

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

4th Report of the Birmingham Independent Remuneration Panel

October 2004

FOREWORD

The Panel produced its first report on Members' allowances in November 2001. It has reviewed the allowances annually since that date. The Government's new Members Allowances Regulations in 2003 resulted in the City Council publishing a new Scheme effective from 1 January 2004, which extended the discretion already available to a Council to determine its own arrangements and included pensions for Councillors, travel and subsistence allowances for all Members and the new Co-optee Allowance. Other than these extensions, there have been no fundamental changes to the original scheme since 2001.

To assist with this year's review the Panel asked Councillors to respond to a survey. Based on replies to this survey and on the low response rate (22 out of 120) the Panel concluded that the majority of City Councillors were in agreement with the principles upon which the current Allowances Scheme was based. Consequently, the Panel reconfirmed its view that the principles and structured approach adopted in its earlier work should continue to underpin the current Allowances Scheme.

The Panel considered the implications of the evolving Devolution and Localisation programme on the backbench Councillor role and on those acting as Chairpersons of the eleven District Committees. There is general expectation that the role of the District Committee Chairperson would develop into one that would be demanding in terms of both time and responsibility. However evidence provided by replies to a specific questionnaire to Committee Chairman indicated that the time commitment did not meet the requirements set for a special responsibility allowances (SRA). It was less clear whether the impact on the backbench Councillor role had significantly changed in terms of additional time commitment or whether there had just been a realignment of existing activities due to the variable progress within the eleven Districts with the initiative.

Although, at present, the evidence suggested that there was no overall change in the average number of hours per month needed to undertake the role of a back bench Councillor, the Panel would continue to monitor, as part of their ongoing watching brief, the consequential impacts resulting from the Devolution and Localisation programme.

The Panel reaffirmed its view that the approach to Basic Allowance should continue to be based on a part-time commitment with a public service discount. Though aware of the time spent by individual Councillors on the role, the Panel felt that expecting this to be a full-time commitment would act as a barrier to a wider range of people standing and serving as Councillors.

The Panel remained of the view that identification of roles for payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance by applying a test of "significant additional responsibilities" with an assessed level of time commitment of 2 days per week or more was still valid.

Out of the 22 responses to the annual survey, the Panel did not identify any other significant issues of concern raised by Councillors.

In terms of travelling and subsistence allowances the Panel was unanimous in its view that the arrangements should continue to be based on claiming for actual duties undertaken and additional expenses incurred rather than a lump sum payment for all Councillors. A claims based system would be understood most readily by council taxpayers, have a direct link with individual activity and be in line with the usual approach in both the public and private sectors.

The Panel recommended that changes should be made to the approved duties laid down by the City Council to reflect the changes in workload brought about by the devolution initiative.

Finally the Panel looked at the progress made on the issue of demonstrating better performance. The Panel agreed that a Councillors' performance management system was required so that local people could be clear about what their local representatives were achieving on their behalf and whether they were getting value for their money.

The current Roles and Responsibilities agreed by the Council on 29 June 2004 provided a good starting point. The Panel has set out a recommended timetable to develop these so that they can be used to monitor Councillor's performance.

Once again, I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by the members of the Panel and the valued input from Dr Declan Hall of INLOGOV [The University of Birmingham] during this review. I would also like to thank the Leader of the Council for his time and the officers of the Council for their support of the work of the Panel and in the production of this report.

John Hawksley
Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Summary of Recommendations

The Independent Remuneration Panel

Principles for the Allowances Scheme

New Members Allowances Scheme

Basic Allowance

Special Responsibility Allowance

Pensions

Travel Allowances and Expenses

Subsistence Allowances and Expenses

Childcare and Dependent Carers' Allowance

Co-optee Allowance

What Next for the Council and the Panel?

Appendix 1: Allowances Scheme - Birmingham City Council

Appendix 2: indicative job descriptions

Appendix 3: Summary of Councillors' responses to the annual survey

Principles for the Allowances Scheme [Pages 5 - 6]

1. The principles that are recommended in Paragraph 36 should be used as the framework for the Members Allowances Scheme adopted by the City Council. This includes arrangements for backdating amendments to the Scheme in particular circumstances, withholding allowances as appropriate, regular review of the indicators used for the annual adjustments of allowances and the need for expense claims to be made on a quarterly basis.

Devolution and Localisation

2. The Panel concluded that, whilst there was variable progress within the eleven Districts with the Devolution and Localisation Initiative, which made it difficult to assess the impact on Councillors and District Chairpersons, there should be no changes to either the Basic or the Special Responsibility Allowances.
3. The Panel would therefore continue to monitor the roles and workloads of both Councillors and District Chairpersons as part of their ongoing watching brief of the consequential impacts resulting from 'Going Local'.

The Council should review the provision of local administrative support in the Districts as part of the Devolution and Localisation programme. Support should be reviewed taking into account Councillors' changing needs resulting from the programme.

4. Councillors needed to better understand their changing roles and workloads so that a broad portfolio of training could be provided to meet differing needs.

Basic Allowance [Page 7]

5. There should be no change to the basis or rate of the Basic Allowance [including the Additional Expenses Element] at this time.
6. The impact of the establishment of District Committees should continue to be monitored.

7. Special Responsibility Allowance [Page 8]

SRA should continue to be payable to a Councillor undertaking a **significant** role with added responsibility requiring an extra 2 days per week.

8. There was not sufficient evidence to indicate that a SRA should be payable to a District Chairperson. The Panel considered that this could develop in a significant role and would revisit this as part of its 2005 Review.
9. There should be no other changes to the roles identified for receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance.

10. Travel Allowances and Expenses [Pages 9 - 12]

The Panel recommends that the current list of approved duties should be expanded to cover the increased amount of travelling resulting from the Devolution Initiative.

11. There should be no other amendments to the existing scheme for claiming travel allowances, except, on the grounds of safety, to allow Councillors, who normally travel by public transport and who also have a subsidised bus pass, to travel to and from approved duties by taxi in the evenings, when there is very limited public transport.
12. The current Allowances Scheme be amended to allow Councillors to submit their claims on a quarterly basis, i.e. every three months.

Subsistence Allowances and Expenses [Pages 12 – 13]

13. There should be no amendments to the existing scheme for claiming subsistence allowances and expenses.

14. Indices

This year, the Office for National Statistics has replaced the New Earnings Survey (NES), which had been used in previous years to calculate the rate of Birmingham City Councillors' allowances with a new Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). ASHE includes not only the percentage change in various categories of wages for the West Midlands Metropolitan County area, but also a separate Birmingham area rate.

The Panel therefore recommends that:

- The Birmingham area average adult wage rate for all full-time employees of 1.9% - as published in the ASHE – be applied to the Councillors' Basic Allowance with effect from 1 February 2005.
- The Birmingham area average adult wage rate of the top 10% of full-time earners of 0.1% - as published in the ASHE – be applied to the Councillors' Special Responsibility Allowances with effect from 1 February 2005.
- The Councillors' allowances scheme be changed to run from 1 April to 31 March bringing it in line with the City Council's financial year with effect from 1 April 2006.

15. Childcare and Dependent Carers' Allowance [Pages 13 – 14]

There should be no amendments to the existing scheme. The maximum cost claimable should be based on the minimum wage (independent care of child under 14) and the Council's own hourly rate for a home care assistant (professional care of a dependent relative).

16. Co-optee Allowance [pages 14 -15]

There should be no amendments to the existing scheme.

17. Councillors' Performance Management

Introduce a timetable into the Councillors' performance management process, as follows:

- During the period to September 2005 an indicative Councillor's job description, based on the Roles and Responsibilities agreed by the Council, should be agreed and introduced as a first step in the City Councillors' performance management

process. The Panel recognise that not all of an elected representative's duties and actions could be included into a formal job description especially the key role of a local community leader.

- During 2005/06 the Deputy Leader, as part of his performance management portfolio, and in consultation with all political group leaders, should establish an object setting and appraisal process supported by recommended training courses.
- Transparent and auditable performance measures should be considered that are open to public scrutiny and demonstrate better performance and value for money.

18. What Next for the Council and the Panel? [Pages 16 -17]

To monitor the Council's progress developing and introducing a performance management framework for Councillors' including job descriptions linked to the District reporting regimes to provide a basis for reporting to the electorate on performance.

19. Continue to monitor progress and consequential changes resulting from the Devolution and Localisation programme on the roles and responsibilities of Councillors.
20. Continue to monitor the Development Control and Licensing Committees as the Council's Devolution programme progresses and the introduction of the Government's new Licensing Laws in January 2005.

Background

19. An Independent Remuneration Panel for Birmingham was established by the City Council at its meeting on 3 July 2001. The main features are:
 - A total of 7 members, made up of 3 “invited” members [one of whom chairs the Panel] and 4 members selected from those responding to a public advertisement.
 - Appointment of an Independent Advisor with wide experience of reviews of councillors’ allowances.

Membership

20. The Birmingham Independent Remuneration Panel comprises:-

Linda Elliot of Moseley, Birmingham Citizen Representative
Lindy Whiston, Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU)
John Hawksley, former President of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
Subat Khan of Ward End, Birmingham Citizen Representative
Graham Macro of Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham Citizen Representative
Hanifa Shah of Small Heath, Birmingham Citizen Representative
John Warburton, former Chief Executive of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce.

