

REPORT TO: INDEPENDANT REMUNERATION PANEL  
DATE: 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011  
CONTACT Andrea Grant, Head of Governance and Civic Services

## 1.0 Background

1.1 At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2011, the Panel made a number of requests for information as follows:

(1) in order to formulate an objective review of the Members Allowance Scheme for 2012/13, the Assistant Director (Democratic Services) be requested to:

(a) provide a copy of the Government guidance on Special Responsibility Allowances to Panel Members;

(b) consider options for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances to Party Group Leaders who do not hold Cabinet positions;

(c) seek the views of Party Group Leaders on whether certain Cabinet Member portfolios should attract a higher Special Responsibility Allowance than others due to additional responsibilities resting with various Cabinet Members following the recent senior management restructure; and

(d) seek the views of all Members of the Council, in writing, on the Members' Allowance Scheme;

(2) it be noted that the Mayoral Allowance does not form part of the remit of the Panel but the views of the Mayoral Working Group be sought on whether the opinions of the Panel on such Allowance would be helpful;

(3) to encourage a culture to make savings, investigations be undertaken to establish a protocol to aid Members in "shopping around" to get the most economic ticket prices for rail journeys;

(4) Party Group Leaders (or their representatives) be invited to the meeting of the Panel on 7 September 2011; and

(5) the meeting of the Panel, scheduled to be held at Bootle Town Hall on 7 September 2011, be held at Southport Town Hall instead.

## 2.0 SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES (SRA's)

2.1 The Government produced 'Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances' in July 2003 and the relevant sections on SRA's are attached at

Appendix A. In accordance with resolution 1(a), a full copy of the Guidance has been circulated to Members separately.

2.2 The current Members Allowances system is based on a review carried out in 1999 by external consultants. At that time, the Consultant expressed the view that SRA's should be allocated to a maximum of 40% of Members in a balanced authority (although there is no statutory basis for this figure). Currently 50% of Members receive an SRA in accordance with the Members Allowances Scheme as follows:

Leader of the Council	£25,560
Party Leaders (with Cabinet position)	£21,300
Other Members of the Cabinet	£17,040
Chair of Planning Committee	£8,520
Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees	£4,260
Chair of Licensing and Regulatory Committee	£8,520
Chair of Audit and Governance Committee	£4,260
Party Spokespersons for Cabinet & Planning Portfolio	£4,260
Waste Disposal Authority - Spokesperson	£2,130

2.3 As only one SRA can be claimed per Member, the Scheme could be amended to allow Party Leaders to claim their allowance with a separate allowance payable to Cabinet Members. If the Party Leader was also a member of the Cabinet only one allowance would be payable.

2.4 The views of Party Leaders in relation to resolutions 1(c) and Members of the Council in relation to 1(d) have been sought and a summary of those responses will be circulated at the meeting.

### 3.0 MAYORAL ALLOWANCE

3.1 The views of the Mayoral Work Group on the Mayoral Allowance have been sought and those responses will be circulated at the meeting.

### 4.0 RAIL TRAVEL

4.1 Further information on the Council's systems for obtaining the best price for rail journeys will be circulated at the meeting.

5.0 **RECOMMENDATION:** That the Panel determine any further requests for information to help with their deliberations.

EXTRACT FROM GUIDANCE ON SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

**Special responsibility allowance**

70. Special responsibility allowance (SRA) may be paid to those members of the council who have significant additional responsibilities, over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor. These special responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the authority's functions.

71. The Regulations do not limit the number of special responsibility allowances which may be paid, nor do the regulations prohibit the payment of more than one special responsibility allowance to any one member.

72. However, these are important considerations for local authorities. If the majority of members of a council receive a special responsibility allowance the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified. Local authorities will wish to consider very carefully the additional roles of members and the significance of these roles, both in terms of responsibility and real time commitment before deciding which will warrant the payment of a special responsibility allowance.

73. It does not necessarily follow that a particular responsibility which is vested to a particular member is a significant additional responsibility for which a special responsibility allowance should be paid. Local authorities will need to consider such particular responsibilities very carefully. Whilst such responsibilities may be unique to a particular member it may be that all or most members have some such responsibility to varying degrees. Such duties may not lead to a significant extra workload for any one particular member above another. These sorts of responsibilities should be recognised as a time commitment to council work which is acknowledged within the basic allowance and not responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be recommended.

74. In addition, any particular local authority will need to look carefully at the nature of its constitution when determining its scheme. New arrangements will mean that there are inevitable changes in the positions of responsibility on the Council, both in terms of number and workload. Some councillors will be spending significantly more of their time on council duties than has ever previously been the case. On the other hand, changes in the traditional committee structure will mean that there are far fewer committees and, as a consequence, fewer councillors engaged as chairs and vice-chairs of numerous committees.

75. In a case where a local authority has agreed that the holder of the chair of its overview and scrutiny committees should be rotated that local authority will need to assure itself of the additional responsibilities of the temporary chairs before determining what allowances to recommend.

76. Having determined which duties should be acknowledged as significant additional responsibilities, the local authority will need to consider the levels of special responsibility allowance which are attached to each post. A good starting point in determining special responsibility allowances may be to agree the allowance which should be attached to the most time consuming post on the Council (this maybe the elected mayor or the leader) and pro rata downwards for the other roles which it has agreed ought to receive an extra allowance. One way of calculating special responsibility allowances may be to take the agreed level of basic allowance and recommend a multiple of this allowance as an appropriate special responsibility allowance for either the elected mayor or the leader.