

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

15 DECEMBER 2010

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON
MEMBERS REMUNERATION**1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER**

- 1.1 (a) To bring to the attention of the County Council the report of the Independent Panel on Members Remuneration.
- (b) To seek approval to the recommended scheme of allowances, the list of approved duties, and the Protocol for Members Attendance at Conferences, for 2011/12.
- (c) To present recommendations from the Panel on other matters that it would wish the County Council to consider.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The report of the Independent Panel on Members Remuneration is attached as **Appendix A** for consideration by the County Council.
- 2.2 The County Council needs to consider the report and its recommendations and decide whether it wishes to amend its allowance scheme.
- 2.3 The Panel has highlighted a number of issues, that whilst they fall outside the direct remit of the Panel are closely related to its role in respect of the allowance scheme. The Panel has made recommendations on how these matters might be progressed.

3.0 ISSUES AND DISCUSSION**(a) Scheme of Allowances**

- 3.1 In making its recommendations, the Panel considered the allowances paid at the current time, in the context of the performance achieved by the County Council, and the overall financial climate. It also considered comparator information from other Councils.
- 3.2 The County Council must approve a Scheme of Allowances before the start of the financial year. The proposed scheme, which takes account of the recommendations made by the Panel, is attached at **Appendix B**.
- 3.3 In summary, the main recommendations of the Panel are:
 - Basic Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances to be paid at the same rate as in the current year (Section 8 and 9 of the Panel Report).

- A full alignment of the scheme of travelling and subsistence allowances with that in place for officers. This would mean in particular, the removal of the current protected higher rates paid for mileage allowance and for some subsistence allowances (Section 10 of the Panel Report).

3.4 The County Council must also agree a scheme of approved duties. A review of the wording of the scheme has been completed with input from the Panel. This is referred to in Section 13 of the Panel Report and the proposed wording of the scheme for 2011/12 is attached as **Appendix C**. In addition, the opportunity of this review has been taken to review the wording of the related Protocol on Members Attendance at Conferences, referred to in Appendix C, and the proposed wording is attached as **Appendix D**.

3.5 Details of the costs of the proposed scheme are show in **Appendix E**.

(b) Other matters which the Panel would wish to be considered by the County Council

3.6 Last year, the previous Panel asked the County Council, through the Standards Committee, to consider providing guidance to the effect that 75% attendance is a reasonable expectation of a minimum attendance level for formal meetings. This did not receive support from the Standards Committee. This year, the new Panel considered the matter again and reiterated the view that this 75% level was a reasonable expectation. The discussion is referred to in Section 5 and 6 of the Panel Report. It was noted that average attendance levels were high at 83%, but a number of individual members fell below the 75% level, with two Members achieving attendance below 50%.

3.7 To assist the public to better understand differing attendance, the Panel have requested that the format of the annual publication on Allowances and Expenses should be altered to explicitly show this % figure for each Member.

3.8 The Panel would also wish to highlight and encourage the importance of training, including the use of ICT (see paragraphs 6.6 and 6.7 of the Panel Report).

3.9 The Panel considered the administrative arrangements in place for claiming expenses (see Section 13 of the Panel Report). In the light of the information provided to them, the Panel have requested that the additional guidance document provided for Members should be reviewed to ensure this is clear and not open to interpretation. This is not a part of the formal scheme, and does not require approval by the County Council. The Corporate Director – Finance and Central Services will carry out this review at the time the guidance document is updated for 2011/12. He will also put in place arrangements for a single point of contact for interpretation of any queries on scheme rules.

3.10 Finally, the Panel considered that the County Council should provide more accessible information on the Members Allowances Scheme. It believed that information on the review of the number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Executive Members would be welcomed by the public, and that the cost reductions should be highlighted. It also considered that the role of the Panel in providing an independent input into consideration of these matters should be more widely publicised to the public. It was

considered that an article in a forthcoming edition of the North Yorkshire Times would be the best way of sharing this information with the public.

4.0 RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 **Appendix E** summarises the proposed expenditure on Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, Co-optee Allowances and travelling and subsistence allowances.
- 4.2 The effect of the recommendations taken together with the reduction in the number of Executive Members and Overview and Scrutiny Committees in July 2010, means that there will be an overall reduction in costs.
- 4.3 The cost of mileage and subsistence will reduce if the rate changes are agreed and will also be impacted by the same reduction in the Members claiming for meetings because of the July 2010 review.
- 4.4 The clarification of approved duties may have some effect on the number of journeys for which a claim is submitted but this is not considered likely to be significant.
- 4.5 If agreed, the cost of all these changes will be reflected in the budget proposals for 2011/12.

5.0 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 5.1 In line with the Regulations and previous practice, a notice publicising the report of the Panel has been placed in the Yorkshire Post and on the County Council's website. A copy of the Report has been made available for public inspection at County Hall.
- 5.2 If the County Council adopts the amendments proposed to the scheme then it must ensure that copies of the scheme are available for inspection by the public. In addition the Council must publish in one or more newspapers circulating in their area a notice which states that the Council has made/amended the Allowances Scheme and specify the period of time for which the Scheme has effect. It must also describe, amongst other things, the main features of the Scheme, specify the amounts of each allowance, state that the Council has had regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and describe the main features of the Panel's recommendations, highlighting any issues where the decision of the County Council differs from that recommendation. In line with previous practice, this notice will be placed in the Yorkshire Post, and on the County Council's website.
- 5.3 As noted in paragraph 3.10 and the recommendation above, it is also proposed that an article is placed in the next available edition of the North Yorkshire Times.

6.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 That the County Council:

- (a) approves a Scheme of Allowances (as attached at **Appendix B**), scheme of approved duties (as attached at **Appendix C**), and Protocol for Members Attendance at Conferences (as attached at **Appendix D**) for 2011/12.
- (b) approves a revision to the format of the Annual Statement of Members Allowances and Expenses, so that the percentage attendance at meetings is shown, in addition to the current information.
- (c) notes that the Panel highlights the importance of member training, including ICT training.
- (d) notes the proposed review of guidance documentation, and a single point of contact for interpretation of the scheme rules.
- (e) approves the proposal to publicise matters relating to the scheme in the next available edition of the North Yorkshire Times.

