of 257 authorities responded (66.2%).
- The survey collected information on basic allowance, special responsibility allowances, dependant/carers allowance, travel allowance, bike allowance, subsistence allowance and access to pension schemes.
- All local authorities in England have independent remuneration panels that review their allowances and provide advice on authorities' schemes. Allowances are intended to recompense properly the time necessary and the level of responsibility of the roles of councillors, whilst incorporating a strong public service discount.
- All data are ungrossed and relate to the figures reported by authorities. Response rates for individual questions vary.

Key findings

All 19,689 councillors in office in 2006 are entitled to a basic allowance and those councillors who hold offices of special responsibility, as set by their authority, are also entitled to a special responsibility allowance. Authorities also have the discretion to pay additional allowances such as dependant/carers allowance, travel allowance and subsistence allowance, and to allow councillors access to pension schemes.

Where the cost of living is highest, so are the allowances. Where the responsibilities and time taken to do the job are greatest, so are the allowances. Strong public service elements are incorporated into the rates and, again, variations take into account distinctions between types of authority and geographical location.

Basic allowance:

- Overall, councillors' basic allowance for 2006 averaged £5,648 per annum, ranging from £3,991 in shire districts to £9,512 in metropolitan districts. There was also wide variation regionally, from £4,729 in the East Midlands to £9,227 in London.

Agenda Item 5

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Special responsibility allowance:

- The average leaders' allowance was £16,356, ranging from £11,065 in shire districts to £31,784 in London boroughs. Regionally, the average allowance ranged from £12,632 in the East Midlands to £21,685 in Yorkshire and Humberside.
- Cabinet/executive members received an average allowance of £9,243, ranging from as little as £5,994 in shire districts to £17,634 in London boroughs. There were also regional variations, ranging from £6,273 in the North East to £12,262 in Yorkshire and Humberside.
- Overall, the average number of cabinet/executive members per authority was 6.9; it was highest in metropolitan districts, unitary authorities and authorities in the North East (7.9, 7.8 and 8.3 respectively) and lowest in shire districts and the East of England (6.4 and 5.9).
- The overall average allowance for Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny was £5,686, ranging from as little as £3,721 in shire districts to £10,738 in London boroughs. There were also regional variations, ranging from £4,299 in the South East to £9,967 in Yorkshire and Humberside.
- Overall, the average number of Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny per authority was 2.6; it was highest in unitary authorities, metropolitan districts and authorities in the North West (3.8, 3.7 and 3.5 respectively) and lowest in shire districts and the East of England (2.1 and 1.6).
- Chairs of planning committees receive an average allowance of £5,172, ranging from £3,824 in shire districts to £9,978 in London boroughs, and Chairs of licensing committees receive an average allowance of £4,064, ranging from £3,034 in shire districts to £8,066 in London Boroughs.

Other allowances:

- 84.0% of authorities offered dependent carers' allowance and 64.2% offered childcare allowance. The overall average hourly rate was £6.84 and £5.96 respectively.
- The majority of authorities also offered both travel (92.6%) and subsistence allowance (87.9%); however, fewer authorities offered a bike allowance (54.1%).
- Less than half of authorities (42.4%) offered their councillors access to a pension scheme.

National Census of Local Authority Councillors in England 2006 – extracts from the Executive Summary:

- 86.9% of councillors cited wanting to serve the community as their reason for wanting to become a councillor and 93.5% thought that listening to local views was the most important thing for them to do.
- Councillors spent an average of 21.9 hours per week on council/political business, with the largest proportion (20.7%) spending between 16 and 20 hours and the smallest (1.4%) spending between 41 and 45 hours. There were variations between types of authority, with the average number of hours per week spent on council and political business varying from 17.8 hours in shire districts to 29.3 hours in metropolitan districts.
- Councillors holding a position of leading responsibility spent on average 25.1 hours per week, compared to 18.1 hours for those not holding a senior position
- 53.7% of councillors held one or more positions of leading responsibility within the council. Of those, most were Cabinet/Executive members (15.1%), Chair/Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny (12.6%) and Chair/Vice-Chair of Regulatory (10.6%).
- 49.5% of councillors reported that they received a special responsibility allowance. The figure ranged from 44.8% in shire districts to 57.7% in shire counties. Regionally, the proportion of councillors receiving a special responsibility allowance varied from 46.2% in the South West to 54.5% in the North East.