John Hawksley acts as Chair of the Panel and served in a similar capacity on an Independent Panel that was set up in 1995 by the West Midlands Joint Committee.

Dr Declan Hall of INLOGOV [The University of Birmingham] who has considerable experience and expertise in the area of members’ allowances acts as a special adviser to the Panel.

21. The Panel Members were appointed in 2001 for a mixture of 2 and 3-year terms. The City Council at its meeting in July 2003 re-appointed Linda Elliot, Subat Khan and John Warburton for a further 3-year term until August 2006. Lindy Whiston, TGWU, was appointed by the City Council in August 2003 for a 3-year term until August 2006. In April 2004, Hanifa Shah and Graham Macro were appointed for a further 3-year term ending 31 August 2007.

The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

22. The City Council Scheme is operated in accordance with the 2003 Regulations that sets out the arrangements for the payment of Basic, Special Responsibility Childcare & Dependants Carers’ Allowances.
23. Under the 2003 Regulations, Council can also.
 - Determine arrangements for the payment of travelling and subsistence allowances.
 - Pay a “co-optees’ allowance” to co-opted and appointed members.

- Decide on eligibility [members and allowances] for access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.
 - Set up a process for withdrawal of allowances if a member is wholly or partially suspended.
 - Establish the basis for any backdating and the review of any index used for annual adjustments.
25. The Regulations require that councils must have regard to the recommendations made to them by an independent remuneration panel before making or amending its Allowance Scheme.
26. On pensions, the council cannot go beyond the recommendations made by its independent remuneration panel.

Terms of Reference

28. The City Council agreed at its meeting on 1 July 2003 the following terms of reference for the Independent Remuneration Panel.

“To consider and keep under review and, as when appropriate, to submit reports [containing recommendations] to the Council on

- The amount of Basic Allowance payable to all members.
- The responsibilities or duties in respect of which Special Responsibility, Travelling, Subsistence and Co-optees’ should be available and the amounts of such allowances.
- Any arrangements for the withdrawal of Basic and/or Special Responsibility Allowance if a member is wholly or partially suspended.
- Whether Dependants’ Carers’ Allowance should be payable and the amount of such an allowance.
- Whether there is any backdating of allowances payable for the year in which an amendment is made.
- Whether adjustments to the allowances are to be determined according to an index and if so, how long the index shall apply before review [maximum of four years].
- Which members of an authority are entitled to pensions in accordance with a scheme made under Section 7 of the Superannuation Act 1972
- Whether Basic Allowance or Special Responsibility Allowance, or both, are treated as the amounts for which pensions are payable.
- Any proposals for the introduction of an Allowances Scheme for members of Parish Council.

- The development of job specifications for roles and responsibilities and key accountabilities for the standard role of a Councillor and for those roles for which a Special Responsibility Allowance is or might be paid.”
30. In addition, the Panel had been requested to consider the role and responsibilities of the eleven District Committee Chairpersons.
- The Panel was informed that, as the Council’s ‘Going Local’ initiative progresses, the role of the District Committees and their Chairpersons would become an increasingly important one requiring significant commitment from the postholders in terms of time and responsibility.

31. The Council’s Chief Legal Officer informed that Panel:
- ‘Having discussed the same with the Group Leaders, it is estimated that the roles and responsibilities for Chairs of District Committees would warrant a Special Responsibility Allowance that is less than paid to the SRA Chairs of the Regulatory Committees; on the basis that the time commitment will be about 2 days per week and a comparative responsibility factor against the role of the Leader of the Council of about 20%.’

Methodology

32. **Meetings** - six meetings of the Panel took place in the period September to November.

33. **Reference Material** - In addition to the enabling Regulations on Allowances and Pensions, it comprised.

- New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances.
- Roles and Responsibilities for City Councillors.
- Birmingham City Council: Members Allowances Scheme [February2004].
- 2003 Strategy Guidance on travel and subsistence allowances.

34. **Reports** - Commissioned by the Panel and compiled by the Democratic Services Manager and supported by input from Dr Declan Hall as the independent adviser to the Panel. The reports covered the following topics:

- Travel and issues arising during 2003-04.
- Changing indices.
- Developing Councillors’ roles and responsibilities.

35. **Papers from Independent Adviser** - In addition to his general advice and guidance as the Panel’s independent adviser Dr Declan Hall provided papers or reference material on the following topics.

- Comparative report of other local authorities allowances schemes.
- LGA guidance on Councillors’ travel expenses.
- Councillors’ role profiles

36 **Other Evidence** - This comprised:-

- A meeting of the Chair of the Panel with the Leader of the Council to discuss the current and future arrangements and directions for the City Council.
- Annual Questionnaire to all City Councillors.
- Specific questionnaire to all District Committee Chairpersons.
- Meetings with various Councillors including the Leader of the opposition.
- Report by Chris Whitehall, Financial Planning Officer, relating to range and choice of indices.
- Advice from Mirza Ahmad, Chief Legal Officer, on list of approved duties for Councillors' travel.
- Presentation and further Information from David Maxted, Strategic Director for Local Services, regarding progress of the City Council's Devolution and Localisation programme.

Background

The Panel's earlier reports had identified principles that it felt should underpin an Allowances Scheme and any case for amending these principles would have to be supported by clear and robust evidence.

Councillors were asked to comment on the principles as part of the survey. No major comments and criticisms were made so the Panel reconfirmed the principles set out below.

Framework for the Council's Allowances Scheme

- 37 The Panel felt that there should continue to be a set of principles that can be used as a logical, transparent and robust framework for the City Council's Members Allowances Scheme.
- 38 The Panel agreed that the following set of principles should continue to underpin any Scheme adopted by the Council.

Scheme Objectives

- Promote a healthy democracy by removal of financial disadvantage as a barrier to people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills standing for election or serving as Councillors.
- Reflect and support the operation of the new political arrangements introduced by Councils under the Local Government Act 2000 whilst excluding any payment for solely party political activity.
- Recognise the role that Co-opted Members play in the operation of the Council.

Basis of Scheme

- Maintain the ethic of voluntary public service and reflect this within the Basic Allowance paid to all Councillors and the Co-optee Allowance paid to non-elected members.
- Councillors generally should not expect nor receive a full-time salary.
- Reflect a reality that some Councillors will be expected to take on significant additional responsibilities that will require a near full time commitment to the detriment or limitation of other career activity.
- All Councillors should have the right to opt to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Better Performance

- Effective support arrangements should be available to assist Councillors in their roles and to maximise the value of the time that Councillors with work and family commitments have available.

- Adequately resourced training and development opportunities should be available to Councillors that would enable them to acquire the skills and knowledge for both their current and future roles.
- The framework to support better performance should involve the publication of Job Descriptions for all roles for which allowances are paid.
- Transparent and audited performance measures should exist that are open to public scrutiny and demonstrate better performance and value for money.

Methodology

- Recommendations of the Panel should be arrived at following a logical, impartial and transparent process that identifies roles, reasonable expectations on those roles and make use of suitable external indicators or comparators to establish the value of individual allowances.
- Wage rate Indicators or comparators should not be related to local authority pay scales or jobs so as to maintain the distinction between the roles of elected members and officers.
- Job Descriptions that clearly define the roles and responsibilities and key accountabilities for the standard role of a Councillor and for those roles for which a Special Responsibility Allowance is or might be paid should be produced as an essential requirement of any Scheme.
- Other than the annual rate review, no changes to the Scheme should be made unless Job Descriptions are available.

- Basic Allowance should reflect the core time [less a discount for Voluntary Public Service] needed to undertake a generally accepted range of duties expected of all Councillors. It includes a recognition that all Councillors will from time to time take on additional roles that fall outside the scope of significant additional responsibilities.
- Special Responsibility Allowances recognise the level of responsibility, complexity and extent of commitment of a limited number of Councillors who are expected to undertake roles on behalf of the Council that involve **significant** additional time and responsibilities. These will be identifiable over and above the generally accepted range of duties for a Councillor that is reflected in the Basic Allowance.
- Co-optee Allowances should reflect the core time needed to serve on a Committee. It should also recognise that any additional work will be undertaken within the ethic of voluntary public service.

Expenses

- The Council should meet a standard range of general expenses [such as telephone and home office costs] that Councillors incur directly when undertaking their role. To avoid a proliferation of claim based systems this should be done by the payment of a lump sum on top of the Basic Allowance.
- Councillors and Co-opted Members should be entitled to claim reasonable travel expenses that are necessarily and exclusively incurred in carrying out approved duties.
- Councillors and Co-opted Members should be entitled to claim reasonable subsistence expenses that are necessarily and exclusively incurred in carrying out approved duties outside the Birmingham authority area.
- Councillors should be entitled to claim for reasonable childcare and dependent carer costs that are necessarily and exclusively incurred in carrying out approved duties.
- Claims for expenses should be made on a quarterly basis. Claims outside that time limit should only be paid if there are acceptable and identifiable exceptional circumstances that prevented the claim being submitted.

Administration and Review

- Robust administrative arrangements should minimise the potential for abuse of the system and remove the possibility of a member receiving allowances from more than one authority for the same duty.
- Appropriate allowances should be withheld where a member is suspended or partially suspended from responsibilities or duties in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000.
- The Independent Remuneration Panel should undertake an annual review of the principles, assumptions and the appropriateness of the indicators used in drawing up the scheme.

