

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Council
2.	Date:	22nd July, 2009
3.	Title:	Members' Allowances Scheme – Co-opted Members on the Standards Committee
4.	Directorate:	Chief Executive's Directorate

5. Summary

The attached report from the Independent Remuneration Panel recommends the payment of allowances to the Independent Members and Parish Council representatives on the Council's Standards Committee.

6. Recommendations

- (1) That Co-optees' Allowance of £1,000 per annum be paid to the Independent Members and Parish Council representatives on the Standards Committee.
- (2) That additional Co-optees' allowances of £2,500 and £1,500 be payable respectively to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee.
- (3) That the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme be amended accordingly.

7. Proposals and Details

The Council is required regularly to review its Members' Allowances Scheme and is advised by an Independent Remuneration Panel. The Panel may recommend payments for those who serve Committees or Sub-Committees of an authority, but are not Members of the authority. The Panel may also make a recommendation as to the level of any such allowances. Some element of the contribution made by Co-opted Members should be voluntary. However, consideration should be given to the need to encourage non-Councillors to give their services to local government and to ensure that Co-optees are not financially disadvantaged by their civic activity.

The Independent Remuneration Panel has recently considered whether to pay allowances to the Independent Members and Parish Council representatives on the Council's Standards Committee. This follows an increase in the work of the Committee over the last year, as a result of the assumption of responsibility for the initial assessment of all allegations that Members of the Borough Council, or Town and Parish Councils within the Borough have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. A copy of the Panel's report and recommendations is attached.

The Panel has recommended an annual allowance of £1,000 for the eight Independent Members and three Parish Council representatives on the Standards Committee.

The Panel also recommended that a further £4,000 be allocated in respect of the responsibilities of chairing the Standards Committee and the Assessment, Review and Consideration and Hearing Panels of the Committee. It is suggested that this be allocated as to £2,500 to the Chairman and £1,500 to the Vice-Chairman.

Payments should take effect from 1st August 2009.

8. Finance

There will be a full year cost to the proposals of £15,000 and a cost in the current financial year of £10,000. The Strategic Director of Finance considers that this cost can be contained within the Democratic Representation budget, subject to careful monitoring.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The Council last year increased the number of Independent Members on the Standards Committee from six to eight, in order better to deal with the Committee's additional responsibilities. Expressions of interest in being Independent Members are obtained through public advertisement. It has in the past proved difficult to attract sufficient expressions of interest from candidates with the necessary qualities, although this was not a problem during the last recruitment exercise in October 2008. The payment of an allowance to Independent Members may assist with future recruitment.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The appointment of Independent Members and Parish Council representatives to the Standards Committee is a statutory requirement. The changes to the Committee's responsibilities which came into effect last year meant that the number of Parish Council representatives on the Committee was increased from one to three. At the same time, the number of Independent Members was increased from six to eight, in line with the Council's policy that the Independent Members should comprise a majority of the Committee as a whole.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel attached.

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