Notes:

1. The Survey was conducted by Local Government Analysis and Research on behalf of the Local Government Association and Improvement and Development Agency.
2. Full survey results are available:
www.lgar.local.gov.uk
3. For further details, please contact Jonathan Evans: jonathan.evans@lgar.local.gov.uk
4. Further reading:

National Census of Local Authority Councillors in England 2006:
<http://www.lgar.local.gov.uk/lgv/core/page.do?pagelId=23372>

Independent Members' Remuneration Panels and the Basic Allowance:
<http://www.laria.gov.uk/content/features/70/feat8.htm>

Key questions and answers about councillor allowances:
<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Briefing.asp?lsection=761&id=SX3D65-A780DDA5&ccat=120>
5. Summary results:

Agenda Item 5

Summary Table

Type	Sample size	Average allowance:												
		Basic		Leader of the authority		Cabinet/Executive members		Chair of Overview and Scrutiny		Chair of Planning Committee		Chair of Licensing Committee		
		£pa	No.	£pa	No.	£pa	No.	£pa	No.	Avg. No.	£pa	No.	£pa	No.
London Borough	22	67%	£9,227	21	£17,634	22	7.3	£10,738	22	3.4	£9,978	21	£8,066	17
Met District	19	53%	£9,512	18	£12,161	19	7.9	£8,394	19	3.7	£7,787	18	£6,001	17
shire County	23	68%	£8,941	23	£14,912	23	7.4	£9,929	22	3.2	£6,070	17	£4,074	2
shire District	165	69%	£3,991	153	£5,944	132	6.4	£3,721	160	2.1	£3,824	157	£3,034	144
itary	28	60%	£7,406	26	£11,748	26	7.8	£7,853	27	3.8	£6,962	27	£5,818	27
egion														
East Midlands	28	62%	£4,729	27	£7,181	21	6.8	£4,481	27	1.8	£3,936	27	£2,816	22
East of England	37	69%	£4,917	34	£8,593	31	5.9	£5,181	37	1.6	£4,702	35	£4,227	30
London	22	67%	£9,227	21	£17,634	22	7.3	£10,738	22	3.4	£9,978	21	£8,066	17
North East	13	52%	£5,777	11	£6,273	12	8.3	£4,892	12	2.9	£3,772	13	£3,295	11
North West	37	80%	£5,720	37	£8,126	35	7.8	£4,775	37	3.5	£4,604	35	£3,682	31
South East	50	68%	£4,824	49	£7,884	43	6.5	£4,299	48	2.5	£4,256	43	£2,778	40
South West	33	65%	£5,263	28	£9,368	25	6.9	£5,636	31	2.7	£4,500	32	£3,596	24
West Midlands	27	71%	£5,526	25	£8,486	24	6.6	£6,021	26	2.6	£6,088	25	£4,695	23
Yorkshire & Humberside	10	45%	£8,164	9	£12,262	9	7.1	£9,967	10	2.7	£7,952	9	£6,628	9
Grand Total	257	66%	£5,648	£16,356	241	£9,243	222	£5,686	250	2.6	£5,172	240	£4,064	207

Summary Table Cont.

Type	Other allowances:									
	Dependent carers'	Childcare	Travel	Bike	Subsistence	Pension scheme	No.	£/hr	No.	£/hr
London Borough	18	£5.75	10	£5.56	18	9	20	14		
Met District	14	£5.27	10	£5.17	17	8	13	13		
Shire County	22	£7.15	19	£5.84	22	17	22	13		
Shire District	136	£6.96	104	£6.05	155	89	146	56		
Unitary	26	£7.40	22	£6.07	26	16	25	13		
Region										
East Midlands	21	£6.82	21	£5.89	28	12	26	13		
East of England	33	£7.38	27	£6.22	36	29	31	14		
London	18	£5.75	10	£5.56	18	9	20	14		
North East	10	£6.38	6	£5.77	12	5	12	4		
North West	29	£6.09	23	£6.15	35	17	33	19		
South East	46	£7.97	34	£5.72	46	33	45	16		
South West	30	£6.09	24	£6.38	30	16	29	11		
West Midlands	20	£5.97	14	£5.47	25	13	23	13		
Yorkshire & Humberside	9	£7.14	6	£6.18	8	5	7	5		
Grand Total	216	£6.84	165	£5.96	238	139	226	109		