- Allowance rates should be automatically updated annually in line with selected wage indicators for Basic [Time Commitment element], Special Responsibility, Co-optee and Childcare and Dependent Carer Allowances. Comparator rates for Mileage and Day Subsistence Allowances or a local authority inflation factor for Basic Allowance [Additional Expenses element] and Overnight Subsistence Allowances will be increased in line with Officer rates.
- Backdating of amendments to a Scheme in the relevant year should only take place if the Independent Remuneration Panel has accepted in its recommendations that the changes had already taken place.
- The Independent Remuneration Panel's reports, the Allowances Scheme and records of payments made should be widely published and generally available to the public.

Devolution and Localisation

The Panel considered the current status of the devolution and localisation initiative and recognised that a number of functions and responsibilities have been devolved to District Committees, who are developing their roles and responsibilities. However, the Panel recognised that the Executive portfolios continued to be supported centrally by the pre-existing cabinet structure. The Panel questioned the impact of devolution on the central key roles of the cabinet members especially where there remained a full-time cabinet member in place. Although a lot of the portfolio of services had been localised and was now the responsibility of Local Services and the District Committees, during this period of change, the Panel noted that the Districts continued to be supported from the corporate centre of the organisation. The Panel, therefore, concluded that the Executive responsibility for service delivery remained with the Cabinet at this point in time.

Although, at present, some of the responses suggested there was a change in Councillors' workloads, the Panel remained unconvinced that this trend would continue in the future and waited to see if more stabilised workload patterns were established in future.

Furthermore, there was no overall change in the average number of hours per month needed to undertake the role of a backbench Councillor when compared to the 2001 survey, although Councillors had indicated clearly that they were involved with a lot more local meetings. The survey responses did reflect a noticeable change away from committee workloads to an overall increase in the number of hours for community leadership work.

There was a general expectation that Councillors' workloads at the centre of the authority should decrease as the Devolution and Localisation programme progressed with the consequential increase and importance of more local commitments.

The following are some of the comments from Councillors about devolution and localisation in the annual survey:

'The allowances scheme does not recognise the evolving community development role of Councillors, except for Ward Advice Bureaux. It felt as though 'the more you do, the less the recognition'!

'Devolution has led to an increased participation and more involvement at a local level, e.g. with residents' associations, local groups.'

'Councillors are expected to play an increased local role.'

'18 days per month taken up with Council business – 20% increase in time than previously, even though this had included being the Chairperson of a Ward Committee.'

'For a Councillor in full-time employment, they would need to allow 1 day per week to undertake the duties of a District Committee Chairperson.'

'There is a need for increased admin support for Councillors, particularly at a local level, including accommodation, and the location of District offices was not always a convenient one for all Wards within the District.'

'The role of the backbench Councillor has changed since Devolution but this varied enormously from District to District.'

'There are more local and less centrally held meetings to attend.'

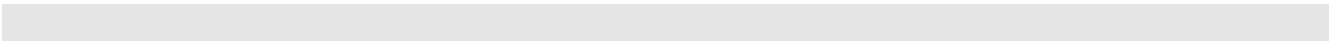
‘There is and would continue to be a growth in the number of District Committee meetings.’

‘It is difficult to give an average estimate of the workloads and time commitments of backbench Councillors. These vary according to the area of the City represented and the issues of local concern.’

‘Too early to have made a substantial difference to me.’

As the above quotations indicate, there is variable progress within the eleven Districts with the Devolution and Localisation initiative which made it difficult to assess the overall situation. The future of Ward Committees was unclear. In some Districts, Ward Committees continue to take up much more of Councillor’s time – particularly their Chairpersons – but in two others, the Panel was informed that Ward Committees had been discontinued.

The Panel concluded that, while inconsistency and uncertainty continued, no changes should be made to the current scheme. The Panel would continue to review the roles and workloads of both Councillors and District Chairs as part of their ongoing watching brief of the consequential impacts resulting from Devolution and Localisation programme.



Background

- 39 The Guidance on Members' Allowances from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister states that
- "Basic allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes."
 - "It is important that some element of the work of members continues to be voluntary - that some hours are not remunerated. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by elected members, and further to ensure that, despite the input required, people are encouraged to come forward as elected members and that their service to the community is retained."

Current Arrangements

- 40 A Basic Allowance of £14,201 per annum [including an Additional Expenses Element of £643] is currently paid to all Members. The rate has historically been reviewed annually in February.
- 41 The Basic Allowance is based on
- A minimum gross time commitment of 3 days a week.
 - A Public Service Discount of 25%.
 - The average non-manual male wage for all industries and services for the West Midlands Metropolitan County area.
 - An additional expenses element to meet part of the cost of telephone rental/calls and office expenses such as postage, stationery and other consumables.
- 42 The Basic Allowance is designed to cover all the roles and activities of Councillors other than those that involved significant additional responsibility. It therefore covers:
- Representative role including acting as an advocate for the interests of the ward, dealing with constituents' enquiries or representations, active participation in the shaping and management of services devolved to a local level and attendance at meetings of local organisations.
 - City Council and Committee work including preparation for and attendance at meetings, interview panels, appeals, visits, seminars and conferences, service on Ward or District Committees and participation on other bodies relating to the work of the City Council.
 - Service as the representative of the City Council or its Committees on outside bodies for which no separate remuneration is made.

Future Arrangements

- 43 The arrangements for the Basic Allowance have been reviewed again this year. This involved consideration of the basic principles, evidence of any significant changes over the past twelve months, a survey and interviews with Councillors, comparison with other authorities and any new issues raised during the review process.

In its October 2003 report the Panel concluded that no change should be made until a robust framework of Job Descriptions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities as well as key accountabilities was available, so that local people could be clear about what their local representatives were achieving on their behalf and whether they were getting value for money. A performance management framework should be introduced using a best practice model and that this should be implemented by the Cabinet (Deputy Leader).

- 44 Whilst Roles and Responsibilities agreed by the City Council on 29 June 2004 were now available and provided a good starting point, more work is needed to convert these to job descriptions so that they could be used as a tool for measuring performance.
- 45 During its review last year, the Panel also recognised that when the District Committees were fully operational across the City there would be the need to review how they were impacting on the standard Councillor role. The October 2003 report stated that, until they had been in operation for a reasonable period of time, the Panel had no available evidence as to whether they would represent a significant additional time commitment or a realignment of existing activities.
- 46 There was a general expectation that Councillors' workloads at the centre of the authority should decrease as the Devolution and Localisation programme progressed with the consequential increase and importance of more local commitments. The survey responses and oral evidence did indicate a noticeable change away from committee workloads to an increase in the number of hours for community leadership work. However devolution appeared to be progressing at differing speeds across all the Districts. In some Ward Committees continue very strongly requiring considerable councillor time, but in two others Ward Committees have been discontinued altogether! As the new system is set up, there are a large number of initial meetings but it is difficult to assess how the workload will turn out once devolution has settled down. In any event, the number of days (157) returned by the councillors during this year's survey compared almost exactly with that carried out in 2001 (156).

In replying to the survey, a number of councillors commented that they considered being a councillor was a full-time job. This is contradicted by the actual number of days returned by the survey referred to above (156 days a year amounts to 3 days per week) and also by the fact that around 60% of councillors are in outside full-time employment. It is recognised that if a councillor is retired or out of work that it would be all too easy for the role to become full-time due to the demands placed on them but the Panel's view remained that it should be regarded as part-time as set out in the Principles of the Allowances Scheme.

The Local Government Act 2000 sets out clearly that the role of a Councillor is part-time. This is reflected in the City Council's Allowances Scheme with a current Basic Allowance of £14,201 to represent 3 working days a week paid at the rate based on the new Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) – FT wages rate in the West Midlands [Birmingham area] pro rata. Birmingham City Council remains at the high end of the national scale of Councillors' allowances.

Although, at present, the evidence suggested that there was a change in Councillors' workloads, the Panel remained unconvinced as to whether this trend would continue in the future or whether, eventually, a more stable change in workload patterns would be established. The Panel concluded therefore that there should be no change to the basis or rate of the Basic Allowance [including the Additional Expenses Element] at this time.

Changing workloads would be reviewed again in 2005 as part of the Panel's ongoing watching brief of the consequential impacts resulting from the Devolution and Localisation programme.



Background

- 47 The Guidance on Members' Allowances from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister states that
- “Special Responsibility Allowances may be paid to those members of the council who have **significant** additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor.”
 - “If the majority of members of a council receive a special responsibility allowance the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified. Local authorities will wish to consider very carefully the additional roles of members and the significance of these roles, both in terms of responsibility and real time commitment before deciding which will warrant the payment of a special responsibility allowance.”
 - “It does not necessarily follow that a particular responsibility which is vested to a particular member is a significant additional responsibility for which a special responsibility allowance should be paid. Local authorities will need to consider such particular responsibilities very carefully. Whilst such responsibilities may be unique to a particular member it may be that all or most members have some such responsibility to varying degrees. Such duties may not lead to a significant extra workload for any one particular member above another. These sorts of responsibilities should be recognised as a time commitment to council work which is acknowledged within the basic allowance and not responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be recommended.”

