

REPORT TO: INDEPENDANT REMUNERATION PANEL
DATE: 14th October 2013
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE DEPENDENTS' CARERS' ALLOWANCE
CONTACT Andrea Grant, Head of Governance and Civic Services

1.0 Background

1.1 At its meeting on 21st January 2013, the Panel resolved to review the dependents' carers' allowance and to aid the Panel in its deliberations on this matter, the Head of Governance and Civic Services be requested to obtain data from other local authorities on their schemes.

1.2 This report provides progress and information to the Panel on these issues.

2.0 THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MEMBERS ALLOWANCES) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2003

2.1 The above Regulations provide that a Members Allowances Scheme:

"...may provide for the payment to members of an authority of an allowance ("dependants' carers' allowance") in respect of such expenses of arranging for the care of their children or dependants as are necessarily incurred in—

(a) the attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or of any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body;

(b) the attendance at any other meeting, the holding of which is authorised by the authority, or a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and at least one other local authority within the meaning of section 270(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee, provided that—

(i) where the authority is divided into two or more political groups it is a meeting to which members of at least two such groups have been invited; or

(ii) if the authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two members of the authority have been invited;

(c) the attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the authority is a member;

(d) the attendance at a meeting of the executive or a meeting of any of its committees, where the authority is operating executive arrangements;

(e)the performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened;

(f)the performance of any duty in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;

(g)the performance of any duty in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at any school approved for the purposes of section 342 of the Education Act 1996 (approval of non-maintained special schools)(1); and

(h)the carrying out of any other duty approved by the authority, or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees or sub-committees.

2.2 Sefton's Scheme of Allowances currently provides for this as follows:

8. Dependents' Carers' Allowance

Members who incur additional expenses in order to arrange care for dependents may claim these expenses. This rate is based on the National Minimum Wage up to a maximum of £60 per week.

2.3 One Councillor currently claims this Allowance and the published table of allowances paid shows this amounted to £1,263.85 in 2012/13 (equivalent to 0.16% of the total amount paid to Members).

3.0 OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

3.1 The Appendix to this report shows the Dependent Carers Allowance in place across Merseyside and other neighbouring local authorities. The Appendix also gives information on the national picture around this aspect of Members Allowances.

4.0 CORRESPONDENCE FROM MEMBERS

4.1 The Panel's attention is drawn to correspondence received on this matter contained within the next agenda item.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That Members of the Panel review the information provided and determine whether any recommendations to Council should be made on this matter.