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Survey Results - Metropolitan Borough Councils

Authority	No	Basic	Planning	Licensing	Audit & Gov	S & R	No	Basis for S&R	Basis for Audit & Governance
Sefton	66	£8,850	£8,850	£8,850	£4,425	£4,425	4	50% Basic	
Where approx % entered - No formula used - IRP based on No days attendance expected in a year									
Wigan	75	£11,532	£10,394	£6,929	£3,460	£5,189	4	app 45% Basic	app 30% Basic
Stockport	63	£9,206	£7,811	£5,338	£7,254	£7,254	5	app 79% Basic	app 79% Basic
St Helens	48	£7,356	£7,356	£4,659	£0	£4,659	6	app 63% Basic	Do not pay - generally Leader
Salford	60	£10,011	£8,109	£8,109	£8,109	£8,109	6	app 81% Basic	app 81% Basic
Man City	96	£16,136	£9,936	£9,936	£9,936	£9,936	8	app 63% Basic	app 63% Basic
Leeds	99	£14,243	£12,891	£6,929	£6,929	£19,311	7	app 136% Basic	app 49% Basic
Bury	51	£7,659	£6,067	£6,067	£6,067	£6,067	10	app 79% Basic	app 79% Basic
Birmingham	120	£16,024	£16,024	£13,735	£6,264	£13,780	11	app 86% Basic	app 39% Basic
Knowsley	63	£8,712	£6,534	£6,534	£6,534	£6,534	5	app 75% Basic	Do not pay - Leader/other Chair
Bolton	60	£9,872	£7,319	£6,928	£0	£4,680	7	50% Basic	Do not pay - generally Leader
Calderdale	51	£9,994	£8,999	£5,996	£5,996	£7,496	5	75% Basic	Based on Licensing
Kirklees	69	£12,272	£6,138	£4,911	£3,684	£6,138	6	50% Basic	Introducing for 2009/10
Liverpool	90	£9,879	£9,156	£9,156	£0	£9,156	6	75% Basic	Do not pay - very few meetings
Newcastle u tyne	78	£8,518	£4,259	£4,259	£2,130	£4,259	6	50% Basic	Chair - Indept Member - pay VC
Rochdale	60	£7,644	£7,644	£7,644	£0	£7,644	3	100% Basic	Do not pay
Solihull	51	£7,000	£5,600	£2,800	£5,600	£5,600	5	80% Basic	80% Basic
Trafford	63	£6,121	£9,794	£9,794	£7,324	£7,344	5	120% Basic	120% Basic
Wirral	66	£9,474	£4,585	£4,585	£4,585	£4,585	10	50% Basic	50% Basic
Totals		£181,653	£148,616		£83,872	£137,741			
Total incl Sefton		£190,503	£157,466		£88,297	£142,166			
Conclusions									
LA contacted		18			18			Planning	
Average payment		£7,482			£4,647			18	
Average % of Basic		75%			43%			£8,288	
No of LA paying above Sel		17			11			83%	
								7	
NB - Birmingham also pay a specific SRA to the Chair of Co-ordinating Committee which oversees S&R Cmtees									

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Chair of a Regulatory Committee, Area Committee and Standards Committee Role Description

1 Accountabilities

- To Full Council
- To the members of the Regulatory, Area or Standards committee