Report prepared by: Geoff Wall, Assistant Director – Central Finance

Background papers: None

RICHARD FLINTON
Chief Executive

County Hall
Northallerton

**INDEPENDENT PANEL ON THE REMUNERATION OF MEMBERS OF
NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON THE REMUNERATION
OF MEMBERS OF NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

November 2010

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Independent Panel was reconstituted in May 2010. Our composition is as follows:-

Mr Clive W Leach CBE Appointed 2002	- Chairman of the Universe Media Group, Chairman of the Durham County Cricket Club, Chairman of Serene Pavilions Ltd. Recent Chairman of Financial Services Skills Academy for Yorkshire and the Humber, President of Harrogate International Festival Ltd, Chairman of Yorkshire Enterprise and Yorkshire Fund Managers (The Yfm Group), Chairman of Yorkshire Culture and Chairman of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Learning and Skills Council.
Mr David Kirby Appointed 2002	- Accountant, Deputy Chairman of South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and former local government officer.
Mr Trevor Nuttall Appointed 2010	- Trustee and Administrator of the Trust for Education, Chairman of Chapel Allerton Tennis and Squash Club. Formerly Chief Executive of Yorkshire and Humberside Development Association, Consultant with Arthur Andersen, Chief Executive Leeds Financial Services, School Governor
Mrs Denise Wilson Appointed 2010	- Policy Manager/lobbyist working on behalf of small and micro businesses at both a regional and national level. Chairman of Craven Council's Standards Board. Former local government officer.

1.2 The Panel has met on three occasions in considering its recommendations. The first meeting was by way of a briefing, to provide background information to the two new Members of the Panel in particular, The additional meetings allowed us to consider information and evidence, and discuss our recommendations for the scheme for 2011/12. It is the issues dealt with in these later meetings that form the main basis of this report.

1.3 Our Terms of Reference are as follows:-

- (i) To consider issues relating to Members' remuneration and expenses
- (ii) To consider representations; and
- (iii) To make recommendations and provide advice to the County Council.

2.0 Background

2.1 We have considered background papers on issues relating to:

- The current scheme and the background to how the scheme has developed in recent years
- Introductory principles to the scheme
- Overview of the County Council's Performance over the last 12 months
- Ethics/Standards Update
- Members' Attendance at meetings
- Pension Scheme Issues
- Basic, Special Responsibility Allowances and Co-optee Allowances
- Travel and Subsistence and Other Allowances
- The scheme of Approved Duties and the current arrangements for claiming travel and subsistence allowances in respect of appointments to some outside bodies.

2.2 We received a briefing from your Chief Executive on some of the current issues and challenges facing the County Council. This included some of the implications of the new policy directions of the Coalition Government, and the likely implications for the County Council of the forthcoming comprehensive spending review, which had not been announced at the time of our main meeting to consider our recommendations, which was held on the 5 October.

3.0 Principles

3.1 In making our recommendations, we considered the key principles, adopted by the previous Panel over recent years, to underpin a system of remuneration. In making our recommendations for 2011/12, we agreed, as a new Panel, that we should continue to adopt these principles:

- (1) It is important to encourage individuals to be involved in the work of the Council. People of all backgrounds and ages should feel attracted to become Councillors if they so wish, and at the very least the allowance structure should put no barriers in their way.
- (2) The work of a County Councillor requires commitment and - if the role is to be carried out well - a significant investment of time. Councillors have a wide ranging role varying from local issues to the national scene. It is the Government's intention that this should be reasonably and properly remunerated.

- (3) However, the Panel do not wish to see the Public Service ethos lost from our County Council. A balance has to be struck between paying 'a rate for the job' and recognising the significant public service element that is rightfully a strong feature of our system of Local Government.
- (4) The cost of any scheme must give value for money.
- (5) Any system must be easily understood, transparent and ensure accountability to the electorate.
- (6) Allowances should take account not only of a Members' representative role but should also include an expectation that Members will attend appropriate meetings including the County Council and its Committees.

3.2 We considered the previous approach of recognising the differing levels of responsibility amongst Members i.e. to base allowances on units of responsibility - the greater the level of responsibility, the more units the particular role would attract. This has stood the test of time and we recommend its continued use. We consider that a system of unitisation is both clear and enables the relative weighting of different functions to be easily recognised. The value of a single unit is currently set at £1,544 in the 2010/11 financial year, and our proposals for 2011/12 are set out later in this report.

4.0 Overview of the County Council's Performance over the last 12 months

4.1 The Panel considered a report on the County Council's performance under the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) arrangements introduced since we last considered performance matters in October 2009. Whilst the system has changed from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime, we noted the evidence of continued high performance across the Council's services.

4.2 We were informed that the CAA regime has been abolished by the new Government, and await developments on how this will be replaced by a mixture of national and local assessment. We noted that it is not yet clear how the new arrangements will work, or how easy it will be to benchmark the County Council using this data in future years.

5.0 Update on Ethics and Standards

5.1 In our report last year, we had highlighted a number of issues where we considered that the County Council might usefully develop further frameworks setting out guiding principles on a number of matters, and then monitor against those frameworks. Our recommendation from last year's report was as follows:

That in view of recent heightened public awareness of the role of elected representatives, it would be appropriate for the County Council to ask the Standards Committee to consider reviewing guidance and frameworks on the following:

- *Guidance on the need for regular attendance at meetings, and then monitoring attendance levels at meetings*

- *Guidance on the appropriate level of engagement with training and other opportunities to understand issues relating to Council services and monitoring attendance levels at training events*
- *Guidance on the use of ICT to support communication between the Councillor, the Authority and Constituents.*