Current Arrangements

- 48 The current Scheme covers the payment of 26 annual Special Responsibility Allowances and up to 5 time-limited Special Responsibility Allowances for Task and Finish Committees. Special Responsibility Allowances are only paid for roles, which require at least an extra 2 working days to meet the extra demands of the positions held.
- 49 The actual value of a Special Responsibility Allowance is based on
- An assessed level of responsibility using the Council's own comparative relationships that were in existence prior to December 2001. These were broadly in line with the averages from the 2001 Birmingham Councillors' Survey and are detailed in the Current Allowances Scheme: Appendix 1.
 - An assessed level of time commitment using the median values from the 2001 Birmingham Councillors' Survey and are detailed in the Current Allowances Scheme: Appendix.
 - The average gross earnings of the top 10% of the non-manual males for all industries and services for the West Midlands Metropolitan County area. This recognises the element of responsibility [weighting] and not simply the time element [loading].
- 50 No Public Service Discount is applied. Councillors can only receive one Special Responsibility Allowance.

Future Arrangements

- 51 The arrangements for Special Responsibility Allowances were reconsidered in this year's review. This involved consideration of the basic principles, evidence of any significant changes since December 2003, responses from the Councillors' survey, comparison with other authorities and any new issues raised during the review process.
- 52 In the 2003 Review the Panel concluded that no change should be made until a performance framework including Job Descriptions with clearly defined Roles and Responsibilities as well as key accountabilities was established. Although roles and responsibilities had been adopted by the City Council in June 2004, further progress was needed.
- 53 The Panel gave further consideration to the current role of **Vice Chairpersons**, but remained of the view that there was no evidence to suggest that there were significant changes. The prime responsibility for the Committees remained with the Chairpersons and not the Vice Chairpersons. Therefore, the Panel recommended no change.

The Panel recognised that the role of **Chairperson of a District Committee** could develop into one, which would be significantly demanding in terms of both time and responsibility.

Six responses from a possible eleven District Committee Chairpersons were received to the Panel's specific questionnaire. The following are a sample of some of the comments:

'There has certainly been an increase in the workloads since I became the District Committee Chairman. I have to attend more meetings with officer support workers, street wardens and my District colleagues.'

'... increased level of email traffic.'

'My working time has increased by approximately 5-6 hours per week, and I do believe that this will continue.'

'The need to be involved, briefing meetings, being consulted by colleagues on the state of progress on various issues'

'The main changes are less time in the Council House, more in the District.'

'I would assess that I am spending the same amount of time on the District as I am as a Scrutiny Chairman.'

'There is likely to be an increase in the time that needs to be allotted to the District responsibilities, as more powers and budgets are devolved.'

'The role of the Chair of the District has increased my workload to such an extent that my role is full-time.'

'With the rise of the Districts, in reality they are mini-town halls, and each Chair is the 'Leader' with the same responsibilities.'

'... it should take about 4 hours per week.'

The Panel noted that no District Committee Chairperson had requested to meet the Panel.

The Panel concluded that different areas appeared to be working and developing at different speeds, and that the portfolios of services continued to be supported centrally by the pre-existing Cabinet structure. Consequently, the current picture of the District Committee Chairperson's role remained unclear as well as varying according to the level of local devolution development in their respective Districts.

The Panel felt that there was a lack of evidence at this point in time to support a Special Responsibility Allowance for the role of the District Committee Chairperson. The Panel did agree that there was a need for a more detailed review as Phases 1 and 2 of the Devolution and Localisation programme progressed and that this should be part of their future remit.

The Panel also considered the role and workload of the Development Control Committee members as well as future consequential impacts of the Devolution and Localisation process. It was agreed that this should be kept under review together with the role and workloads of the Licensing Committee.

Overall, responses to the Councillors' annual survey indicated that no changes were needed to the current scheme of Special Responsibility Allowances. The Panel endorsed this view.

Travel Allowances and Expenses

Current Arrangements

- 54 Councillors or Co-opted Members can claim mileage allowances and recover other travel expenses as long as expenditure has been actually and necessarily incurred in the performance of an approved duty. Transport services [bus passes, rail warrants, chauffeur driven cars, taxis] are also provided for Councillors undertaking approved duties or in connection with the overall functions of the City Council.
- 55 The current arrangements are summarised below.

Allowance/Provision	Bus Pass Provided	No Bus Pass
Mileage Allowance – within West Midlands	No	Yes
Mileage Allowance – outside West Midlands	Yes	Yes
Credit Taxis/Access to Chauffeur Service	Yes	Yes
Rail Warrants	Yes	Yes

- 56 The City Council has defined a range of approved duties based on legislation for which travelling allowances can be claimed. These duties are set out in law and interpreted by the Council's Chief Legal Officer. The Panel has no powers to change these duties, which cover attendance at Council/Committee meetings, activity in the role of Cabinet Member/Committee Chair, ward constituent duties including advice bureau up to a maximum of 4 per month, meetings of outside bodies and certain other meetings [interviews, rota visits, seminars]. These do not cover all the meetings or duties that a Councillor undertakes. Other costs may be offset as allowable expenses against tax paid.
- 57 The Secretary of State set the maximum mileage allowance rates previously. They are in line with the current rates payable to officers.
- 58 Claimants are required to provide receipts for directly incurred expenses and are encouraged to claim within 2 months. Payment is made via the payroll system and forms go through a verification process.
- 59 The Panel noted the Council's Business Management Committee's decision of 18 November 2003 recommending to the City Council that the Panel's original recommendation set out in its annual report 2003 for a limit of 6 dates per calendar month for claims for travel costs to meetings of outside organisations to which a Councillor is appointed as representative of the City Council be deleted. The Panel are happy to endorse this change.
- 60 The Panel was informed that a system has been introduced which ensured that all Councillors' claims for travel and subsistence costs are checked before payment is agreed.

Future Arrangements

- 61 The Panel remains unanimous in its view that the arrangements should be based on Councillors or Co-opted Members having to claim for travel allowances and expenses for actual duties undertaken rather than a [taxable] lump sum. This was seen as a

system that would be understood most readily by council taxpayers, have a direct link with individual activity and be in line with the usual approach in both the public and private sectors.

- 62 In terms of the approved duties, the Panel continues to favour paying only for those duties that the public at large could recognise as necessary to support the operation of the Council and the expected role of a Councillor or Co-opted Member.

There was a particular concern that no payment should be made for travel to and from the Council House where it only involved activity associated with the general representative role of a Councillor or the day to day element related to a special responsibility role. These would be perceived as a payment for travel to and from work and was inequitable as others in comparable situations in both the public and private sectors would not be in a position to claim.

- 63 However, the Allowances Scheme, at present, recognises the Council House as the main location from which Councillors operate. Indeed, the Panel felt that the District offices would become increasingly important points of local operation for Councillors as the Council's Devolution and Localisation programme progresses and this should be kept under review.

The Panel also wanted to ensure that for the sake of transparency any payment should only be for the additional expense incurred as a result of undertaking the duty. In specific terms where a duty was part of an overall journey to and from work [or holiday] then the amount paid should be the difference between the actual costs and the value of the travel that would ordinarily have occurred without the duty. This is in line with recommendations made in a District Audit Public Interest Report on Nottingham City Council.

- 64 The nature and rates of allowances or expenses that can be claimed by a Councillor or a Co-opted Member continue as follows:

- **Mileage, Motorcycle and Bicycle Allowances.** The rates per mile should continue to be in line with those that are paid to officers in the authority. Where the duty is outside the West Midlands, the claim should be the actual mileage or the peak time standard rail fare whichever is the lower.
- **Standard Rail Fare.**
- **Actual cost of tube fares, bus fares, car parking and toll charges.**

- 65 Councillor or Co-opted Members should continue to be entitled to claim for additional travel costs necessarily incurred when undertaking the following approved duties laid down by the Council.

Council and Committee Role

- Attendance at meetings of the City Council, the Executive, Committees, Sub Committees or authorised working groups.

Ward Role

- Attendance at Constituency or Strategic Partnership meetings and Ward Advisory Boards.

- Attendance at publicly advertised advice bureaux up to a maximum of 4 dates per calendar month.

Representation on Outside Bodies

- Attendance at meetings of a Joint Committee or Body of which the Council is a member.
- Attendance at meetings of a local authority association of which the Council is a member.
- Attendance as the appointed representative of the City Council, the Executive, Committees or Sub Committees at meetings of other outside bodies that are **held outside the Council House**.

Regulatory and Quasi-Judicial Functions

- Attendance at Fostering or Adoption Panels.
- Rota visits to Social Services establishments.
- Attendance at Housing Local Management or Consultative Boards.
- Attendance at Appeals Panels, Hearings or Tribunals on behalf of the Council.
- Attendance at the School Organisation Committee.

[Under the Education Governor Allowances Regulations (England) 2003 governing bodies can now set up their own arrangements for the payment of expenses to governors including councillors].

Special Responsibility Role

- Attendance at meetings held **outside the Council House** by a Councillor in connection with the role for which a Special Responsibility Allowance is paid.

Other Duties

- Attendance as an authorised representative at a conference or seminar.