2 Role Purpose and Activity

- **Provide leadership and direction**
 - Provide confident and effective management of meetings to facilitate inclusivity, participation and clear decision making
 - Demonstrate integrity and impartiality in decision making which accord with legal, constitutional and policy requirements
 - Delegate actions to sub committees as appropriate
- **Promoting the role of the regulatory committee, area or standards committee**
 - Act as an ambassador for the regulatory, area or standards committee, facilitating understanding of the role
 - Act within technical, legal and procedural requirements to oversee the functions of the committee fairly and correctly
 - Ensure thoroughness and objectivity in the committee, receiving and responding to professional advice in the conduct of meetings and in individual cases/applications before formal committee meetings
- **Internal governance, ethical standards and relationships**
 - Develop the standing and integrity of the committee and its decision making
 - Promote and support good governance by the Council

Regulatory Committee Chairs

- Understand the principles of national justice and the quasi judicial decision making role of the Committee
- Ensure that applicants and other interested parties are satisfied as to the transparency of the regulatory process
- Understand the respective roles of members, officers and external parties operating within the regulatory committee's area of responsibility

Agenda Item 5

Area Committee Chairs

- Ensure that any functions which the Area Committee is responsible for are carried out in a manner consistent with the policies approved by Full Council.
- Ensure any applications to expend any Budgets delegated to Area Committee are approved in accordance with the Committees guidelines.

Standards Committee Chair

- Act as champion for ethical standards within the Authority liaising closely with the Council's Monitoring Officer.

(NB. Any local determination hearings will be chaired by an independent member of the Committee)

3 Values

- To be committed to the Council's vision and strategic aims and objectives and the following principles of public office:
 - Selflessness
 - Honesty and Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability
 - Openness
 - Personal Judgement
 - Respect for others
 - Duty to uphold the law
 - Stewardship
 - Leadership

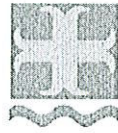


Chair of Regulatory Committee, Area Committee or Standards Committee Person Specification

To fulfil his or her role as set out in the role description, an effective committee chair requires:

- **Providing leadership and direction**
 - Ability to conduct meetings to ensure that applicants feel that they have been dealt with fairly and fully even if their application is refused
 - Understanding of the Council's role and ability to ensuring that stake holders are aware of that role
 - Communication skills
 - Knowledge of local issues
 - Ability to manage the work of the committee
 - Ability to support and develop necessary skills in fellow members of the committee
- **Promoting the role of the regulatory committee and quasi-judicial decision making**
 - Understanding and appreciation of the regulatory framework
 - Ability to inspire and enthuse committee members for the work of the committee
 - Integrity and the ability to set aside own views and act impartially
 - Knowledge and understanding of the relevant code(s) of conduct and protocols and the ability to champion them
- **Promoting the role of the Area/Standards Committee**
 - Good knowledge of local issues
 - An understanding of the importance of consultation and local views
 - Knowledge and understand of the Ethical Standards agenda and the ability to promote and champion high ethical standards
- **Internal governance, ethical standards and relationships**
 - Knowledge and understanding of the Code of Conduct and protocols
 - Knowledge of and commitment to the Council's vision and strategic aims and objectives

Agenda Item 5



Scrutiny and Review Chair Role Description

1. Accountabilities

- Full Council
- The Public
- External Regulatory Bodies

2. Role purpose & activity

- **Provide leadership and direction**
 - Provide confident and effective management of the member team
 - Promote the role of Scrutiny and Review within and outside the council, liaising effectively both internally within the council and externally with the Council's partners
 - Develop a balanced work programme of the committee which includes pre decision scrutiny, policy development and review, investigative scrutiny, and performance monitoring
 - Ensure the programme takes account of relevant factors such as: the work programmes of the cabinet and other committees, strategic priorities and risks, and relevant community issues
 - Demonstrate an objective and evidence based approach to scrutiny
 - Evaluate the impact and added value of scrutiny activity and identify areas for improvement
- **Manage the work programme**
 - Ensure that the work programme is delivered
 - Report on progress against the work programme to Council, and others as appropriate
 - Liaise with officers, other members and community representatives to resource and deliver the work programme
- **Hold the Cabinet to account**
 - Evaluate the validity of executive decisions and challenge inappropriate decisions through call in