- 5.2 In particular, the previous Panel had concluded that, whilst recognising there were reasons that it is not possible to attend some meetings, it was the view that 75% attendance should be a reasonable minimum expectation. The previous Panel also considered that a framework might be set for the expectations on training and development, but recognised that a simple benchmark percentage would probably not be appropriate in that situation.
- 5.3 In receiving the report on ethical standards, we were updated on the discussions that had been held in the Standards Committee. We are pleased that the report was presented to the Standards Committee following our recommendations. We recognise that the Committee has had an established practice of monitoring attendance at Committee Meetings, and referring to Group Leaders instances where attendance had fallen below a rate of 60%. We learnt that the Standards Committee considered on balance that a level of 60% attendance was a more realistic expectation than the 75% attendance made in our recommendations last year. We noted that the Committee had agreed that the Monitoring Officer should prepare guidance in relation to the importance of engagement in the Committee process, and training.
- 5.4 In relation to IT, we noted that the Standards Committee recognised the importance of Members engaging with the Council's IT processes to facilitate communications. The Committee had observed that the vast majority of Members readily used this means of communication. We also noted that the Committee has proposed that when the Members' Code on the use of ICT is reviewed, guidance on the benefits of using the Council's systems to facilitate communication should be strengthened.
- 5.5 Both the issues of attendance at meetings and training, and in respect of the use of ICT, were returned to in later items considered by the Panel, and are dealt with later in this report.
- 5.6 We also received a general update on the Council's approach to promoting ethical governance. Once again, the Panel was reassured by the information provided, including the statistics presented regarding the Council's local handling of complaints procedure.
- 5.7 We have seen the Standards Committee as an important part of the process for monitoring a range of matters that are of interest to the Panel in carrying out its role. We were informed of the Government's indication that when the Decentralisation and Localism Bill is introduced, that the standards framework, including Standards Committees, will be abolished. We were reassured that the indication from the Government is that Local Authority Members will still be required to observe very high standards of conduct, and in relation to interests issues, breaches of requirements will be enforced through the Criminal Courts.
- 5.8 In relation to future monitoring of matters such as Members' attendance, we stressed the importance of consideration being given to the means of monitoring attendance

at Committees and training events, once the detail of future frameworks is settled. The Panel reiterated, however, its view that in respect of attendance at key meetings, a 75% target was reasonable, and the Panel was of the view that it is a role of the Panel on behalf of the community at large to set expectations of this type.

6.0 **Members Attendance**

- 6.1 In view of the reconstitution of the Panel, and in the light of the discussion on the previous item, there was a full discussion amongst the Members of the Panel on their expectations on Members' attendance and engagement, and how this might be measured
- 6.2 Linked to the discussion regarding the consideration of last year's recommendation by the Standards Committee, and in the light of evidence on the average level of attendance at main meetings during 2009/10, the Panel concluded that a target of 75% is a reasonable expectation as a minimum level, bearing in mind the payment of Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances, whilst recognising that there will be exceptional circumstances such as sickness, that may mean that this is not achievable by all Members every year. The Panel is encouraged that the attendance figure, on average is high, and indeed higher than last year. For example, in respect of all meetings, an average of 83% attendance was achieved, compared with 81% in 2008/09. It was noted that two Members had attendance below 50%.
- 6.3 The Panel believe that information on attendance at key meetings should continue to be included in the Annual Statement on Allowances and Expenses. In addition, however, we recommend that the presentation includes a percentage for the attendance of meetings during the year against each Member, to make it easier for members of the public to understand relative attendance levels.
- 6.4 We recognise that the statistics on attendance are restricted to the main meetings of the County Council, the Executive and the main Committees. We recognise that Members are involved in many other forums, both in other less formal meetings, and in their constituency work. We recognise the difficulties of implementing a more widely defined measure of attendance or engagement, and make no recommendations for changes in respect of the collection or publication of such information.
- 6.5 Turning to training, the previous Panel, had, in recent years, asked for additional information on both the range of training, and on the uptake of that training by Members.
- 6.6 The Panel would wish to continue to consider information about the range of training offered to Members, but recognises that there will be many reasons why individual Members take a decision on whether to attend such opportunities. In future, it would not be the intention of the Panel to consider attendance levels at individual training events or seminars. The Panel considers it important, however, that these should be supported and that the Council ensures that those who are involved in decision taking, and consideration of specific issues, are properly trained and briefed to enable them to do that effectively. Hence it is a matter for individuals and the political groups on the Council to consider carefully and encourage attendance where seminars or other events are relevant to Members.

6.7 We consider training in the use of ICT to be important to ensure its effective use by Members in their constituency role, and in the effective administration of County Council business.

7.0 Members of the Pension Scheme

7.1 We received an update on scheme membership. There had been a slight increase in membership compared with the position reported last year, from 26% to 28% of Members.

8.0 Basic Allowance

8.1 In relation to the Basic Allowance, the Panel received information about the level of allowances paid in other Local Authorities within the County Council's comparator group. The relative position within this group of 16 counties had stayed at 9th for 2010/11, as last year, compared with 11th in 2008/09. The relative financial position is that the North Yorkshire Basic Allowance is 3.6% below the average for the group. It was noted that a number of Authorities like North Yorkshire, had not increased the allowance in 2010/11.

8.2 The Panel considered that there is no case on the grounds of either comparability or changing role, for the number of units of responsibility to be reviewed, and that our consideration this year should be restricted to considering the case for an increase in the value of a unit, including the affordability of such an increase.

8.3 Information was considered on levels of increases made in recent years, together with information on officer pay awards, the Government's announcement on public sector pay for 2011/12, and the rate of inflation.

8.4 We also considered the background to the general economic situation, and the financial prospects for the Authority, as shared with us by the Chief Executive. Although, at the time of this discussion, the Comprehensive Spending Review had not been announced, it was clear to us that difficult financial times lay ahead.

8.5 Taking account of all the factors, it is our view that a NIL increase is justified at this time, and this is our recommendation to the County Council.

8.6 Last year the Panel reviewed the position, following the introduction of the new arrangements from April 2009 of an inclusive Basic Allowance. This had replaced the previous position where the allowance was in two parts, with an identifiable separate element for ICT.

8.7 Part of the reason for moving towards the integrated allowance was the acceptance that ICT should be an integral part of the way that Members do business, both with Officers of the County Council, but also with their constituents.

8.8 We heard that emphasis has continued to be placed on the importance of these matters and that support has continued to be offered to Members in their use of technology and the equipment provided.