66 As evidenced from the annual survey of Councillors, the Panel noted the change of emphasis between the different workloads, i.e. time spent undertaking Council committee work had reduced, whereas there had been an increase in community leadership workloads and the consequential impact on travel required. There is no provision in the current Allowances Scheme for Councillors to claim for travel to meetings within their local Districts.

The Panel concluded that the current approved duties should be expanded to include local District journeys other than those between home and any District office to be consistent with the rules relating to travel to and from the Council House.

The Panel believed that there should be a separate section of approved duties to take account of the progress of the Devolution and Localisation programme.

67 A Councillor or Co-opted Member can continue to claim travel allowances and expenses as follows:

- **Rail Warrant.** Should be at standard class unless exceptional circumstances justified first class travel.
- **Taxi.** Should only be provided for duties for which a claim could be made. Where there is a limit on the number of duties [advice bureaux and outside bodies] the taxi should count against the limit. A Councillor, who would normally travel by public transport using a subsidised bus pass, may claim on the grounds of health and safety for travel by taxi when undertaking an approved duty in the evenings, when public transport is extremely limited.
- **Chauffeur.** The Panel recognised the specific provision for the Leader, Deputy Leader, Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor and that the Council might choose to use any available capacity to support other Councillors in the discharge of the functions of the Council. However the Panel was concerned that the Council should not incur additional costs to provide the service other than for the range of duties for which a claim for travel expenses could be made. If this was for a duty where there is a limit on the number of duties [advice bureaux and outside bodies] the journey should count against the limit.
- **Air Travel.** This could be justified if there was a significant saving in time **and** the cost involved was reasonable compared to the cost of alternative travel plus any saving in subsistence expenses.
- **Bus Pass.** The District Audit in its Public Interest Report on Nottingham City Council concluded that the provision of free Travel Passes was unlawful expenditure, as it did not fulfil the test of only meeting costs that were wholly and necessarily incurred. The Panel did not want a cumbersome process of a large volume of tickets being needed to support a claim. It was felt that the Council still ought to be able to provide Councillors with a Travel Pass provided the recipient made a contribution in respect of the private benefit. Using the minimum time commitment of 3 days a week for the Basic Allowance that would suggest the Councillor should meet 40% of the total cost met by the Council.

The Panel felt that a holder of a Travel Pass should not be able to claim travel expenses or use transport services where there was a direct or additional cost to the Council unless the relevant travel service was not available or there was a safety risk, i.e. travel in the evenings.

- 68 The Panel felt that the public would have the reasonable expectation that any administrative arrangements made for processing claims should minimise the potential for abuse. Whilst claimants would be personally responsible this ought to be coupled with sufficient supporting information and a verification procedure that should “protect the public purse.”

The Panel was anxious to avoid overly onerous conditions but considered that the following represented a reasonable amount of information that should be provided in support of any claim.

- Details of the nature and location of the approved duty.
Details of the journeys undertaken including start and finish mileometer readings if appropriate.
- Confirmation of home to Council House mileage and standard home to work mileage.

- Provision of receipts for direct expenses claimed. Unsupported claims could be paid where receipts would ordinarily not be available or their provision was disproportionate to the amount claimed.

To assist with accountability and the verification process claims should be made on a quarterly basis. Claims outside that time limit should only be paid if there are acceptable and identifiable exceptional circumstances that prevented the claim being submitted.

Subsistence Allowances and Expenses

Current Arrangements

- 69 Councillors or Co-opted Members can claim a day subsistence allowance if the time spent on the duty is over 4 hours and expenditure has been actually and necessarily incurred. There is also an entitlement to claim an overnight subsistence allowance if costs are met direct by the Councillor or Co-opted Member.
- 70 The City Council has defined a range of approved duties for which subsistence allowances can be claimed. For Councillors these cover attendance at Council/Committee meetings, activity in the role of Cabinet Member/Committee Chair, ward constituent duties [maximum of 4 per month], meetings of outside bodies and certain other meetings [interviews, rota visits, seminars]. These do not cover all the meetings or duties that a Councillor undertakes.
- 71 The Secretary of State set the maximum subsistence allowance rates previously. Day subsistence [meal] allowances were in line with the rates payable to officers but these have not changed since 2000.
- 72 There is no requirement for any receipts but claimants should be encouraged to claim on a quarterly basis. Payment is made via the payroll system and forms go through a verification process.
- 73 The Council now has discretion to determine its arrangements for the payment of subsistence allowances and expenses within an overall range of approved duties. Arrangements are based on Councillors or Co-opted Members only being able to claim subsistence allowances or expenses for expenditure that would not ordinarily have been incurred. It was a principle that would be understood by council taxpayers and in line with the usual approach in both the public and private sectors.
- 74 The Panel felt that arrangements that related predominantly to time spent on a duty and where there was an entitlement to claim without producing receipts would not fit that principle. It gave the impression of a form of meetings allowance rather than a reimbursement of actual additional expenses.
- 75 There was also the view of the District Audit in its Public Interest Report on Nottingham City Council that paying subsistence allowances without evidence of expenditure and for certain types of general duty [e.g. dealing with casework, preparation for meetings] was unlawful expenditure. This was for a new approach was reinforced by the Inland Revenue's Guidance that day subsistence allowances were taxable unless paid in respect of extra expense incurred on council business away from the council offices.
- 76 A Councillor or Co-opted Member can only claim for day or overnight subsistence allowances for attendance as an authorised representative of the Council at a meeting, conference or seminar held that was held outside the Birmingham authority area. The Panel continues not to support the payment of subsistence allowance or expenses for any duties that were undertaken within the Birmingham authority area.
- 77 Councillors or a Co-opted Member who met expenses direct or where no meals were provided can claim as follows:
- **Day Subsistence.** The claim should be for the reasonable cost of meals taken. The test should be based on where the meal was taken; the total time spent on the duty and the meal allowances claimable by officers. The judgement should be made on all three factors and not just the money value of individual meal allowances.

- **Overnight Subsistence.** The claim should be for the reasonable cost of overnight accommodation and minor associated out of pocket expenses. The test should be based on the location and the benchmark overnight subsistence allowance previously approved by the Secretary of State. The judgement should be made on both factors and not just the money value of the overnight subsistence allowance.

For the benchmark overnight subsistence allowance, taking the April 2000 level as a starting point and applying the local authority inflation factor from that date produces a value [excluding VAT] for 2003/4 of £97.09 for London and £85.13 elsewhere.

- 78 The Panel reconfirmed its view that the public would have the reasonable expectation that any administrative arrangements made for processing claims would minimise the potential for abuse. Whilst claimants would be personally responsible this ought to be coupled with sufficient supporting information and a verification procedure that should “protect the public purse.”

To avoid overly onerous conditions the following represents a reasonable amount of information that is required in support of any claim.

- Details of the nature and location of the approved duty.
- Details of the start and finish times of the duty including associated reasonable travel time.
- The amount and nature of the expense claimed.
- Provision of VAT receipts for expenses claimed. Unsupported claims should not be paid.

To assist with accountability and the verification process claims should be made on a quarterly basis. Claims outside the time limit should only be paid if there are acceptable and identifiable exceptional circumstances that prevented the claim being submitted.

Future Arrangements

- 79 The Panel concluded that no changes were necessary to the current procedures on subsistence allowances and expenses.

Background

80 The Guidance on Members' Allowances from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister states that "A scheme of allowances may also include the payment of childcare and dependent carers' allowance to those councillors who incur expenditure for the care of children or dependent relatives whilst undertaking particular duties".

Current Arrangements

81 Councillors can claim childcare or dependent carer allowances under the Current Allowances Scheme. The Panel recommended its introduction under the 2001 Members Allowances Regulations and the arrangements came into effect in December 2001 along with changes in Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances.

82 The Scheme enables a claim to be made for the cost for the independent care of a child under the age of 14 [based on the minimum wage] and for the professional care of a dependent relative [based on the Council's own hourly rate for a Home Care Assistant].

83 Whilst only a small number of claims have been made to date under the Scheme, the Panel felt that its retention should be supported as it helped offset a potential barrier to people standing or serving as Councillors.

84 The Council retains the discretion to determine its arrangements for the payment of childcare or dependent carer allowances within an overall range of approved duties.

85 The Panel's view was that the current allowance arrangements should continue but that in the interests of clarity and consistency the range of duties for which the allowance could be claimed should be the same as those for travel allowances and expenses.

86 Whilst conscious of the need to "protect the public purse", the Panel was particularly anxious to avoid overly onerous conditions that might be a barrier to Councillors claiming this allowance. It was considered that the Panel's original recommendation, as detailed below, remained a reasonable amount of information that could be expected as support for any claim.

- Full details of the approved duty undertaken.
- Confirmation of who the care had been provided for [including age of child or children as appropriate].
- Name of the provider of the care.
- The amount [within the maximum] limits claimed.
- A receipt or copy invoice where the care involved the services of a professional carer.
- A declaration that the care had not been provided by a member of the immediate family or household.
- A statement to the effect that the costs were necessarily incurred in order to undertake the duty, had not been reimbursed through any other means and were not already covered by any benefits paid to or on behalf of the person for whom the care had been arranged.

87 **Future Arrangements**

The Panel concluded that no changes were necessary to the current procedures for Childcare and Dependent Carers' Allowances.