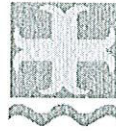
- **Effective meeting management**
 - Set agendas containing clear objectives and outcomes for the meeting
 - Manage the progress of business at meetings, ensuring that meeting objectives are met, and the code of conduct, standing orders and other constitutional requirements are adhered to
 - Ensure that the necessary preparation is done beforehand
 - Ensure that all participants have an opportunity to make an appropriate contribution

- **Community leadership**
 - Act as a focus for liaison between the council, community and external bodies in relation to the scrutiny function
 - Build understanding and ownership of the scrutiny function within the community
 - Identify relevant community based issues for scrutiny
 - Involve fully external stakeholders for example, service users expert witnesses and partners in scrutiny activity

- **Involvement and development of committee members**
 - Encourage high performance from all committee members in both committee and task and finish groups
 - Assess individual and collective performance within the committee and facilitate appropriate development
 - Ensure members adhere to and promote the Scrutiny and Review Committees agreed values

- **Scrutiny & Review Values**
 - Adopt an informal, friendly and non-confrontational approach
 - Be open, transparent and fair to all involved in the Scrutiny process
 - Share information and seek consensus
 - Allow preparation and thinking time to all witnesses
 - Allow witnesses to submit their evidence in a form they feel comfortable with (Oral/Written)
 - Make any necessary arrangements to facilitate or assist witness attendance in line with the Council's Equality Policy.
 - Provide feedback, written or verbal, to all witnesses involved in the process.
 - Look for continuous improvement through a positive process
 - Value diversity and ensure equality is built into all our processes

Agenda Item 5



Scrutiny and Review Chair Person Specification

To fulfil his or her role laid out in the role description an effective Scrutiny Chair requires:

Provide leadership and direction

- Understanding of council role and functions
- Understanding of role of scrutiny, terms of reference for the committee, role of chair, and other aspects of the democratic arrangements
- Understanding of member support functions
- Understanding of council priorities and risks
- Ability to develop work programmes
- Understanding of community issues
- Objectivity
- Negotiation and consensus building
- Ability to build constructive and 'critical friend' relationships with the Executive

Manage the work programme

- Ability to manage projects and resources
- Ability to manage people
- Ability to prioritise
- Ability to report progress to different groups in different styles

Holding the Executive to account

- Understanding of arrangements for call in

Effective meeting management

- Understanding and application of meeting protocols, code of conduct, standing orders and other constitutional requirements
- Ability to chair meetings effectively, managing the agenda and progressing business
- Ability to facilitate effective discussions
- Ability to listen and question effectively

Community leadership

- An understanding of the community leadership role
- Knowledge of local issues and expectations
- Ability to work effectively with all members of the community and build understanding and ownership of scrutiny
- Knowledge of the individuals and organisations in the community especially those traditionally excluded

Involvement and development of committee members

- Understanding of role and skills of the scrutiny committee and its individuals
- Ability to support members and the committee in assessing their performance
- Ability to identify any training and development needs and procuring appropriate learning and development

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Annex F

Examples of work undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny Chairs

May 2008 – November 2008

Work Programme sessions – May 2008

At the beginning of this Municipal Year each Overview and Scrutiny Committee held a workshop session to determine individual work programmes for 2008-09. These sessions involved Council Officers and LSP Partnership Managers, who were invited to present information on current priorities and issues on their thematic and service areas. Following these sessions the Overview & Scrutiny Committees agreed to focus on the following areas for in-depth reviews:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Performance & Corporate Services)

- Perception of Crime, with particular focus on the budgetary aspects of communication and marketing (with a link to the Street Scene agenda).
- Equality of access to services provided to members of the public

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services)

- Extended Schools Agenda
- Fostering – Recruitment and Retention Linked to Agency Staff
- Corporate Parenting – Member Visits to Care Homes

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration & Environmental Services)

- Community Involvement – Licensing Act
- Watercourse Maintenance and Flooding
- Asset Management Review of Library Service

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Health & Social Care)

- Supported Housing Needs
- Analysis and Evaluation of Early Mechanisms in Health & Social Care Systems
- Core Standards Working Group (NHS Declarations to the Healthcare Commission)

Review of work programme sessions – November December 2008

Following the work programme session at the beginning of the Municipal Year each Overview and Scrutiny Committee held / are holding a workshop session to review current priorities and performance areas within their remit, in order to ensure that Members are focusing resources on the correct areas of work. Review of work programme sessions follow a similar format to the setting of work programmes at the beginning of the year, with informative presentations from Council and partnership officers.