- 8.9 We heard that there is still a range of engagement, with some Members being more proactive in their use than others. We also heard that there is still one Member who will not engage with the use of ICT.
- 8.10 We considered again the case for amending the scheme to reflect a position of non-use. We agreed that no further action should be taken on withholding payments, even if this were possible under the regulations underpinning the scheme, as this could be seen as formalising disengagement with the use of IT. We see the use of IT as important, and continue to encourage its use. On that basis, we believe it is important that the County Council continues to provide appropriate and accessible training and support to all Members to meet their needs.
- 8.11 In summary, the Panel is recommending that the Basic Allowance from 1st April 2011 is based on 5.825 units and at a unit value of £1,544. This would lead to a Basic Allowance of £8,994 i.e. the same amount payable in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

9.0 **Special Responsibility Allowances**

- 9.1 The Panel believes that the system based on units of responsibility continues to be appropriate. The review of the County Council's Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) compared with those in the comparator group of shire counties was considered, although it was recognised that the definitions of roles and hence the responsibility undertaken, could clearly vary across different authorities. As with the Basic Allowance, we noted that a number of Authorities had not increased their payment in 2010/11, mirroring the position in North Yorkshire.
- 9.2 In terms of the comparative position, it was noted that the payments to the County Council were, in all cases, in the third or fourth quartile.
- 9.3 We were appraised of the changes, implemented July 2010, of the number of Members making up the County Council's Executive, and the number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the new arrangements. We were informed that the changes to the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements arose from a Member-led review. We were also told that the underpinning reason for both reviews was to ensure efficient and effective arrangements were in place, and that the savings arising from the reduction in the number of Special Responsibility Allowances in payment were seen as a contribution towards the County Council's Budget Savings Plan.
- 9.4 No case was presented, therefore, that these changes led to an increase in responsibility that we needed to consider in regards to the number of units of responsibility attached to these roles.
- 9.5 We considered the arrangements for the Employment Appeals Committee. This had been introduced from August 2009, and hence had only been in operation for a short time when the Panel considered this matter in October 2009. Since then the level of workload, in terms of meetings and the need for the Chairman to attend at Tribunals, provided sufficient evidence for us to conclude that the allocation of one unit of responsibility to this role continued to be appropriate.

- 9.6 In summary, we concluded that there was no case for a change in any of the units of responsibility linked to any of the Responsibility Allowances, and that these should continue as in the current year.
- 9.7 Following the previous approach, the value of the unit should be set in line with the value attached to the Basic Allowance. It follows, therefore, that we recommend no increase in Special Responsibility Allowances for 2011/12.
- 9.8 We also considered the position with regard to Co-option Allowances. Such Allowances have been in place for a number of years in respect of independent Members of the Standards Committee, one of whom has traditionally acted as the Chairman of that Committee. We recognised that the arrangements for the Standards Committee are likely to change in the near future, and this will need to be looked at, depending on what replacement arrangements are made.
- 9.9 Your Officers had raised with us the possibility that there might be a case for additional Co-option Allowances on Committees other than the Standards Committee. In particular, the possible need for an allowance for Co-opted Members to the Audit Committee had been raised at our first meeting. The outcome of the further review work had concluded that sufficient candidates of high quality had made themselves available to stand as Co-opted Members of the Audit Committee, and that there appeared to be no immediate call for a payment to be made to ensure that good appointments could be made to this role. On that basis, the recommendation from your Officers was that no further action should be taken at this time. We concur with that recommendation. We also consider that this matter should only be reviewed if problems were seen to arise in attracting sufficient high quality candidates for future co-option requirements across different Committees of the County Council.
- 9.10 The effect of the proposal for a NIL increase and taking account of the reduced number of Special Responsibility Allowances required in the revised Executive and Committee structure, is reflected in **Appendix 1**. The impact of these reductions leads to a saving of approximately £52k in the cost of allowances (excluding on-costs).

10.0 Travel and Subsistence Allowances

- 10.1 In previous years, the Panel has taken the view that, wherever appropriate, there should be an alignment between the rates payable to officers of the County Council, and those payable to Members, and that this link should be reflected in the wording of the scheme.
- 10.2 The stage has now been reached where there are only a few differences, and in the main these relate to the protection of some higher rates that have been payable within the Members Scheme compared with the current rates paid within the Officers Scheme.
- 10.3 The Panel has given careful consideration to whether this approach of protected rates continues to be defensible, given the current financial situation and the need for fairness and transparency on these matters.

- 10.4 In recent years, the rates in question have been “frozen” on the assumption that inflation would take Officer Rates to a stage where, in time, these would equal or exceed the rates payable to Members. This would then have led to the alignment of rates in line with the previous vision of aligning the schemes.
- 10.5 The current financial position means that this alignment may not occur in the short term at least.
- 10.6 On that basis, the Panel is recommending that these differences should be removed from the Scheme and that a Scheme fully aligned with the Officers Scheme should be implemented.
- 10.7 The immediate implications of this are as follows:-
- (a) The current mileage rate for the first 8,500 miles, set at 48.5p, would be aligned with the Officer Rate. At present this stands at 47p. The rate payable for mileage above 8,500 i.e. 25p per mile, is already aligned with the current Officer Rate. Thereafter, rates would change as and when the Officer Rate changed.
 - (b) The Evening Meal Allowance, currently at £12.00, should be aligned with the Officer Rate. At present this stands at £11.00. Rates for Breakfast, Lunch and Tea are already aligned with Officer Rates. In addition, to fully align with the Officers Scheme, the guidance on the times at which such allowances are claimable should be changed to those in the Officers Allowance Scheme. As now, these amounts are seen as a maximum, with the amount to be claimed to be actual expenditure necessarily incurred up to the amount set out in the Scheme.
 - (c) The current overnight allowances for Members are £82.00 (£97.00 in London or when attending the Annual Conference of the Local Government Association). This compares with the Officers Scheme where the rates are £76.50 (£90.00 in London). There is no equivalent recognition of special rates at any conference in the Officers Scheme. It is proposed that the current condition within the Scheme where these overnight allowances apply where a Member makes their own arrangements for accommodation and re-claims an allowance should continue to apply. Where the arrangements are made by a Directorate on behalf of the Member, for example, as part of conference arrangements, then the approach should continue to be to use our contract with Co-op Travel to make the most cost-effective hotel arrangements. It is proposed that this continues to be a feature of the Scheme.
- 10.8 As noted above, the intention, if these proposals are agreed, would be to align the Scheme formally with Officer Rates rather than specifically fixing rates for Members. This would mean that any changes, either up or down, in the Officers Scheme would then be reflected automatically in the Members Scheme with effect from the date of the change in the Officers Scheme.

11.0 **Child Care and Dependent Carers Allowance**

11.1 The Scheme Rules were reviewed and amended two years ago, and the Panel considers that these remain appropriate. For information, the rate for the adult minimum wage will be £5.93 from 1 October 2010. The hourly rate for a full cost payer for home care provided by Adult and Community Services is £16.00 per hour in 2010/11, and is subject to review for 2011/2012, within the context of a Means Test Scheme. The wording of the current scheme remains appropriate.

12.0 **Scheme of Approved Duties**

12.1 The circumstances in which a member is entitled to claim travelling and subsistence allowances is governed by the Scheme of Approved Duties. Your officers informed us that there had been issues about the interpretation of the current document. As a Panel, therefore, we considered the Scheme and the need to amend this to make it fit for purpose.