Background

- 88 The Guidance on Members' Allowances from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister states that
- “Each local authority may make provision in its scheme for the payment of a co-optees’ allowance, for attendance at conferences and meetings to any co-opted and appointed members of a council’s committees or sub-committees. The co-optees’ allowance will in general be an annual allowance, and it may vary from one co-opted member to another”.
 - “Where either a co-opted or an appointed member is appointed chair of the committee on which they are co-opted or appointed, the co-optees’ allowance they receive must be of an amount no less than the equivalent special responsibility allowances being made available to chairs of equivalent committees of the council”.
 - “The Panel may wish to consider the degree of time and effort put in by co-optees. Some element of the contribution made by co-optees should be voluntary. However, consideration should be given for the need to encourage non-councillors to give their services to local government, and to ensuring that co-optees are not financially disadvantaged by their civic activity.”

Current Arrangements

- 89 There are currently 12 co-opted members and these can be classified under a number of categories.
- Education and Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Parent Governor Representative [2]. Have to be appointed and are voting members. Elected through the Parent Governor Association.
 - Education and Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Church Representative [2]. Have to be appointed and are voting members. Selected by the respective church organisation.
 - Standards Committee – Independent Members [2]. Proportion of the membership must be persons who are not Councillors. These are voting members and one currently acts as Chair. Appointed by the City Council after inviting interest from anyone wishing to serve on the Committee.
 - Standards Committee – Parish Council Representative [1]. In the absence of a Parish Standards Committee, the New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council nominates a representative to serve on the Standards Committee as a voting member.
 - Housing and Urban Renewal Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Invited Co-optees [5 currently]. Appointed under the Council’s Constitution. Comprise 2 representatives of the City Liaison Board and 1 each for the Private Rented Sector, Home Owner Sector and Social Landlord. These are invited through available representative bodies.

90 The standard Co-optee Allowance rate is based on

- A value in days reflecting the time commitment involved in attending the standard schedule of meetings.
- “Average non-manual male wage for all industries and services for the West Midlands Metropolitan County area” as the indicator to calculate the annual value. This indicator is used for Basic Allowance.

The voluntary service element would be reflected in attendance at ad hoc/working group meetings and other activity outside the scheduled committee cycle.

91 Taking an estimate of the core meetings and applying a value of 5 hours per meeting [covering preparation and attendance] produces the following standard Co-optee Allowances.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee [10 meetings – 6¼ days]	£724 per annum
Standards Committee [4 meetings – 2½ days]	£290 per annum

92 In terms of the role of Chair of the Standards Committee the standard Co-optee Allowance is paid and based on

- An equivalent annual day value to that for the standard Co-optee Allowance [2½ days].
- A responsibility factor of 42% [equivalent to the role of Chair of the Licensing Committee].
- “Average gross earnings of the top 10% of the non-manual males for all industries and services for the West Midlands Metropolitan County area”. This indicator is used for Special Responsibility Allowance.

This produced an additional element of £193 per annum making a total Co-optee Allowance for the Chair of the Standards Committee of £490 per annum.

Future Arrangements

The Panel concluded that no changes were necessary to the current arrangements for Co-optee allowances.

Supporting Better Performance

In a world of increasing cynicism about the value of those who put themselves forward for public service, taking on the standard role of a Councillor or the onerous demands of a special responsibility role was not an attractive proposition for many people.

The Panel's earlier recommendations on allowances and support arrangements were designed to remove at least some of the barriers that discouraged people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills standing for election or serving as Councillors.

Local taxpayers would have an expectation that the significant investment of public funds involved was money well and wisely spent. Whilst there needed to be an acceptance that aspects such as attracting a wider range of people to serve as Councillors could only be judged in the longer term, there was an onus on the Council and its Members to demonstrate that the new arrangements represented value for money.

Framework for Better Performance

93 In its 2003 report, the Panel suggested that the Council could use a framework that would support the delivery of the sort of effective performance that was needed to cope successfully with the governance of a modern local authority and that local taxpayers had a right to expect.

The first element would be the publication of Job Descriptions for the standard role of a Councillor and for those roles for which Special Responsibility Allowances are paid. The standard format would need to identify the key skills and competencies expected of those undertaking the roles.

During the current review, the Panel was pleased to note that the Constitution now included Roles and Responsibilities, which Councillors are required to undertake. However, there seemed to be a general lack of awareness of these and they were only considered to be a 'guide'. The Panel agreed that they provided a good starting point. They resembled a 'wish list' of all that should be undertaken, but were not sufficiently developed to be used as a tool for measuring performance. They could however be used as a basis from which a City Councillor's job description could be developed.

Evidence the Panel received indicated, however, that some Councillors might not yet be fully aware of this Constitutional statement of their formal roles and responsibilities. Others may feel, as the Panel did, that there remains a need for the Council to devise a less formal, practical job description for Councillors.

Such a job description should identify the changing demands on Councillors' time involved in making a reality of localisation and devolution, and assist in the effectiveness of Councillors' training programmes. It should also assist in publicising to residents how well their individual Councillors are performing, and the value which accrues to them from Councillors representing and promoting their interests.

The Panel have provided at appendix ... indicative job descriptions for the role of backbench councillor and district committee chairperson. These job descriptions make use of the current best practice used within the authority for production of officer job descriptions and are offered as a proposal for discussion purposes.

The rationale behind the production of a job description in this format is outlined below:

Firstly, the panel did not consider it appropriate to produce a 'person specification' for the roles, as this was considered to be an issue for the political parties.

Secondly, the job description should relate to the service delivery element of the role and not intrude on a councillor's democratic right to define all other aspects of their duties.

Thirdly, the job description should not be prescriptive, but should identify key roles which individuals identify, in consultation, their current roles and can then produce more detailed objectives for day-to-day use. These could then be used to publicise performance successes in local reports.

Finally, the job description and objectives could be used, in consultation, to produce a personal development plan identifying training needs in order to improve individual ability at service delivery within the new and still evolving structures.

The Panel concluded that Councillors' job descriptions would provide a basis on which changes could be measured. The outcome of this work would then assist the Panel in subsequent reviews, when considering 'value for money' issues involved in councillors' remuneration and any proposed changes.

Councillors Support Services

The second element was improved support arrangements that would maximise the impact of the time that Councillors, with work and family commitments, had available.

The Panel was informed that a review of current support provided through the centrally based political group offices had been undertaken but the outcomes were not yet known. The Panel commented that support should be reviewed taking in account of Councillors' changing needs resulting from the Devolution and Localisation programme and that future support should be in place to address the 'going local' focus of Councillors' roles.

The Panel was pleased to note the significant progress that had been made in the provision of Home IT for Councillors.

The final element identified was an adequately resourced training and development programme that would offer Councillors the opportunity to acquire the skills for both their current and future roles.

With regards to future training and to development to underpin and support the new and changing roles not only for senior councillors but also senior officers, the Panel learnt that the City Council was working with the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Government Office of the West Midlands (GOWM) and a locally based Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor to develop a development programme for Councillors engaged in District Strategic Partnerships. The programme will also draw on the syllabus of the IDEA "Modern Members" national module to address the training and skills required. The training programme will be launched on 16 November and will be aimed, in the first instance, at the 11 District Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons.

The Panel concurred that Councillors need to better understand their changing roles and workloads and that a broad portfolio of training, such as the programme mentioned above, should begin to address their differing needs.

Responses from the Councillors questionnaire indicated that current training did not meet all needs particularly as the Devolution and Localisation progressed.

The majority of responses suggested that the following areas of general management would need to be addressed:

- An increased understanding of Council finances, budgets
- Performance monitoring skills
- A better understanding of service management
- Decision-making
- Devolution

In addition to existing arrangements there was particular activity around providing training support for the roll out of Home IT for Councillors and addressing the extensive training and information issues around the implementation of the Council's devolution agenda.

There was also a broader review of member development being undertaken along with consideration of the induction arrangements for the intake of new Councillors in June 2004. The size of the task represented a hard challenge but with no elections due in 2005 it also offered a real opportunity to establish an effective framework for the future.

Demonstrating Better Performance

- 94 The Panel recognised that Councillors operated in an environment with traditional mechanisms around party political discipline/procedures and the ballot box. The full election in June 2004 served to reinforce this aspect of performance assessment.
- 95 However the Panel continues to feel that there was a need for a more rigorous framework that would demonstrate better performance and would be open to regular public scrutiny. It was a matter for the Council to decide appropriate performance arrangements but the Panel did want to re-state the suggestions that it had made in its earlier reports on aspects that should be covered in such a framework.
- Publication of Job Descriptions for the standard role of a Councillor and for those roles for which Special Responsibility Allowances are paid. These Job Descriptions should be in a standard format and define clearly responsibilities and key accountabilities. They should be issued to each Councillor.
 - Acceptance by Councillors of the expectations under the Job Descriptions. This should be in the form of a role and accountability statement, which is a practice in some authorities.
 - Commitment to obtaining the skills and adopting the ways of working that would fulfil the Job Descriptions. This should be in the form of a personal development or training plan.
 - Measurement of performance against expectations in the Job Descriptions. This could include:-
 - Publication of attendance records on a quarterly basis.
 - Councillor's own account of their District based activities on at least an annual basis.
 - Councillors with Special Responsibility Allowance to provide a statement of objectives on taking up the role and a 6-monthly report of achievements against these objectives.

