

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

CABINET – 16 AUGUST 2007

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES PANEL

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

1. Executive Summary

This report informs members of the process to review the Members' Allowances Scheme and requests authority to appoint a consultant to assist the Members' Allowances Panel to review the Members' Allowances Scheme.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 relevant regulations require local authorities to establish and maintain independent remuneration panels. The purpose of independent remuneration panels is to make recommendations to the Authority about the allowances that should be paid to elected members. Allowances that can be paid include basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, travel and subsistence allowances, conference and meetings allowances and childcare and dependent carers' allowances.
- 2.2 Government guidance states that remuneration panels must be independent and should reflect diversity in the communities in the local authority's area. The Panel's current membership is Mr R Allan, Ms N Bertali and Ms P Brown.
- 2.3 The purpose of the panel is to make recommendations about the amount of basic allowance, the circumstances in which special responsibility allowances should be payable and also the amounts of any such allowance. Panels should also make recommendations as to whether the Council's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of expenses for arranging for the care of children and dependents.
- 2.4 The existing scheme was implemented on 1 April 2004 and there is a requirement to review the scheme after four years.
- 2.5 It is recommended that the independent panel be set up at the beginning of October. In order to provide the panel with knowledge of local government, responsibilities of members and comparative levels of payments elsewhere, it is recommended that an independent special adviser advise the panel.

3. Timescale

The panel will meet throughout October and the report will be available towards the end of October/beginning of November, which the Authority must consider. The panel is likely to request oral representations from party leaders. It will also consider any individual written submissions members may wish to make.

4. Financial and Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications. The financial costs can be met from within existing budgets. Other than that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, although financial implications may well arise from the recommendations of the Members' Allowances Panel and subsequent adoption of a Members' Allowances Scheme.

5. Equal Opportunity Implications

None

6. Human Rights Implications

None

7. Local Agenda 21 Implications

None

8. Local Member Support Implications

None

9. Background Papers

None

10. Recommended

That

- (1) the independent remuneration panel of three members meet to make recommendations upon a future members' allowances scheme;
- (2) the Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Services be authorised to identify and appoint an appropriate consultant to assist the Panel with their deliberations, and
- (3) all members be notified of the timescale of the process in order that any members who so wish may make written representations to the panel.

J Wilkie

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Legal and Member Services