12.2 In part, this was a matter of tidying up the format and removing references that were no longer applicable.

12.3 There are issues, however, that are not covered adequately in the current wording and appear to be the main reason for the interpretation issues mentioned above.

12.4 Certain duties such as attending formal meetings of the Council's Committees are approved by Regulation. In 2000, the Council gave the Chief Executive authority to designate approved duties arising from these regulations. We consider it sensible for this delegation to continue should changes to these regulations be made in the future.

12.5 For travel and expenses not directly related to such attendance at formal meetings, we consider that the Scheme can be clarified by including a reference to meetings, outside of formal Council meetings, attended by any member, with officers for the purpose of progressing County Council business. This would also remove the need for clauses such as that referring to Best Value Review Teams and Special Interest Groups, terms which we understand are no longer, in fact, common parlance in the Council.

12.6 For example, Members may from time to time attend Council offices to discuss planning or highways matters or to seek advice from Council officers for purposes related to Council business. The Panel considers that such journeys should reasonably attract a payment of travelling and subsistence allowances provided that:

- the journey is strictly necessary for the matter to be resolved in an effective way;
- the issue could not be dealt with at the same time as other business is being undertaken, for example on the same day as a formal meeting, so as to avoid an unnecessary journey; and
- is reasonably undertaken in pursuit of the Council's work.

- 12.7 We consider that the current exclusions, regarding the role as school governor, constituency business and social functions should remain.
- 12.8 One of the items of approved duty is attendance as an authorised representative of the County Council at meetings of specified bodies in the Schedule of Appointments to Outside Bodies.
- 12.9 Whilst the Panel recognises that the inclusion of bodies on the list is a matter for the County Council, and not for direct recommendation by the Panel, we did discuss the extent to which, in all cases, representation might be considered by the public at large, to further the aims of the County Council. Since the inclusion of a body on this list could lead to cost being incurred by the County Council, the Panel believes that it may be appropriate for the County Council to review this list, in respect of those bodies for which expenses are payable, bearing in mind the difficult financial circumstances being faced by the County Council in the period ahead.
- 12.10 A redrafted version of a Scheme of Approved Duties, amalgamating the approach proposed above, is included for consideration at **Appendix 2**. For reference the current wording of the Scheme is attached as **Appendix 3**.
- 13.0 **Administrative arrangements for claiming Expenses**
- 13.1 As part of our review, we sought information on the arrangements in place for the verification and authorisation of Members' expenses claims.
- 13.2 Having considered the practical implications for Members and the County Council, we are satisfied that it is reasonable for Members to take full responsibility for the completeness and accuracy of the claims they submit and for these not to require specific authorisation.
- 13.3 We have also been made aware of the move towards on-line submission of claims, with the expectation that increasingly, Members will make use of this facility. In the absence of a specific authorisation, this has implications for the degree of reasonableness checking that is in place currently when Members claims are submitted on the traditional paper claim form.
- 13.4 In the light of this, we have asked your Officers to review the additional guidance document that is issued alongside the formal Members Allowances Scheme to ensure that this is clear and not open to interpretation. In respect of situations in which mileage can be claimed, this links to the next item in our report regarding the review of the List of Approved Duties.
- 13.5 In addition, we have recommended that arrangements are reviewed to ensure that there is a single point of contact for Members to seek advice and guidance on the interpretation of the Scheme in respect of any specific items on which Members may need to query their entitlement to claim.

14.0 Publication and Communication of the work of the Panel

- 14.1 Your officers explained the approach that had been taken in recent years to publicising the recommendations made by the Panel. In particular, regulations require the Panel's report to be advertised, with a summarisation of the key recommendations of the Panel. Following consideration by the County Council, regulations require a further advertisement of the decisions taken by the County Council, highlighting any areas where that decision differs from the recommendation of the Panel. Traditionally these adverts have been placed in the Yorkshire Post newspaper and have been written in the form of a statutory notice.
- 14.2 The Panel considered that this approach, whilst meeting the regulations, did not do justice to the consideration of the Panel, and that it may be helpful to the public at large to know more about the way in which the County Council considered matters relating to Members Allowances.
- 14.3 We recommend, therefore, that thought be given to how an approachable summary of the work of the Panel, and the decisions taken by the County Council, might be provided to the public, probably through an article in an early edition of the North Yorkshire Times following the consideration of this matter at County Council in December. This summary might beneficially include publicity on the decisions taken by the County Council in July 2010 to reduce the cost of members allowances arising from the review of the size of the Executive and the number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

CLIVE W LEACH CBE
Chairman

2010/11 Special Responsibility Allowances and Co-optee Allowances

APPENDIX 1

This Table sets out the full year cost of allowances for the roles in place post the July 2010 Review

	<u>NO OF UNITS</u>	<u>2010/11 ALLOWANCE</u> £	<u>Number Of Allowances</u>	<u>FULL YEAR COST OF ALLOWANCE</u> £
Value of a Unit		1,544		
SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES				
Chairman of the County Council	6	9,264	1	9,264
Vice Chairman of the County Council	2	3,088	1	3,088
Leader of the County Council	16	24,704	1	24,704
Deputy Leader	10	15,440	1	15,440
Other Executive Members (Note 1)	9	13,896	5	69,480
Chairman Of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Note 2)	6	9,264	1	9,264
Chairman of Other Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Note 2)	3	4,632	4	18,528
Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Note 2)	1	1,544	5	7,720
Chairman of Area Committees	2	3,088	7	21,616
Chairman of Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee	2	3,088	1	3,088
Chairman of Appeals Committee	2	3,088	1	3,088
Chairman of Employment Appeals Committee	1	1,544	1	1,544
Chairman of Pensions Committee	3	4,632	1	4,632
Chairman of Scrutiny Board	1	1,544	1	1,544
Chairman of Audit Committee	2	3,088	1	3,088
Champion for Young People	3	4,632	1	4,632
Champion for Older People	3	4,632	1	4,632
Leaders of Political Groups				
Second largest group membership (Liberal Democrats)	3	4,632	1	4,632
Third largest group membership (Independent)	1.5	2,316	1	2,316
Secretaries of Political Groups				
Largest Group Membership (Conservatives)	1.5	2,316	1	2,316
Second largest group membership (Liberal Democrats)	1	1,544	1	1,544
Third largest group membership (Independent)	0.5	772	1	772
CO-OPTEE ALLOWANCES				
Chairman of Standards Committee	2	3,088	1	3,088
Independent Members of the Standards Committee	0.5	772	3	2,316
Total Special Responsibility Allowances			39	216,932
Total Co-Optee Allowances			4	5,404

Note 1 : The number of Executive Members was reduced by The County Council in July 2010 from 7 to 5

Note 2 : In July 2010, the review of Overview and Scrutiny arrangements led to a reduction in the number of Committees from 9 to 5 (including the Scrutiny of Health Committee)

Redrafted version of a Scheme of Approved Duties

SCHEME OF APPROVED DUTIES - Eligibility for travel and subsistence allowances

All Members of the County Council are entitled to receive payment of travelling and subsistence allowances in respect of expenditure necessarily incurred by them for the purpose of enabling them to perform an **Approved Duty**.