- Introduction of a formal and publicly transparent performance management process that would demonstrate accountability and value for money. This monitoring role could be one that the Deputy Leader undertakes.
- Analysis of newly elected members to test whether the objective of attracting a wider range of people to serve as Councillors was being achieved.

SUGGESTED TIMETABLE

The Panel recommends the following timetable for developing the Councillors' performance management process, as follows:

- During the period to September 2005, in consultation with Councillors, an indicative Councillor's job description, as suggested by the Panel, should be agreed and introduced as a first step in the City Councillors' performance management process. The Panel recognise that not all of an elected representative's duties and actions could be included into a formal job description especially the key role of a local community leader.
- During 2005/06 the Deputy Leader, as part of his performance management portfolio, and in consultation with all political group leaders, should establish an object setting and appraisal process supported by recommended training courses thereby linking Councillors' performance to allowances.
- Transparent and audited performance measures should be considered that are open to public scrutiny and demonstrate better performance and value for money.

Future Work for the Panel

96 The consensus was that the Panel would have the following roles in the next couple of years.

- Providing comment and advice in support of the Council's work on developing Job Descriptions and identification of associated skills and competencies.
- Review of the Allowances Scheme in autumn 2005 to specifically assess the progress of devolution and its impact on the workload of District Chairpersons and backbench Councillors. Annual reviews to take place thereafter.
- Responding to any direct requests from the Council for ad hoc work or reviews.

97 The following timetable was identified.

September - November 2005	Broad review by Panel of principles and any significant changes with specific assessment on the impact of devolution.
December 2005	Panel's Report re City Council Members Allowances Scheme.
September - November 2006	Broad Review by Panel of principles and any significant changes.
November 2006	Panel's Report re City Council Members Allowances Scheme.

APPENDIX 1



**Birmingham City Council
Members Allowances Scheme
[Rates from 1 February 2005]**

December 2004

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

[As amended by the City Council on 4 December 2001]

The City Council's Scheme, made under Section 18 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and last amended on 30 April 2001, was further amended by the City Council at the meeting on 4 December 2001.

The Amended Scheme was agreed after consideration of the recommendations contained in the report "Valuing Public Service" received from an Independent Remuneration Panel established in accordance with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2001.

An individual Councillor will be entitled to receive the payments specified in the amended Scheme with effect from the implementation date of the Amended Scheme of 5 December 2001.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Scheme may be cited as the Birmingham City Council Members Allowances Scheme.

1.2 In this Scheme, "Councillor" means an elected member of Birmingham City Council.

2. BASIC ALLOWANCE

2.1 Allowance Rate

A Basic Allowance will be paid to each Councillor and will comprise two elements:

- A time element based on 156 days per annum less a Public Service Discount of 25% resulting in a net value of 117 days per annum. The actual rate of allowance is calculated by reference to the Birmingham area average adult wage rate for all full-time employees of 1.9% as published the new Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). This is expressed as a daily rate and multiplied by the net value of 117 days per annum to produce the time element of the annual Basic Allowance.
- An additional expenses element to meet the cost of telephone rental and calls and office expenses such as postage, stationery and other consumables.

The current rates for these elements of the Basic Allowance are shown in the Appendix.

2.2 Annual Review

The two elements of the Basic Allowance will be automatically revised each year as from 1 February and subsequently from 1 April 2006 thereafter in line with the following:

- For the time element, by the change in the Birmingham area average adult wage rate for all full-time employees - as published in the ASHE.
- For the additional expenses element, by the inflation allowance for 'Supplies and Services' made in the Council's budget.

2.3 Payment Dates

The effective payment date for the allowance shall be

- a) For a Councillor elected to office following an annual Local Government Election, from the fourth day after the date of the election or the date of making the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, whichever is the later.
- b) For a Councillor elected to office at any other time, from the date of making the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2.4 Renunciation

A Councillor may by notice in writing given to the Chief Executive [or nominated representative] elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Basic Allowance under this Scheme.

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing to the Chief Executive [or nominated representative] withdraws it.

2.5 Payment Arrangements

Payment will be made in instalments of one-twelfth of the annual amount due and will be paid via a payroll system on the same date as that applicable to employee salaries.

2.6 Partial Entitlement

Where a Councillor holds the office of Councillor for less than a full calendar month, the Basic Allowance due will be calculated on a pro rata basis by reference to the number of days entitlement to the allowance to the total number of days in that particular month.

2.7 Overpayment

Where the payment of a monthly instalment of Basic Allowance results in a Councillor receiving more than the amount entitled, the over payment will be recovered subsequently through a deduction from other allowances due to that Councillor or through the issue of an official invoice.

3. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

3.1 Offices and Roles

A Special Responsibility Allowance will continue to be paid to a Councillor in respect of the following roles:

- a) Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.
- b) Cabinet Member.
- c) Chairperson of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- d) Chairperson of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- e) Chairperson of a Task and Finish Overview and Scrutiny Committee [for the period of its existence].
- f) Chairperson of the Development Control Committee.
- g) Chairperson of the Licensing Committee.
- h) Chairperson of the Public Protection Committee.
- i) Leader and Deputy Leader of a Qualifying Opposition Group *.

[* A Qualifying Opposition Group is one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]

3.2 Receipt of Special Responsibility Allowance

No Councillor can receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance.

3.3 Level of Responsibility and Time Commitment

Two components will continue to be taken into account in arriving at a value for individual Special Responsibility Allowances as follows:

- The comparative level of responsibility of the role in relation to that of the Leader of the Council.
- The comparative time commitment of the role in relation to that of the Leader of the Council.

Comparative Levels of Responsibility

The comparative levels of responsibility used for the recommended Special Responsibility Allowance roles remain as follows:

Leader of the Council	100%
Deputy Leader of the Council	75%
Cabinet Member	56%
Chair of Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee	56%
Chair of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee	42%
Chair of a Task & Finish Overview & Scrutiny Committee	42%

Chair of Development Control Committee	42%
Chair of Licensing Committee	42%
Chair of Public Protection Committee	31%
Leader of the Largest Opposition Group [one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]	42%
Deputy Leader of the Largest Opposition Group [one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]	21%
Leader of Other Qualifying Opposition Group [one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]	21%
Deputy Leader of Other Qualifying Opposition Group [one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]	10.5%

Comparative Levels of Time Commitment

The comparative levels of time commitment used for the recommended Special Responsibility Allowance roles remain unchanged as follows:

Leader of the Council	5 days [100%]
Deputy Leader of the Council	5 days [100%]
Cabinet Member	5 days [100%]
Chair of Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3.5 days [70%]
Chair of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3 days [60%]
Chair of a Task & Finish Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3 days [60%]
Chair of Development Control Committee	3.5 days [70%]
Chair of Licensing Committee	3 days [60%]
Chair of Public Protection Committee	2.5 days [50%]
Leader of the Largest Opposition Group [one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]	3 days [60%]
Deputy Leader of the Largest Opposition Group [one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]	2.5 days [50%]
Leader of Other Qualifying Opposition Group [one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]	2.5 days [50%]
Deputy Leader of Other Qualifying Opposition Group [one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]	2 days [40%]

3.4 Allowance Rate

The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Council will be based on the Birmingham area average adult wage rate of the top 10% of full-time earners of 0.1% - as published in the ASHE.

The Special Responsibility Allowance for the other roles will continued to be calculated by multiplying the rate for the Leader of the Council by the comparative levels of responsibility and time commitment specified in 3.3.

The current rates are shown in the Appendix.

3.5 Annual Review

The rate of Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Council will be automatically revised each year as from 1 February and subsequently from 1 April 2006 thereafter.

The rate will be revised in line with the change in the Birmingham area average adult wage rate of the top 10% of full-time earners - as published in the ASHE.

3.6 Entitlement to Receive Special Responsibility Allowance

A Councillor will be entitled to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance in the following circumstances:

- a) For the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, from their appointment at a meeting of the City Council.
- b) For a Cabinet Member, from appointment at a meeting of the City Council.
- c) For a Chairperson of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee, from appointment at a meeting of the City Council.
- d) For a Chairperson of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, from appointment at a meeting of the City Council.
- e) For a Chairperson of a Task and Finish Overview and Scrutiny Committee, from appointment at a meeting of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- f) For a Chairperson of the Development Control, Licensing and Public Protection Committees, from appointment at a meeting of the City Council.
- g) For a Leader of a Qualifying Opposition Group *, from receipt by the Chief Executive of a notification signed by a majority of members of that Group.
- h) For a Deputy Leader of a Qualifying Opposition Group *, from receipt by the Chief Executive of a notification signed by the Leader of that Group.

[* A Qualifying Opposition Group is one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]

3.7 Renunciation

A Councillor may by notice in writing given to the Chief Executive [or nominated representative] elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Special Responsibility Allowance under this Scheme.

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing to the Chief Executive [or nominated representative] withdraws it.

3.8 Payment Arrangements

Payment will be made in instalments of the annual amount due and will be paid via a payroll system on the same date as that applicable to employee salaries.

The payment year will run from mid May 2005 to mid May 2006 and comprise 12 full instalments.

3.9 Partial Entitlement

In the event of a Councillor holding an office or undertaking a role for less than a full payment year, the Special Responsibility Allowance due for their final month will be calculated on a pro rata basis by reference to the number of days entitlement to the allowance to the total number of days in that particular month.

