

## REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

### Meeting Held on 3 October 2005

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#### Membership:

R Hunt (Personnel Manager, (Special Metals, Wiggins Ltd)  
W Lindesay (Chief Executive, Herefordshire Voluntary Action)  
S Marlor (Financial Controller, Sun Valley Foods Ltd)  
Ms L Griffin (Editor, The Hereford Times)  
C Osborne (Editor Hereford/Ross/Leominster Journal)  
E Clark (Branch Secretary, UNISON)

#### HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Panel has received a written report on a meeting organised by Bath and North East Somerset Council for Chairs of Independent Panels and their advisers together with an oral update on a similar meeting organised by the Institute of Local Government Studies.

Issues discussed at the meetings included:

roles and responsibilities of the Panel including recruitment and retention/replacement of members

a discussion on the level of Basic Allowances and variations across the country;

a recommendation that Panels should identify exactly what the Basic Allowance was intended to cover;

Special Responsibility Allowance and how it relates to the Basic Allowance;

Transparency and Accountability;

Dependent Carers' Allowance

Travel and Subsistence;

Co-optees Allowance;

Pensions for Councillors;

Rewards for Licensing Committee Members;

Performance Management;

Allowances for Parish and Town Councillors.

The Panel was particularly interested in the issue of performance management which it suggested may be an area for it to explore in the future.

The Panel has considered the additional workload and responsibility of the Chairman of the Regulatory Committee following the recent introduction of the Licensing Act 2004 and recommends an increase as set out below, pending further analysis of the workload and frequency of meetings once the initial round of applications has been completed.

The Panel recognised the need to meet again to re-consider the Allowances Scheme prior to the Herefordshire Council elections in May 2007.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**That (a) The Councillors' Allowances Scheme be amended to provide that the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chairman of the Council's Regulatory Committee be increased from Band 4 to Band 3 on an interim basis until the next review of the scheme, from 1 April 2005, to reflect the recent increase in responsibility**

and frequency of meetings;

- (b) **the Panel meet during 2006/07 to review the Council's Members' Allowance Scheme in advance of the May 2007 local elections and taking into account practice elsewhere in the County; and**
- (c) **work be carried out on measurement of Members' performance and a report submitted to a future appropriate meeting.**

## **TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL ALLOWANCES**

The Panel has received a report in response to a request from the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) that the Panel consider the payment of allowances to town and parish councillors. The issue arose as a result of recent changes in the law which permit allowances to be paid to parish councillors, and a recent request from Breinton Parish Council.

The Panel has considered the request and expressed the view that it would not wish parish councillors to be out of pocket as a result of their voluntary activities as parish councillors. They have therefore recommended that town and parish councillors be eligible to claim travel expenses. However, as most meetings take place in the evening, it does not feel it appropriate to recommend a subsistence allowance.

As HALC has not expressed any opinion in favour or against the payment of allowances to parish councils, the Panel requested that its views, together with the views of the Market Towns Councils and Hereford City Council be sought and, if they are in favour, they should be requested to present information on time commitment and level of responsibility and supporting material to the Panel for further consideration.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- That**
- (a) **Town and Parish Councillors be eligible to claim reimbursement for travel associated with their parish council duties at the same level as Herefordshire Council elected Members (currently 40p per mile);and**
  - (b) **before any recommendation be made by the Panel on level of allowances, HALC, the Market Town Councils and Hereford City be asked about interest in introducing a scheme for payment of a Parish Basic Allowance, and, if interested, to present information on time commitment and level of responsibility and comment in support.**