List of Approved Duties

- (a) All meetings of the County Council, the Executive, and any Committees of the Council or of the Executive, and any Sub-Committees, Panels or Working Parties they may establish.
- (b) Visits by Executive Members, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees on County Council business associated with those roles.
- (c) Meetings, outside of formal Council meetings, attended by Members with officers, for the purpose of progressing County Council business, provided that:
 - the journey is strictly necessary for the matter to be resolved in an effective way;
 - the issue could not be dealt with at the same time that other business is being undertaken, for example on the same day as a formal meeting, so as to avoid an unnecessary journey; and
 - is reasonably undertaken in pursuit of the Council's work.
- (d) Attendance of Members at training courses and seminars approved by the Chief Executive.
- (e) Attendance at conferences, subject to the specific arrangements set out in the **Protocol on Members Attendance at Conferences** within the County Council's Constitution.
- (f) Attendance as an authorised representative of the County Council at meetings of specified outside bodies listed in Sections 1 and 2 of Schedule 5 of Part 3 to the Constitution. (Note: Expenses will not be payable where they are payable by the body appointed to, in which case case, the claim should be submitted to the body concerned.) In particular it should be noted that the Police, Fire and National Park Authorities have their own arrangements in relation to the payment of these allowances.
- (g) Attendance at Parish Council Meetings in connection with the work of the County Council.

Certain duties, specifically relating to formal meetings of the County Council are covered by Regulations made under the Local Government Act 1972. At its meeting on 19 July 2000 the County Council gave the Chief Executive authority to designate approved duties arising from any changes to these Regulations.

Duties for which travelling and subsistence will not be paid

It should be noted that travel/subsistence allowances are not payable to Members of the County Council for the following purposes:

- Acting as Governors of primary or secondary schools
- Constituency business
- Social functions

Current text of the Scheme of Approved Duties

APPROVED DUTIES - ELIGIBILITY FOR TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

*All Members of the County Council are entitled to receive payment of travelling and subsistence allowances in respect of expenditure on travelling and subsistence necessarily incurred by them for the purpose of enabling them to perform an **Approved Duty**.*

Certain duties, such as attendance at meetings of the County Council or any of its Committees, are specifically approved by Regulations made under the Local Government Act 1972. At its meeting on 19 July 2000 the County Council gave the Chief Executive authority to designate approved duties for these purposes.

*Attendance at any of the following meetings is now specified as an **Approved Duty** for the purpose of the payment of travelling and subsistence allowances by the County Council:*

- (a) *All meetings of the County Council, the Executive, and any Committees of the Council or of the Executive, and any Sub-Committees, Panels or Working Parties they may establish.*
- (b) *Visits by Executive Members, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees on County Council business associated with those roles.*
- (c) *All meetings of the Best Value Review Teams, and of Business Units' Special Interest Groups of Members.*
- (d) *Attendance of Members at training courses and seminars approved by the Chief Executive.*
- (e) *Any meeting of the LGA and/or CCN where the Member is attending as an authorised representative of NYCC.*
- (f) *Attendance as an authorised representative of the County Council at meetings of specified outside bodies listed in Sections 1 and 2 of Schedule 5 of Part 3 to the Constitution.*
- (g) *Attendance at Parish Council Meetings in connection with the work of the County Council.*

The allowances are set by the County Council each year.

Payments of travel and subsistence allowances will be made on the last working day of each month in respect of claims received up to the day 14 days before that date.

It should be noted that:

- (i) *Travel/subsistence allowances are not payable to Members of the County Council for the following purposes:*
 - *Acting as Governors of primary or secondary schools*
 - *Constituency business*
 - *Social functions*
- (ii) *The Police, Fire and National Park Authorities make their own arrangements in relation to the payment of travel and subsistence allowances. Members appointed to these bodies should therefore make all claims relating to the meetings thereof directly to those bodies.*

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Members' Allowances Scheme

In exercise of the powers conferred by Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the County Council has made the following scheme for the payment of allowances.

The scheme will be reviewed from time to time by an independent review panel in accordance with the relevant Regulations.

1. This scheme may be cited as the North Yorkshire County Council Members' Allowances Scheme, and shall have effect from **1 April 2011**.
2. In this scheme
"councillor" means an elected member of the North Yorkshire County Council;
"year" means the 12 months ending with 31 March.

Basic Allowance

3. Subject to paragraph 10, for each year a basic allowance of **£8,994** shall be paid to each councillor.

Special Responsibility Allowances

4. (a) For each year a special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those councillors who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the authority that are specified in paragraph 1 of schedule 1 to this scheme.
(b) Subject to paragraph 10, the amount of each allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that schedule.

Childcare and Dependant Carers' Allowance

5. (a) A childcare and dependant carers' allowance shall be paid to all members of the Council in respect of costs necessarily incurred by them in making arrangements for the care of children (under 14) or other dependant relatives (requiring care because of age and/or disability) to enable them to perform an approved duty (other relatives include parents, partners, siblings and others agreed by the Chief Executive Officer).
(b) For childcare, the allowance payable will be the lower of actual expenditure and the national minimum wage for adults aged 22 or over.
(c) For care for others, the allowance will be the lower of actual expenditure and the charge for home care by NYCC Adult and Community Services.
(d) All claims for childcare should be accompanied by a statement signed by both the Councillor and carer certifying that the childcare has been provided, that the expenditure has been incurred and that the carer does not live in the same household as the Councillor. If the childcare is provided by a professional carer then a receipted invoice is required.

- (e) All claims for the care of elderly and/or disabled dependant relatives should be supported by a receipted invoice. It is expected that this care will be provided by professional carers.

