

**CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**23 FEBRUARY 2009**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - 2009/2010**

**1 Introduction and Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To consider and determine the levels of the allowances to be paid to Members for the forthcoming 2009/2010 financial year following the submission of the report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel on the review of the 2008/2009 Members' Allowances Scheme.

**2 Wards Affected**

- 2.1 Potentially all Wards.

**3 Effect on Policy**

- 3.1 The Council has previously adopted its approach to the setting of the allowances payable to Members. The decisions taken at the meeting should not therefore, represent new Council policy.

**4 Contact Officer**

- 4.1 James Doble (Ext 1587).

**5 Members' Allowances**

- 5.1 The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel has met to review the current (2008/2009) Members' Allowances Scheme and its report on the recommended levels of the allowance payments for the 2009/2010 financial year has been submitted to the Council and is attached to this report.
- 5.2 The Council is required to have regard to the Panel's recommendations but is under no obligation to accept them if they are deemed to be inappropriate. It is open to the Council to revise the levels of the recommended allowance payments for 2009/2010 (either up or down) as is considered appropriate.

**6 Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contributions to Efficiency Savings**

- 6.1 The following details approved by Karen Curtin (extension 1551) (financial) and Rosemary Watt (extension 1556) (risk).
- 6.2 Risk Assessment – there are no risks associated with the report other than the possibility of

exceeding the budget provision.

6.3 Financial Effects – provision has been included in the draft 2009/2010 budget for Members' Allowances. There are principally three options available in terms of settling the levels of the allowances for the forthcoming financial year as follows:-

- (1) to adopt the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel including the increase in the basic allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances – the full year cost can be accommodated within the draft budget as mentioned above;
- (2) not to adopt the Panel's recommendations and to retain the allowance payments at their existing levels – this would reduce the current budget provision;
- (3) to increase the levels of the allowances over and above those recommended by the Panel although this would increase the provision included in the draft budget.

6.4 Consideration of this item falls within the provisions of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and Members affected by that Section should declare accordingly and refrain from voting.

6.4 Efficiency Savings – none.

## 7 Recommendations

7.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Council consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and resolves:-

- (1) the levels of the allowances to be included in the 2009/2010 Members' Allowances Scheme and whether, in that regard, the Panel's recommendations should be adopted or modified in any way;
- (2) Consider whether to backdate the proposed increases to the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board from 9/9/08 and 16/9/08 respectively, the Chairman of Planning Committee from 15/5/08 and Chairman of Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee from 14/5/08 as the relevant dates when their responsibility increased.
- (3) that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to prepare an amended Members' Allowances Scheme, in accordance with the decisions of the Council for implementation with effect from 1 April 2009;
- (4) that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to take all necessary action to revoke the current (2008/2009) Scheme and to publicise the revised Scheme pursuant to The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended); and
- (5) that the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for its thorough and detailed report.

Background Papers:

None

