

**MEMBERS' EXPENSES AND ALLOWANCES**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Members of the proposed revised arrangements for claiming expenses and the latest position regarding a Special Responsibility Allowances.

**Information and Advice**

**Process for claiming expenses**

2. The initial plan was to pay each Council the individual allocation of funding (£460 this year, £920 in a full year) for their Member which could then be drawn upon as required.
3. Having sought further guidance from the Home Office on this issue it has been clarified that the amount for each Member is for expenses and not to be paid as an allowance. The intention is that any money not claimed by Members should be used for other purposes by the Panel or returned to the Home Office.
4. Some Panels have chosen to use this pot to fund expenditure relating to the Panel meetings (room hire, refreshments etc.). With some Panels, each Authority is picking up the cost of expenses for their own Member/s (in light of the relatively small amounts involved).
5. Expenses should primarily be about travel, subsistence, loss of earnings and conference / training costs. We have requested details of each Member's expenses relating to the Panel up to March 2013 – including any costs related to attending training and conferences as part of their role as a Panel Member. We will build these figures into the final expenditure figures and reimburse each Council as appropriate.
6. Following discussions at the informal Panel meeting on 7 June 2013, Members requested that a more streamlined process be developed to enable them to claim expenses directly from the County Council as the host authority. This process has now been arranged and will be explained to Members via e-mail.

**Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)**

**Members**

7. Further to discussions at the April meeting of the Panel we have made some further enquiries as to what other Panels are doing. At this stage, the only Panel we are aware of that is paying an SRA for Members is West Yorkshire PCP with the costs being met from each Authority rather than from the Panel's grant. These payments are subject to approval by each of the Authorities which has resulted in

some Members getting the full amount recommended (£11,000), some receiving 50% (£5,500) and some receiving no payment.

#### Chairman

8. In terms of SRAs for Chairs of Panels, a number of authorities have taken the same approach as Nottinghamshire – i.e. that it is down to the relevant authority to consider paying an SRA if their Member has been appointed as Chair of the Panel.
9. As reported to the last Panel meeting, Gedling Borough Council wrote to the County Council (as the host authority) on 28 March 2013 to share the findings of its Independent Remuneration Panel which had considered the issue of allowances for Members and the Chairman of the Panel. This recommended setting up a joint independent remuneration panel in line with the approach taken by Norfolk PCP. Having contacted Norfolk PCP again we have been informed that the proposed joint remuneration panel is still yet to be arranged. As this is the only Panel which we are aware of which has proposed such an approach (and at this stage has yet to pursue it) it is not recommended that this approach be replicated in Nottinghamshire.
10. As such at this stage it is proposed that, in line with the agreed Panel Arrangements, any SRA payment for the Chairman should remain with the Council which they are representing. However, this issue will be kept under review in terms of developments by other Panels nationally.

#### Independent Members

11. With regard to Independent Members we had originally agreed to write to the Home Office to underline the special circumstances relating to Independent Members (with reference to the small allowances paid by many Councils to other Scrutiny body independent co-optees and also to the fact that such Members do not receive other allowances as part of a wider Council role). Having spoken to the Home Office direct they have underlined their position regarding allowances.
12. Some Panels have chosen to seek an Independent Remuneration Panel to look at how much such Members should receive, with a view to the host authority possibly paying any such allowance (subject to approval by the relevant Council).
13. Nottinghamshire County Council currently pays allowances of £582 for any statutory co-optee (a person, other than a Councillor who is statutorily appointed to membership of a Council committee). If the County Council so wished it could consider extending this criterion to pay this allowance to the Panel's independent members without the need for an Independent Remuneration Panel, covering these costs in order to enable the Council to better undertake its role as host authority. A proposal suggesting such an approach will be developed for formal approval by the County Council.

## **Other Options Considered**

14. The existing process, whereby each Council pays expenses and claims it back from the County Council at the end of the financial year, could be continued but it is felt that a more streamlined approach could be adopted.
15. To hold a joint Independent Remuneration Panel to look at SRAs for Members, Chairs and Independent Members but this approach is not in line with practice nationally and would incur additional costs for the Panel itself.
16. To not pursue an SRA for independent members but this could impact on the Panel's ability to recruit and retain independent Members and therefore affect the host authority's ability to meet the statutory requirements around Panel membership.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

17. To inform Members of the latest position on expenses and allowances.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) To note the latest position on expenses and allowances.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

- 1) Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (published)

## **For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Keith Ford, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Nottinghamshire County Council  
Tel: 0115 9772590 E-mail: keith.ford@nottscc.gov.uk