6. Travel and Subsistence Allowance

The following allowances shall be payable under the scheme in respect of travel and subsistence.

Travelling Allowance

- (a) Public Transport

All rail travel is made in standard class accommodation and claimed at the most economical reasonable rate dependant on the rail company's prevailing ticket policy. However, with the approval of the Leader of the Council, Members are able to claim for first class rail journeys where this is appropriate.

Air travel at standard rate may also be claimed with the approval of the Leader of the Council where this is appropriate.

- (b) Travel by Member's own private vehicle

Travel by member's own private vehicle will be paid at the rate payable under the officers scheme. The current rate is shown below. If, during the year, the rates payable to officers is reviewed, then the scheme will be amended to pay the revised officer rates:-

for a motor or tri car:-

Up to 8,500 miles per annum	47p per mile
Additional miles in excess of 8,500 per annum	25p per mile

for a motor cycle:-

To match the rates payable under the Officer Scheme

- (c) The amount claimed for a journey may be increased by not more than the amount of any expenditure incurred on tolls, ferries or parking fees. Wherever possible receipts should be submitted.
- (d) Travel by bicycle may also be reimbursed at the rate of £2.00 per week for a regular user, or 40p per day for an occasional user.

Subsistence Allowance

- (a) Current rates and eligibility based on time of day are shown below. It is expected that claims will be made only where there are genuine and unavoidable additional expenses incurred. If during the year the rates payable to officers are reviewed then the scheme will be amended to pay the revised officer rates.

- (b) For an absence not involving an absence overnight from the usual place of residence, the maximum subsistence rates for Members operate on a meals basis and will be paid in line with the officer scheme.
- | | | |
|-------|---|--------|
| (i) | Breakfast allowance (when a journey commences before 7.30am) | £6.50 |
| (ii) | Lunch allowance (when a journey commences before 12 noon and continues after 2pm) | £9.00 |
| (iii) | Tea (when the absence continues after 6:30 pm) | £3.50 |
| (iii) | Evening meal allowance (when the absence continues after 8.30pm) | £11.00 |

Note: In line with the officer's scheme, it should be noted that where a dinner allowance is claimed, a tea allowance may not be claimed for the same day.

- (c) When main meals (ie a full breakfast, lunch or dinner) are taken on trains during a period for which there is an entitlement to daytime subsistence, the reasonable cost of the meals (including VAT) may be reimbursed in full, within the time limits specified below. In such circumstances, reimbursement for the reasonable cost of a meal would replace the entitlement to the day subsistence allowance for the appropriate meal period.
- (d) In line with the officers scheme, maximum overnight allowances for Bed and Breakfast are £76.50 outside London and £90.00 in London. Other meals taken during the absence are payable in line with the rates set out in section (b) above. These allowances apply where a Member makes their own arrangements for accommodation and reclaims an allowance. Where the arrangements are made by officers on behalf of the Member, then the County Council Travel Contract will be used to arrange appropriate accommodation at the most cost effective rate. Again in line with the officers' scheme it is recognised that there may be exceptional circumstances where consideration needs to be given to paying above these maximum rates. This may be necessary where other costs, eg conference fees, are part of a package, or where accommodation in a particular town or city are high and it can be shown that efforts have been made to find hotels or guest houses within the limits. Where such difficulties are likely to occur, it will normally be appropriate to ask officers to make the necessary arrangements using the County Council Travel Contract.
- (e) Subsistence allowances are limited to the reimbursement of actual expenditure, for which receipts are required, subject to the maximum rates set out in this scheme. Where any meal is provided free of charge by an authority or body in respect of the meal or the period to which the allowance relates no further allowance should then be claimed.

General Provisions

All claims shall only be payable if received within three months of the date of the entitlement arising.

7. Payments to Co-optees

A “Co-optee” is defined as a person who is not an elected member of the County Council, but who has been appointed to serve on one or more of the County Council Committees.

Co-optees Allowance

For each year a co-optees allowance will be paid to the Chairman and Independent Members of the Standards Committee in accordance with paragraph 2 of Schedule 1.

Travelling Allowance

All Co-optees are entitled to claim travelling allowance in line with Section 6 in the same way as Members of the Council.

8. Pensions

A councillor, subject to scheme eligibility criteria, may participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme if they wish. The councillor should give notice in writing to the Corporate Director – Finance and Central Services that they wish to participate. Pension contributions would then be payable on basic and special responsibility allowances that the councillor is entitled to and they would receive benefits in line with the regulations of the Local Government Pension Scheme for a councillor member.

9. Renunciation

A councillor may by notice in writing given to the Corporate Director – Finance and Central Services elect to forego any part of his entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

10. Part-year Entitlements

- (a) The provisions of this paragraph shall have effect to regulate the entitlements of a councillor to basic and special responsibility allowances where, in the course of a year, this scheme is amended or that councillor becomes, or ceases to be, a councillor, or accepts or relinquishes a special responsibility in respect of which a special responsibility allowance is payable.
- (b) Where a councillor does not hold office as such throughout a year, or the scheme is amended to change entitlement to basic allowance during a year, the basic allowance to which the councillor is entitled shall be treated as calculated on a daily basis, so that the entitlement shall be to the aggregate of the daily entitlements for each day on which the councillor holds office.
- (c) Where a councillor who receives a special responsibility allowance does not have the special responsibilities in question throughout a year, or this scheme is amended in a way which changes his or her entitlement to a special responsibility allowance during a year, the special responsibility allowance to which the councillor is entitled shall be treated as calculated on a daily basis, so that the entitlement shall be to the aggregate of the daily entitlements for each day on which the councillor has the special responsibilities.

- (d) A daily entitlement to basic allowance or special responsibility allowance is the annual amount of that allowance as it applies on the day in question, divided by the number of days in the year.
- (e) The Corporate Director – Finance and Central Services is authorised to automatically adjust the special responsibility allowances to reflect changes in the numerical strength of the Political groups. In these circumstances any such changes will take effect from the beginning of the month after which such a change has taken place.

