

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider whether allowances should be paid to Co-opted Members.
- 1.2 To consider levels of travel and subsistence allowances payable to Elected Members.
- 1.3 To consider the outcome of the Standards Committee with regard to the report of the Panel of 14 August 2003.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Member's Allowances Regulations provide for the payment of allowances each year to Co-opted Members. If mindful to agree to such an allowance, the Panel is invited to recommend an appropriate level.
- 2.2 The Panel has already taken the decision to pay travel and subsistence allowances to Elected Members. The Regulations also provide for Panels to fix the level of such allowances. To date these have been set against nationally prescribed rates. Discussion took place regarding variations in terms of car mileage rates payable to officers and those payable to elected members.
- 2.3 At its meeting on 25 September 2003, the Standards Committee had considered the report of this Panel on the issue of Pensions for Elected Members and had recommended that the Council should reject the principle of Pensions for Elected Members on the grounds that there had been no desire expressed by Councillors for such a scheme and no evidence of members of the public being deterred from standing for Council. This recommendation would be placed before the meeting of Council on 5 November 2003.
The Panel sought clarification as to the role of the Standards Committee in regard to Members' Allowances.

3. EVIDENCE

- 3.1 The Panel met on 1 October 2003 and considered the following documents:-
 - 1) List of Co-opted and Independent Members for 2003/2004.
 - 2) Travel and subsistence expense claim forms which included information on rates payable.
 - 3) Copy of e-mail from Mr Jim Sherry setting out his views on these issues. (Mr Sherry had submitted apologies for the meeting on 1 October 2003 but had been invited to forward written comments).

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Panel wished to reiterate its view that this Council should adopt the principle of Pensions for Elected Members.

- 4.2 The Panel does not feel in a position at the present time to recommend that allowances should be paid to Co-opted and Independent Members. However, the Panel would wish to review this position at some time in the future on the basis of further evidence and information from Co-opted and Independent Members.
- 4.3 The Panel consider that travelling expenses should be payable to Co-opted and Independent Members at the rates payable to Elected Members. It also considers that subsistence allowances should apply on those occasions where Co-opted or Independent Members are required to undertake certain duties on behalf of the Council. An example would be attending a Conference outside of the Borough.
- 4.4 The Panel recommends that the Council continue to pay allowances for travel and subsistence which are consistent with nationally agreed guidance.

**COLIN SMITH
CHAIR OF THE INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL**