

**REPORT OF THE
INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL ON
MEMBER ANNUAL REPORTS
AND GROUP WHIPS
ALLOWANCE**

OCTOBER 2018

Introduction

1. The County Council is required under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to set up and maintain an advisory Independent Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice about the allowances paid to Members.
2. The Panel met in the summer of 2017 to review Member allowances and made a number of recommendations on the level of allowances as well as a recommendation that every Member should submit an Annual Report. The Panel's report was agreed and adopted at the full County Council meeting in September 2017.
3. The Panel in its 2017 report stated that they intended to reconvene in the autumn of 2018 to review the outcome of its recommendation regarding the submission of Annual Reports and the Group Whips Allowance. This report deals with these two aspects.

Membership of the Panel

4. Leicestershire County Council's Independent Remuneration Panel comprises the following:-
 - Professor David Wilson –(Chairman) – Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor De Montfort University.
 - Jayne Kelly – Former Solicitor working with various local authorities.
 - Michael Pearson – Former Bursar and Finance Director of Loughborough University.

Support to the Panel

5. The Panel was supported by the Chief Executive of the Council, Head of Member Services and Head of Democratic Services.

Annual Reports

6. The Panel in its summer 2017 report recommended that Members should provide a public account of what they had done during the council year by way of an Annual Report which should be published on the County Council's website.
7. The Panel noted that the County Council had published on its website a job description for Members (attached as Appendix 1 to this report). The job description makes specific reference that Members should '*explain and*

account for personal performance as a County Councillor on a regular basis, particularly through the publication of an Annual Report on the Council's website'. Furthermore the Panel noted that the Council had signed up to the CIPFA Framework for Delivering Good Governance and that Framework refers to 'good practice in transparency reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability'. The Panel believed and still believes that this principle should extend to Members and that given Members are in receipt of public money through the Basic Allowance they should be open and transparent and report on how they have undertaken their roles and responsibilities for which they are remunerated.

8. Given that a new Council had just been elected the Panel thought it useful to outline what it saw as the various roles which might assist Members in their annual reporting.
9. The Local Government Act 1989 specifies that the role of a Member is:-
 - i) To participate in the decision making of the Council and to represent their local community in decision making;
 - ii) To contribute to the strategic direction of the Council through the development and review of key strategic documents of the Council including the Council Plan.

The Act also states that Members should adhere to standards of good conduct.

10. The Panel therefore identified the following as the key roles for Leicestershire County Councillors:-
 - i) Members are accountable to the wider Leicestershire community and they must govern in the best interest of all Leicestershire residents. In undertaking this role the Panel has noted that:
 - they are accountable in multiple ways primarily through the internal and external performance monitoring (audits and inspections) of the Council as whole, although that is not as extensive as it once was. The outcome of those reports will reflect on the Members' performance;
 - The Leader of the Council and the Scrutiny Commissioners are responsible for ensuring members of the Executive and Scrutiny bodies undertake their roles and responsibilities with rigour. The Scrutiny Commission will also produce an annual report on Scrutiny activities and achievements. The

Leader and Cabinet Lead Members are held to account at public Scrutiny meetings and provide regular Position Statements to the Council.

- ii) Members have a representational role for their communities and in this role will need to bring to the attention of the Council the needs of their local community or act as advocates for individuals or groups. They also have a wider community leadership role in acting for their local area, working constructively with local statutory partners, businesses and with local groups and citizens to build community capacity and improve facilities and services in the area. The accountability for this role is to the community itself both on an on-going basis and every four years at the ballot box.
11. The Panel recognised however, that much of this activity involves being visible and available and is about perception of the Councillor and as such SMART performance measures are difficult.
 12. To assist Members in writing their Annual Reports the Panel produced a template which covers amongst other things the following:-
 - i) Membership and engagement with local councils, schools and community groups;
 - ii) Engagement with the Council, other statutory bodies and public utility companies (Water, Gas etc.) about services in the area;
 - iii) The key issues dealt with during the year and the impact of these on the local area;
 - iv) Key issues still facing the area;
 - v) Events, fairs and meetings in the local area which help to bring communities and people together for common good/purpose.

However, Members were free to choose how they wrote their Annual Report.

13. The Panel also noted that the use of social media has grown significantly and those Members who feel comfortable to do so, should signpost their social media accounts in their Annual Reports.

14. The Panel took the view that the Group Leaders and Group Whips should be responsible for ensuring that all Members of their Group each complete an Annual Report.

Request for Annual Reports

15. At the beginning of May 2018 all Members of the Council were asked to write and submit their Annual Report and were provided with a copy of the template and job description for a councillor. Members were reminded of the Panel's 2017 report and its recommendation regarding Annual Reports.
16. At the same time as Members were asked to submit their reports Group Leaders and Whips were reminded that the Panel was of the view that it was their responsibility to ensure that all Members of their Group complete and submit a report for publication. To help Group Leaders and Group Whips ensure compliance they were provided with a weekly update on the progress of submissions within their Group.
17. As and when Members submitted their Annual Report they were published on the County Council's website so that they were accessible:-

from the Member's individual page see link

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1> and/or

a dedicated page for Member Reports see link

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13200>

The Panel's Review of Annual Reports

18. The Panel met in October 2018 to review the Annual Reports submitted by Members. A total of forty eight out of fifty three Members* produced and submitted an Annual Report for publication on the County Council's website which equated to ninety per cent of the Council. The Panel noted that this was a significant increase from previous years and had surpassed the Panel's expectations. The Panel therefore wished to put on record its gratitude and thanks to all those Members who took the time to write and submit a report.

(*The Panel noted that there are fifty five Members on the Council but due to two Members passing away during the municipal year and the two new Members not being elected until May and June 2018 respectively it was not appropriate that they be asked to submit a report.).

19. Whilst pleased at the high response rate the Panel was disappointed that a very small number of Members, listed below, had still not submitted one.

The Panel therefore urged those Members who had not done so to produce a report thus providing their constituents with a record of their activity for the 2017/18 municipal year.

- Mrs. Broadley CC
- Mr. Charlesworth CC
- Dr. Hill CC
- Mr. Mullaney CC
- Mr. Wyatt CC

20. The Panel read all the reports and was generally very pleased with the submissions made by Members. A number of reports were highlighted by the Panel as being particularly good. These reports were submitted by the following:-

- Mr. Bill CC,
- Dr. Bremner CC,
- Dr. Eynon CC,
- Dr. Feltham CC,
- Mr. Hunt CC,
- Mr. Parton CC,
- Mrs. Radford CC,
- Mrs. Taylor CC

The Panel in commenting on the reports thought it might be useful for other Members of the Council to consider these when preparing their 2018/19 report.

21. The Panel was also pleased to see that a number of Members used their own report template and/or inserted photographs into their report which in the Panel's view made those reports more personal and in some cases an easier read.
22. A small number of Members, Dr. Eynon CC, Mr. Ould CC and Mrs Radford CC, have chosen to submit monthly reports for publishing. By doing a monthly report these Members are providing constituents with an up to date account of their activity as well as keeping them informed of current issues within their electoral division. This was beyond the Panel's expectations and the Panel commended these Members.

23. The Panel observed however, that there were a small number of reports which contained very little content which in the Panel's view probably did not provide a fair reflection of the Member's activity during the year.
24. Given the success of the 2017/18 Annual Reports and the Panel's continued view is that Members should provide a public account of what they have done during the council year Annual Reports should continue to be submitted by Members. The Panel is of the view that Members should submit their second Annual Report in June 2019.

Annual Reports Role of Group Leaders and Group Whips

25. When the Panel made its recommendations regarding Annual Reports it made it the responsibility of the Group Leaders and Group Whips to ensure that Members of their Group submitted a report. This was the first time the Panel had done this. The Panel concluded that this could be the reason why there was such a high submission rate by Members.
26. The Panel therefore wished to put on record their thanks to all but in particular the Conservative and Labour Group Leaders and Whips who ensured that all Members of their Group submitted an Annual Report.
27. Given the success of Group Leaders and Whips in ensuring that Annual Reports were submitted by Members the Panel's view is that the responsibility should remain with them for the 2019 submissions.

Recommendations on Annual Reports

The Panel recommends to Council that

- i) Those Members who submitted an Annual Report be thanked for doing so.**
- ii) Those Members who have not submitted an Annual Report for the municipal year 2017/18 do so at the earliest opportunity.**
- iii) All Members of the County Council be required to prepare and submit a second Annual Report for publication on the County Council's website by June 2019. (The Panel intends to reconvene in the autumn of 2019 to review the outcome of this recommendation.)**

- iv) **Group Leaders and Whips, in particular the Conservative and Labour Group Leaders and Whips, be thanked for their hard work in ensuring that all Members of their Group submitted an Annual Report.**
- v) **Group Leaders and Group Whips be responsible for ensuring that all Members of their Groups complete and submit a second Annual Report.**

Group Whip Allowance

28. In its 2017 report the Panel recommended that a new Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to Group Whips. The rationale for this allowance was that once the Political Assistants had left the County Council, in February 2018, the Whips would have an increased role in supporting the decision making structure, but the extent of that role was not clear and there was a lack of benchmarking data. The Panel therefore recommended a modest allowance be paid to the Group Whips from 1st March 2018 and this was calculated at twenty five per cent of the amount paid to Opposition Group Leaders (£13,000) apportioned across all three Groups pro rata to the number of members in each group, i.e. a total of £3,250 allocated at a rate of £59.00 per member. This was subsequently increased to £60.20 from 1st April following the indexation increase across all allowances i.e. employee pay award.
29. In recommending the Group Whips allowance the Panel stated that it would need to review the level of the allowance, at its next meeting, in the light of experience and the demands placed on the Group Whips.
30. The Panel discussed the allowance payable to Group Whips and concluded that given that the new arrangements had only be in place for six months it was too early to draw conclusions. The Panel thought it best to defer its deliberations until its next meeting in the autumn of 2019 and leave the Group Whip allowance at its current rate.