3.10 Overpayment

Where the payment of a monthly instalment of Special Responsibility Allowance results in a Councillor receiving more than the amount entitled, the over payment will be recovered subsequently through a deduction from other allowances due to that Councillor or through the issue of an official invoice.

4. CHILDCARE AND DEPENDANT CARERS' ALLOWANCE

4.1 Authorised Duties

A Childcare and Dependant Carers' Allowance can be claimed where Councillors necessarily incur expenditure in arranging care of their children or dependants when undertaking the following particular duties:

- A meeting of the Cabinet or of a Cabinet committee.
- A meeting of the full Council or of a committee or sub-committee of the Council.
- A meeting of any other body or of a committee or sub-committee of any other body to which the Council makes appointments or nominations.
- A meeting which has **both** been authorised by the full Council, a committee or sub-committee of the Council or a joint committee of the Council and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of a joint committee **and** to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited (if the Council is divided into several political groups) or to which two or more councillors have been invited (if the Council is not divided into political groups).
- A meeting of a local authority association of which the Council is a member.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the Council in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the Council in connection with the discharge of any function of the Council conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the Council to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the Council in connection with arrangements made by the Council for the attendance of pupils at a school approved for the purposes of section 342 of the Education Act 1996.

4.2 Allowance Rate

The rate that can be claimed will depend on the nature of the care involved:

- For the independent care of a child [under the age of 14], the maximum hourly rate that can be claimed will be the minimum wage.
- For the professional care of a dependent relative, the maximum hourly rate that can be claimed will be the Council's own hourly rate for a Home Care Assistant.

The current maximum hourly rates are shown in the Appendix.

4.3 Annual Review

The maximum hourly rates will be automatically revised each year as from 1 February in line with the changes in the minimum wage and the Council's own hourly rate for a Home Care Assistant.

4.4 Making a Claim

Claims for the allowance will need to be made on the form provided and supported by the following information:

- Full details of the approved duty undertaken.
- Confirmation of who the care had been provided for [including age of child or children as appropriate].
- Name of the provider of the care.
- The amount [within the maximum] limits claimed.
- A receipt or copy invoice where the care involved the services of a professional carer.
- A declaration that the care had not been provided by a member of the immediate family or household.
- A statement to the effect that the costs were necessarily incurred in order to undertake the duty, had not been reimbursed through any other means and were not already covered by any benefits paid to or on behalf of the person for whom the care had been arranged.

4.5 Payment Arrangements

Claims will be paid along with all other allowances via a payroll system on the same date as that applicable to employee salaries.

4.6 Overpayment

Any deduction necessary following verification of the claim will be made will be made from the next month's allowance payment.

APPENDIX

CURRENT ALLOWANCES RATES

(From 1 February 2004)

£

BASIC ALLOWANCE [per annum unless otherwise stated]

The Birmingham area average adult wage rate for all full-time employees - as published in the ASHE - per day

Basic Allowance

Time Element

Additional Expenses Element

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE [per annum unless otherwise stated]

The Birmingham area average adult wage rate of the top 10% of full-time earners - as published in the ASHE - per week

The Executive [Leader and Cabinet]

Leader of the Council

Deputy Leader of the Council

Cabinet Member

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Chairperson of Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Chairperson of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Chairperson of a Task and Finish Overview & Scrutiny Committee [for the period of its existence]

Regulatory Committees

Chairperson of the Development Control Committee

Chairperson of the Licensing Committee

Chairperson of the Public Protection Committee

Opposition Groups

Leader of the Largest Qualifying Opposition Group*

Deputy Leader of the Largest Qualifying Opposition Group

Leader of Other Qualifying Opposition Group*

Deputy Leader of Other Qualifying Opposition Group*

[A Qualifying Opposition Group is one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]*

CHILDCARE AND DEPENDANT CARERS' ALLOWANCE [maximum hourly rate]
£

Independent care of a child [under the age of 14] - maximum hourly rate of Professional care
of a dependent relative - maximum hourly rate of

APPENDIX 1

CURRENT ALLOWANCES RATES [February 2005]

BASIC ALLOWANCE [per annum unless otherwise stated]

	£	£
BASELINE VALUE - per day		118.08
Per day rate is based on April 2002 Baseline Value adjusted by the change in the adult average wage rates for all full-time employees for the Birmingham City area as published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2004.		
Basic Allowance		14,471
Time Element	13,815	
Additional Expenses Element	656	

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE [per annum unless otherwise stated]

	£
BASELINE VALUE - per week	953.85
Per week rate is based on April 2002 Baseline Value adjusted by the change in the adult average top 10% of wage rates for all full-time employees for the Birmingham City area as published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2004.	

The Executive [Leader and Cabinet]

<i>Leader of the Council</i>	<i>49,600</i>
<i>Deputy Leader of the Council</i>	<i>37,200</i>
<i>Cabinet Member</i>	<i>27,776</i>

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

<i>Chair of Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee</i>	<i>19,443</i>
<i>Chair of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee</i>	<i>12,499</i>
<i>Chair of a Task and Finish Overview & Scrutiny Committee [pro rata for the period of its existence]</i>	<i>12,499</i>

Regulatory Committees

<i>Chair of the Development Control Committee</i>	<i>14,582</i>
<i>Chair of the Licensing Committee</i>	<i>12,499</i>
<i>Chair of the Personnel Appeals Committee</i>	<i>10,416</i>
<i>Chair of the Public Protection Committee</i>	<i>7,688</i>

Opposition Groups

<i>Leader of the Largest Qualifying Opposition Group *</i>	<i>12,499</i>
<i>Deputy Leader of the Largest Qualifying Opposition Group *</i>	<i>5,208</i>
<i>Leader of the Other Qualifying Opposition Group *</i>	<i>5,208</i>
<i>Deputy Leader of Other Qualifying Opposition Group *</i>	<i>2,083</i>
<i>[* A Qualifying Opposition Group is one with a minimum of 12 Councillors]</i>	

CO-OPTEE ALLOWANCE [per annum]

£

<i>Member of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee</i>	<i>738</i>
Member of the Standards Committee	295
Chair of the Standards Committee	495

APPENDIX 2

WARD COUNCILLOR

Introduction

Modern local government brought in by the Local Government Act 2000 that introduced local authorities to change in the way decisions and business was transacted, is based on the following three principles:

- Openness
- Transparency
- Accountability

The following job description is based on current best practice within the City Council. It sets out service delivery requirements and does not attempt to quantify or qualify the Councillor's community development role.

Purpose

- To participate at Ward and District Committees in the production, implementation and review of local plans.
- Participate in the setting of priorities, monitoring and reviewing of devolved services.
- Participate actively in full City Council and its Committees to which appointed.

Accountabilities

- Prepare and maintain complete budget in accordance with Local and Corporate Plans.
- Participate in the production and approval of Local and Corporate Plans that fulfil statutory requirements, obligations and deliver services.
- Monitor and review delivery of devolved local services against priorities and the Local and Financial Plans.
- Develop partnerships with local stakeholders.
- Consult and inform all other relevant local groups.
- Identify and agree within Ward and District Committees training needs.
- Undertake agreed training.

Skills

- Ability to operate effectively and openly within the democratic process.
- Communicate effectively.
- Facilitate partnerships.
- Ability to manage and monitor effectively service delivery.
- Ability to think in an efficient business-like way.

Success Measures

This is an item in the current best practice job description template.

The Panel considers that this relates to objectives, which are best set and developed at the Ward and District level.

DISTRICT CHAIRPERSON

Introduction

Modern local government brought in by the Local Government Act 2000 that introduced local authorities to change in the way decisions and business was transacted, is based on the following three principles:

- Openness
- Transparency
- Accountability

The following job description is based on current best practice within the City Council. It sets out service delivery requirements and does not attempt to quantify or qualify the Councillor's community development role.

Purpose

- To provide leadership and direction to the District Committee and act as lead, in consultation with the Cabinet and local stakeholders.
- Responsible for the setting of priorities and compliance with the Community and Financial Plans.
- To lead production, implementation and review of local plans including meetings with the District Director.
- Participate actively in full City Council and its Committees to which appointed.

Accountabilities

- Responsible for the production of the District Community Plan.
- Chair meetings of the District Committee.
- Prepare and maintain complete budget in accordance with Local and Corporate Plans.
- Participate in the production and approval of Local and Corporate Plans that fulfil statutory requirements, obligations and deliver services.
- Leads review of delivery of devolved local services against priorities and the Local and Financial Plans.
- Leads development of partnerships with local stakeholders.
- Reports to Cabinet and stakeholders and other relevant groups on District performance management issues.
- Ensure that all other relevant local groups are consulted and kept informed.
- Identify and agree within Ward and District Committees training needs.
- Undertake agreed training.

Skills

- Ability to operate effectively and openly within the democratic process.
- Communicate effectively.
- Facilitate partnerships.
- Ability to manage and monitor effectively service delivery.
- Ability to think in an efficient business-like way.
- High level of negotiating skills.
- Ability to provide visible and support leadership.
- Ability to work in a pressurised political environment.

Success Measures

The Panel considers that this relates to objectives which need to be agreed and set with the Deputy Leader of the Council.