Agenda Item 5

**As Lead Members of Working Groups there is a requirement to undertake a lot of research and commit a certain level of time to undertaking an in-depth review. For example the ongoing Children's Services Working Group concerning fostering recruitment has resulted in the Chair working very closely with the O&S Team to identify research, draw out key issues, interview service users, visit service users at home, site visits at other authorities and drafting the final report and recommendations to Cabinet **

Chairing of Committees – normal committee cycle of meetings

Agenda setting meetings with O&S officers – in order to ensure information is not submitted to Committee for information only, that the items meet those criteria set out in the work programme and that the Chair, and Members, have clear ownership of the agenda.

Management Board meetings – Meetings have scheduled from June 2008 to March 2009 on a cycle of once every 4 – 6 weeks.

O&S Chairs Network – Chairs and Vic-Chairs are invited to the North West Chairs Network, where active participation is expected, for example recently one of our Chairs undertook a new training course and provided feedback to Members of the Network.

Learning & Development seminars – As Chairs of a developing function, with growing Government guidance and legislation regarding its future role, the Chairs of the O&S Committees are expected to participate in learning & development and ensure they are kept up to date with the growth of requirements for the function.

**Regulation 33 Visits
Children's Homes
2008/09**

Home	Cllr	Party	Date
Cherry Road	Cummins	Labour	April 2008
	Ms Ibbs	Conservative	June 2008
	Cummins	Labour	July 2008
	Ms Ibbs	Conservative	September 2008
Kirwan House	Cluskey	Labour	May 2008
	Platt	Conservative	November 2008
Knowsley Road	Ms Ibbs	Conservative	April 2008
	Kerrigan	Labour	August 2008
	Ms Ibbs	Conservative	October 2008
Melrose House	Kerrigan	Labour	June 2008
	Cummins	Labour	August 2008
	Ms D Jones	Conservative	November 2008
Springbrook	Cluskey	Labour	June 2008
	Cluskey	Labour	September 2008

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Home	Cllr	Party	Date
Cherry Road	Mrs Porter	Conservative	July 2007
	Mrs Ibbs	Conservative	September 2007
	Clusky	Labour	October 2007
	Platt	Conservative	December 2007
	Clusky	Labour	January 2008
	Mrs Porter	Conservative	March 2008
Kirwan House	Mrs Ibbs	Conservative	May 2007
	Cluskey	Labour	May 2007
	Cluskey	Labour	Aug 2007
	Pearson	Conservatives	April 2007
	Mrs Porter	Conservative	July 2007
	Mrs Ibbs	Conservative	21/01/08
Knowsley Road	Mrs Kerrigan	Labour	Aug 2007
	Mrs Kerrigan	Labour	Nov 2007
	Pearson	Conservative	July 2007
Melrose House	Mrs Kerrigan	Labour	June 2007
	Mrs Kerrigan	Labour	December 2007
	Clusky	Labour	September 2007
Springbrook	Mrs Porter	Conservative	May 2007
	Cummins	Labour	June 2007
	Clusky	Labour	September 2007
	Pearson	Conservative	November 2007
	Mrs Porter	Conservative	February 2008
	Cluskey	Labour	March 2008

