

REPORT OF EAST HERTS COUNCIL'S INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL ON COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES –
NOVEMBER 2004

1. Introduction

At the request of the Leader of the Council, the Remuneration Panel for East Herts Council has considered the issue of payments to “shadow” members of the Executive.

The background to this request was the Council's desire to introduce succession planning in relation to its Executive.

A number of long serving, highly experienced, Members of the Council's Executive will be stepping down from their executive roles in May 2005. It is the Council's wish to appoint two additional members to the Executive (this is allowed under the constitution ... the Executive can comprise up to 9 Members plus the Leader) to 'shadow' the portfolio holders who will be retiring, over the remaining six months of their tenure.

The roles of the 'shadow' members will broadly reflect the duties currently undertaken by the Executive Members but without their executive powers.

2. What Allowances can be paid

The Panel recalled that the following allowances may be payable to Members of local authorities:

- Basic Allowance
- Special Responsibility Allowance
- Dependants' Carers' Allowance
- Travelling and Subsistence Allowance
- Co-optees' Allowance.

It was only the Special Responsibility Allowance that was relevant to the request relating to 'shadow' Executive Members.

3. Special Responsibility Allowance

A local authority may make provision in its scheme for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances for those Councillors who have significant responsibilities. Special Responsibility Allowances may be payable for duties which fall within the following categories:-

- Acting as Leader or Deputy Leader of Political Groups
- Membership of the Executive
- Presiding at meetings of a Committee, Sub-Committee or Joint Committee
- Representing the Authority at meetings of another body
- Membership of a Committee or Sub-Committee which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods
- Acting as a spokesperson for a political group on a Committee or Sub-Committee
- Membership of a Panel dealing with licensing or controlling any activity
- Any other activities in relation to the discharge of the Authority's functions that require equal or greater effort of the Member than any of the activities listed above

The scheme must specify the amounts of allowance to be paid for each responsibility identified. Statutory guidance indicates that a majority of the total councillors of an authority should not receive special responsibility allowances. It is permissible for a Member to receive more than one of these allowances. Council, however, adopted the Panel's previous recommendation that if this should happen, only 50% of the second allowance should be paid.

Where one political group is in control (Conservative Group in the case of East Herts Council) and where an authority has decided to pay special responsibility allowances, the authority must make provision for the payment of a special responsibility allowance to at least one member of a minority group. East Herts Council meets this objective by appointing a member of a minority group as Chairman of the Call-in Scrutiny Committee.

The current Special Responsibility Allowances paid by the Authority to Executive Members are:

Leader	£24,219
Deputy Leader	£14,532
Executive Members (currently 5)	£12,102 each

In formulating its initial recommendations on allowances, the Panel took the view that, under the new political structure, the role of Ward Councillor would be increasingly demanding. This role, which should be remunerated at a level to attract as wide a range of good quality people from the community, would form the link by which the levels of allowances to be paid to designated posts would be determined. The Panel's recommendation of the following relative positions was adopted by Council:

Ward Councillor	1
Chairman of Committee (excluding Standards)	1.5
Executive Member	2.5
Deputy Leader	3
Leader of the Council	5

The Panel, based on the information provided, particularly the "job description" for 'shadow' Executive Members considered that the work and time commitment associated with the shadow post equated to that of a Committee Chairman.

The Panel agreed to recommend that the factor for 'shadow' executive posts should be 1.5 (i.e. they will receive a special responsibility allowance of £7,268. This allowance should be paid pro rata for the period commencing from their appointment to the Annual meeting in 2005.

4. Members of the Panel

For Members' information, the Panel comprises the following individuals:

- Barry Norman – local resident Chairman of the Panel
- John Wilson – Benefits and Remuneration Manager with GlaxoSmithKline
- Jane Alford - Director of Planning with Hertford Regional College
- Gary Matthews – Managing Director of Herts & Essex Newspapers

The Panel was supported by the Head of Democratic Services in its deliberations.

The Panel once again believes that the recommendations it has now made are fair, comparable with the mainstream thinking within Local

Government as a whole and will assist the Council in recruiting Members for the benefit of the community of the District of East Hertfordshire.