Recommendation on Group Whip Allowance

The Panel recommends to Council that:-

- i) **The allowance payable to Group Whips continues to be paid at the current rate of £60.20 per Member.**
- ii) **The Panel reviews the level of Group Whips allowance at the Panel's next meeting (autumn 2019).**

Summary of Recommendations

The Panel recommends to Council that:-

- i) Those Members who submitted an Annual Report be thanked for doing so.**
- ii) Those Members who have not submitted an Annual Report for the municipal year 2017/18 do so at the earliest opportunity.**
- iii) All Members of the County Council be required to prepare and submit a second Annual Report for publication on the County Council's website by June 2019. (The Panel intends to reconvene in the autumn of 2019 to review the outcome of this recommendation.)**
- iv) Group Leaders and Whips, in particular the Conservative and Labour Group Leaders and Whips, be thanked for their hard work in ensuring that all Members of their Group submitted an Annual Report.**
- v) Group Leaders and Group Whips be responsible for ensuring that all Members of their Groups complete and submit a second Annual Report.**
- vi) The allowance payable to Group Whips continues to be paid at the current rate of £60.20 per Member.**
- vii) The Panel reviews the level of Group Whips allowance at the Panel's next meeting (autumn 2019).**

"JOB DESCRIPTION"

THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF MEMBERS OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Each County Councillor is elected by the people of a particular electoral division to represent them on Leicestershire County Council. Whilst they each represent a particular part of the County they are also required to represent the interests of the wider Leicestershire community, sometimes on issues which go beyond the County Council's functions or local boundaries.

County Councillors have particular responsibilities for the services provided by the County Council; within a legislative framework they decide what services to provide and how much money to spend on them and ensure that they are delivered efficiently and effectively. The Government and other bodies have issued various guidance as to how councillors should carry out their roles.

KEY TASKS

Representatives

to be accessible to local people (including people who did not vote for them), to advocate their views and to look after their concerns generally;

to explain to people the responsibility and decisions of the County Council and other public services bodies with which the County Council works in partnership; to represent the Council to the community and the community to the Council;

to support and promote citizenship and participation in local democracy generally;

Decision Making and Scrutiny

to attend regularly and take part in meetings of the full County Council, its committees and other bodies;

to develop a good working knowledge of how the County Council operates and to apply this knowledge through:-

- contributing to the formation and scrutiny of the Council's policies, budget strategies and service delivery;
- contributing to the scrutiny and/or performance review of the Council's services and those of other local public bodies;

to participate in the activities of any Party group of which the councillor is a member;

Individual

to participate constructively in good governance of the area and to ensure that all duties and actions are carried out in accordance with the highest standards of conduct;

to behave in a manner which maintains public confidence in the County Council and local democracy generally;

to identify any skills or gaps in knowledge and request training and support where required;

to explain and account for personal performance as a County Councillor on a regular basis, particularly through the publication of an Annual Report on the Council's web site.

County Councillor Annual Report

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during

Name of Councillor

Briefing Note

This form enables you demonstrate to your constituents what you have achieved during the year. The information provided will be published on the County Council's website. The report will be tailored to the response. For example, briefing notes and any unused boxes will be removed.

1) Electoral Division activities

Briefing Note

Please specify any particular aspect of your work within your electoral division which you would like to draw attention to. This is an opportunity to set out your main activities, priorities, achievements, challenges etc .which you have been addressing in the past year.

Main Activities and the impact during the past year:

Engagement with the Council, other statutory bodies and public utility companies (Water, Gas etc) about services in the area

Priorities for the immediate future are:

Briefing Note This is an opportunity to recognise any issues which may be particularly relevant to the future well being of people within your electoral division.

2) Council Activities

Briefing Note

Please specify any particular issues of note that you have been actively involved in connected with the following bodies.

Committees you serve on at County Hall

Local committees/Outside Bodies

Other bodies – School governors/community and charity organisations etc

3) Learning and development:

Briefing Note

Please specify any learning and development activities which you have undertaken during the year.

4) Other Matters:

Briefing Note

This gives an opportunity to include anything else which you think is relevant.

Social Media

Signed by Councillor

Date