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Home	Cllr	Party	Date
Cherry Road	Clusky	Labour	April 2006
	Mrs Porter	Conservative	June 2006
	Clusky	Labour	July 2006
	Ms Ibbs	Conservative	September 2006
	Clusky	Labour	October 2006
	Cummins	Labour	November 2006
Kirwan House	Pearson	Conservative	April 2006
	Clusky	Labour	May 2006
	Cummins	Labour	August 2006
Knowsley Road	Platt	Conservative	April 2006
	Ms Kerrigan	Labour	May 2006
	Pearson	Conservative	July 2006
	Ms Kerrigan	Labour	August 2006
	Clusky	Labour	November 2006
Melrose House	Mrs Porter	Conservative	May 2006
	Clusky	Labour	24 th May 2006
	Clusky	Labour	29 th May 2006
	Platt	Conservative	August 2006
	Pearson	Conservative	November 2006
	Ms Kerrigan	Labour	December 2006
	Ms Ibbs	Conservative	February 2007
	Cummins	Labour	March 2007
Springbrook	Mrs Porter	Conservative	May 2006
	Clusky	Labour	June 2006
	Mrs Porter	Conservative	August 2006
	Clusky	Labour	September 2006

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
DECEMBER 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Panel was convened specifically to consider:-

- (a) The appropriate figure for the Special Responsibility Allowance for Overview & Scrutiny Chairs.
- (b) The appropriate figure and level of Special Responsibility Allowance for the Audit and Governance Chair.
- (c) Whether it is appropriate to pay travelling expenses to those Members who undertake statutory visits to childrens homes.

1.2 We met on the 3rd December 2008. Unfortunately Steve Dickson, the third member of the Panel, was unable to join us. In the circumstances we agreed to proceed in his absence but requested the Legal Director to circulate the draft report on the Panel's findings to Mr Dickson on the understanding that if he has any concerns about the findings then the Panel be reconvened to discuss the matter further.

1.3 The three Leaders of the Council had been given the opportunity to attend and make representations to us or send a nominee. The four Scrutiny Chairs had also been invited to attend to make representations. We therefore had the opportunity to hear directly from three of the Scrutiny Chairs, namely Councillor Hardy, Councillor Papworth and Councillor Hands. In addition Councillor Mrs Parry and Councillor P Cummins addressed us in relation to the issue of travelling expenses. We were advised by Paul Edwards (Finance Director), Caroline Elwood (Legal Director) and Viv Swale (Claims & Administration Manager).

1.4 This report outlines our recommendations to the Council in respect of the current Members Allowance Scheme.

Agenda Item 5

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Panel last met on the 14th June 2007 and undertook a full and comprehensive review of the Members Allowances Scheme. This was subsequently accepted and approved by the Full Council in September 2007. We had recommended that the Basic Allowance should be reviewed and increased to a figure comparable to the Merseyside average, with future increases linked to the Local Government annual pay settlement (using scp 33) and that the Special Responsibility Allowances should continue to be calculated based upon a multiplier of the Basic Allowance. We also recommended that the Council should no longer continue to make separate payments to cover travel expenses for duties undertaken by Members within Sefton, on the basis that the enhanced level of Basic Allowance would reflect the discontinuance of separate travel expenses. We also recommended that a further full review of the Scheme should be undertaken prior to the beginning of the Municipal Year 2010/2011.

3.0 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY CHAIRS

3.1 The Cross Party Working Group which was originally established to implement the detailed recommendations made by Dr Snape into improvements to the scrutiny function at Sefton requested that the Panel should formally review the level of Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) currently paid to the Overview & Scrutiny Chairs. The Working Group felt that the level of the SRA demonstrated the value placed upon the function and Dr Snape herself expressed concern that generally scrutiny had a low status within the organisation which was having an adverse effect upon the performance of the function. The recommendation that the allowance should be reviewed was subsequently approved by Cabinet on 13 December 2007 and Full Council on 28 February 2008.

3.2 We noted that there are currently four Overview & Scrutiny Chairs each of whom receives a Special Responsibility Allowance based on a multiplier of 50% x the Basic Allowance (ie. £4,425). This can be contrasted with the Chair of both Planning and Licensing Committees, both of whom received a Special Responsibility Allowance based on a multiplier of 100% x the Basic Allowance (ie. £8,850).

