



WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

15 DECEMBER 2016

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

**REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR
WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL – 2017/18**

1. Membership

1.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to review and report to the Council on the Members' Allowances Scheme. Following public advertisement and interview we are the current members of the Panel.

1.2 We are: -

- 1 Gail Stanley – of Ruff Lane, Ormskirk (Chairman of the Panel);
- 2 Jeremy Boardman - HR Business Partner of Burscough; and
- 3 Ian Thompson - retired former police officer now working in the charity sector of Aughton.

1.3 We have been assisted in our deliberations by an external local government consultant, Mike Dudfield.

2. Panel's Terms of Reference

2.1 The Council set us the following terms of reference:

- 1 To make recommendations to the Council as to the amount of basic allowance which should be payable to elected members.
- 2 To make recommendations to the Council about the roles and responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be payable and the amount of each such allowance.
- 3 To make recommendations as to whether the Council's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependents and, if it does make such a recommendation, the amount of this allowance and the means by which it is determined.
- 4 To apply Best Value principles in relation to the allowances under consideration.

3. Legislative Position

- 3.1 The local government legislation requires a full review of Members' allowances to be undertaken at least every four years. This is the first year since we last undertook a full review.

4. Report

- 4.1 The Council agreed in February 2016 that the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances be fixed for a 4 year period until 31 March 2020, the Council being able to ask the IRP to consider an increase in any year but only on giving specific reasons for the request. The Panel has been advised that there is no request for any change to these.
- 4.2 The Panel has considered the Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowance, Co-optees Allowances and Travelling and Subsistence. The only issue that has been raised with the Panel is the decision made by the Council on 19 October 2016, as part of the Policy Options process, in relation to mileage rates and their alignment with HMRC suggested rates. This decision seems sensible in the current financial climate.
- 4.3 The Panel therefore recommends that the level of allowances paid to members remain the same, with the exception of the mileage rates which will need to be amended to HMRC suggested rates with effect from April 2017.
- 4.4 In carrying out this year's short-form review the only matter of concern to the Panel was the attendance of Members at training sessions. The Panel believes that it is very important for Members to attend these sessions and we feel that it should be included within Members' existing job descriptions

5. Recommendations for 2017/18

- 5.1 We recommend that the Council's Scheme of Allowances for 2017/18 should remain the same with the exception of the mileage rates which will need to be amended to HMRC suggested rates with effect from 01 April 2017 in accordance with the decision made by Council on 19 October 2016 as part of the Policy Options process.
- 5.2 We also wish to remind Members of the importance of attending training sessions and recommend that this should be included within their existing job descriptions.

Gail Stanley

Jeremy Boardman

Ian Thompson