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**MEMBERS'S ALLOWANCES**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor John Williams, Leader**

**Responsible Director(s) - Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider the recommendations of the Independent Panel appointed by the Council in relation to the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances for the recently established Audit Committee of the Council.

**Background**

2. At its last ordinary meeting on 23rd March, 2006, Council agreed to establish an Audit Committee with effect from the commencement of the 2006/07 Municipal Year.
3. Members will recall that the Council appointed an Independent Panel to review its allowances in 2003 (Minutes 13/May/03 and 48/Oct/03 refer). Following the establishment of the Audit Committee the Panel was asked to consider whether the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee should be remunerated and, if so, at which level.

**Panel's Report**

4. The Panel has recommended (report attached at **Appendix 1**) that initially the Chair of the Audit Committee be paid at the same level as the Chair of the Council's Standards Committee (set at £500 in 2003) with effect from the commencement of the 2006/07 Municipal Year.
5. The Panel decided against recommending a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee but agreed that this can be reviewed at a later date once the workload of the Audit Committee is known.

**Affordability**

6. The cost of implementing the Panel's recommendations is minimal and can be met from the revenue budget.

**Members' Allowances Scheme**

7. Should the Independent Panel's recommendation be approved it will be necessary to amend Darlington Borough Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

8. An amended scheme is attached at **Appendix 2** which takes into account all the recommendations suggested by the Independent Panel.

### **Legal Implications**

9. This report has been considered by the Legal Services Manager for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Legal Services Manager considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

10. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

### **Council Policy Framework**

11. The issues contained within this report are required to be considered by Council.

### **Recommendation**

12. Council are requested to :-
  - (a) approve the Members Independent Panel's recommendation as detailed in Appendix 1.
  - (b) approve the payment for the Chair of the Audit Committee with effect from 19th May, 2006.
  - (c) approve the revised Members' Allowances Scheme attached at Appendix 2.

### **Reasons**

13. The recommendations are supported to implement the recommendation of the Independent Panel appointed by the Council to enable a Special Responsibility Allowance to be paid to the Chair of the Council's Audit Committee.

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Director of Corporate Services**

### **Background Papers**

- (i) Independent Panel's Report to the Council
- (ii) The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
- (iii) The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- (iv) Darlington Borough Council's Members' Allowances Scheme

Linda Todd : Extension 2354  
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