3.3 We were advised that in recent years the scrutiny function had evolved significantly with a resulting impact upon the workload of the Scrutiny Chairs. Although each Overview & Scrutiny Committee still meets once a cycle much more work is now done in Working Groups undertaking in-depth reviews on a variety of topics. Working Group reports have been well received and welcomed by Cabinet. The Chairs and Committees are supported by a dedicated Scrutiny Team with

Chairs generally kept briefed and informed and becoming involved in a wide range of issues related to the work of the Committee.

3.4 We heard from three of the Scrutiny Chairs who explained the far more proactive role which had now developed and we noted the proposed expansion and strengthening of the roles envisaged by the government, particularly in acting as a critical friend to partner organisations requiring the Council to adopt more innovative and imaginative scrutiny enquiries and wider engagement with service users. We also noted the pro-active role of the Scrutiny Chairs in protecting the integrity and propriety of the decision making process by their guardianship of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

3.5 We noted that national research commissioned by the LGA and IDeA in 2006/07 demonstrated that the average allowance of O&S chairmanships is comparable or higher than chairmanships of Licensing and sometimes of Planning Committees. We were also provided with information from 18 other areas and noted 17 of these paid a higher amount of Special Responsibility Allowance than Sefton. Overall the summary showed the average amount paid to Overview & Scrutiny Chairs is £7,482 which equates to 75% of the average Basic Allowance.

3.6 We considered it was important to send out the clear message that as an organisation Sefton does value its scrutiny function and the important role it plays not only in holding the Executive to account but also as a guardian of the constitution particularly in relation to the Forward Plan. We therefore recommend that the Special Responsibility Allowance for Chairs should be increased to 100% of the current Basic Allowance ie. £8,860 with effect from the new Civic Year in May 2009.

4.0 Audit & Governance Chair

4.1 At the meeting of the Panel on the 26th September 2006 it was resolved that "the allowance to the new Chair of Audit & Governance be approved and linked to the current multiplier paid to Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny (namely half of the Basic Allowance)". Accordingly we noted the Audit & Governance Committee Chair is currently paid the same rate as Overview & Scrutiny Chairs (£4,425). We were provided with information from the survey of 18 Authorities undertaken on our behalf which shows that the average amount paid to Audit & Governance Chairs is £4,647 (which equates to 43% of the Basic Allowance). In those circumstances we felt that the current allowance to the Audit & Governance Committee Chair continued to be appropriate and that the current link to Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny should be discontinued.

Agenda Item 5

5.0 Visits to Childrens Homes.

5.1 As previously noted at the last Panel Meeting it was agreed that, in order to save administrative time in future Members would not be paid individual travelling expenses for travel within the Borough of Sefton. Instead an amount was incorporated within the increased Basic Allowance which all Members received. However Sefton is required to undertake statutory visits to childrens homes within the Borough and these visits are over and above Members regular commitments. At present only a small number of Members actually undertake the visits and in these circumstances the Leader of the Labour Group had suggested the Panel should consider providing those Members who do additional mileage an appropriate internal mileage allowance. We heard from Councillor Paul Cummins who is in favour of this proposal and Councillor Paula Parry who did not favour any alteration to current payments for travelling expenses.

5.2 We received details of visits undertaken since 2006/07 and wished to express our concern that Sefton may not be fulfilling the required number of statutory regulatory visits to childrens homes. However, we did not consider that the payment of travelling expenses to undertake such visits was a suitable way to remedy this issue. Accordingly, we do not recommend that it is currently appropriate to pay travelling expenses to those Members who undertake statutory visits to childrens homes. We are aware that this issue has been drawn to Members attention and note that Childrens Overview & Scrutiny Committee are shortly to commence a review of the Council's Corporate Parenting Role which will include the statutory requirement to visit childrens homes. Once the report has been concluded and considered by Cabinet we would be prepared to reconsider the issue of whether and how this function should be recognised in the Allowance Scheme.

6.0 Conclusions

We recommend the above amendments to the Council's current Scheme of Members Allowances and that all other details of the Scheme remain unchanged.

December 2008

Canon R Driver (Chair)
Mrs S Lowe
Mr S Dickson