11. Withholding of Allowances for Members under Suspension

- a) The Standards Committee shall have the ability to withhold any part of a Member's basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, co-optees allowance or travel and subsistence allowance payable for any period where, or in respect of duties from which, s/he is suspended or partially suspended under Part III of the Local Government Act 2000;
- b) The Standards Committee shall have the ability to require repayment of any allowance (or part thereof) already paid in respect of any period during which the Member concerned is suspended or partially suspended under Part III, ceases to be a Member of the authority or is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of that period; and
- c) That the withholding of the specified allowances or the requirement to repay any allowance in the circumstances set out above should continue during any period of appeal by the Member concerned under Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 and associated legislation. In the event of any appeal being successful in removing the suspension or partial suspension, then any withheld or repaid amount may be reimbursed to the Member where appropriate.

12. Claims and Payments

Payments shall be made in respect of basic and special responsibility allowances, in instalments of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme on the last working day of each month. Payments shall be made in respect of childcare and dependant carers' allowances, and travelling and subsistence allowances, on the last working day of the month in respect of claims received by the processing deadline.

13. Attendance by Councillors

- (a) Individual councillors are expected to attend meetings of the Executive/Committees to which they are appointed. Periodic reports of attendance level will be made to the Standards Committee.
- (b) Individual councillors' attendance will be published annually.

SCHEDULE 1

1. The following are specified as the special responsibilities in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable, and the amounts of those allowances:

Post	<i>Allowance Per annum per Member</i> £
Chairman of the County Council	9,264
Vice Chairman of the County Council	3,088
Leader of the County Council	24,704
Deputy Leader of the Council	15,440
Other Executive Members (5):	13,896
Chairman of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	9,264
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (4):	4,632
Vice-Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (5):	1,544
Chairmen of Area Committees (7):	3,088
Chairman of Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee	3,088
Chairman of the Appeals Committee	3,088
Chairman of the Employment Appeals Committee	1,544
Chairman of Pensions Committee	4,632
Chairman of Scrutiny Board	1,544
Chairman of Audit Committee	3,088
Champions (2)	4,632
Leaders of Political Groups:	
Where group is second party in terms of group membership	4,632
Other parties, where group has over 10% of all Members	2,316
Secretaries of Political Groups	
Where group is first party in terms of group membership	2,316
Where group is second party in terms of group membership	1,544
Other parties, where group has over 10% of all Members	772

These allowances are payable in addition to the basic allowance.

2. The following is specified as the co-optee allowance payable, and the amount of that allowance:

Chairman of the Standards Committee	3,088
Independent Members of the Standards Committee (3)	772

SCHEME OF APPROVED DUTIES - Eligibility for travel and subsistence allowances

All Members of the County Council are entitled to receive payment of travelling and subsistence allowances in respect of expenditure necessarily incurred by them for the purpose of enabling them to perform an **Approved Duty**.

List of Approved Duties

- (a) All meetings of the County Council, the Executive, and any Committees of the Council or of the Executive, and any Sub-Committees, Panels or Working Parties they may establish.
- (b) Visits by Executive Members, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees on County Council business associated with those roles.
- (c) Meetings, outside of formal Council meetings, attended by Members with officers, for the purpose of progressing County Council business, provided that:
 - the journey is strictly necessary for the matter to be resolved in an effective way;
 - the issue could not be dealt with at the same time that other business is being undertaken, for example on the same day as a formal meeting, so as to avoid an unnecessary journey; and
 - is reasonably undertaken in pursuit of the Council's work.
- (d) Attendance of Members at training courses and seminars approved by the Chief Executive.
- (e) Attendance at conferences, subject to the specific arrangements set out in the **Protocol on Members Attendance at Conferences** within the County Council's Constitution.
- (f) Attendance as an authorised representative of the County Council at meetings of specified outside bodies listed in Sections 1 and 2 of Schedule 5 of Part 3 to the Constitution. (Note: Expenses will not be payable where they are payable by the body appointed to, in which case case, the claim should be submitted to the body concerned.) In particular it should be noted that the Police, Fire and National Park Authorities have their own arrangements in relation to the payment of these allowances.
- (g) Attendance at Parish Council Meetings in connection with the work of the County Council.

Certain duties, specifically relating to formal meetings of the County Council are covered by Regulations made under the Local Government Act 1972. At its meeting on 19 July 2000 the County Council gave the Chief Executive authority to designate approved duties arising from any changes to these Regulations.

Duties for which travelling and subsistence will not be paid

It should be noted that travel/subsistence allowances are not payable to Members of the County Council for the following purposes:

- Acting as Governors of primary or secondary schools
- Constituency business
- Social functions

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PROTOCOL

ON

MEMBERS ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES

1. The County Council will not meet the cost of conference attendance, including any related travelling and subsistence expenses, unless attendance at that conference has been authorised. A number of conferences have been approved by the Executive, as set out in paragraph 6 below. All other conferences will require specific authorisation as set out in this protocol.
2. All arrangements for attendance at conferences should be made through the Staff Officer to the Chief Executive.
3. Travelling and subsistence allowances will be paid in accordance with the Members Allowances Scheme. In general, the County Council will not meet the cost of accommodation associated with attending a conference held within the County although arrangements will be flexible dependent on the associated transport costs compared with accommodation costs.
4. If any Member obtains information on a conference they would wish to attend, they should contact the Staff Officer to the Chief Executive, to discuss the possible attendance. In the event of there being several expressions of interest, attendance will normally be restricted to a maximum of five members (three members from the controlling group and two from other groups).
5. Attendance at party political and political conferences is specifically excluded from this protocol. All expenses associated with attendance at these events will be met by the relevant group, or the individual concerned.
6. The following conferences have been approved by the Executive for the attendance detailed below. Further authorisation from the Staff Officer to the Chief Executive is not required. In all cases, however, she will need to be informed of arrangements made. All references to Executive and Scrutiny Members should be taken to mean those Members with the relevant portfolio.
 - Local Government Association Annual Conference and the CCN Annual Conference – representatives appointed at the annual meeting of the County Council, unless they are unable to attend, in which case they may appoint an alternative Member to attend in their place.
 - North of England Education Conference – Executive Members plus Scrutiny Chair and Vice-Chairs.
 - Council of Local Education Authorities – Executive Members plus Scrutiny Chair and Vice-Chairs.
 - Public Libraries Association Conference – Executive Member plus Scrutiny Chair and Vice-Chairs.
 - RTPI Conference – Executive Member and the Chairman of Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee.
 - Trading Standards Conference – Executive Member plus Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

- CIPFA Conference – Leader and Deputy Leader.
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Conference – attended by the Executive member.
 - National Transport Conference – Executive Members and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs.
 - The National Children and Adults Services Conference – Executive Members.
7. In the case of conferences associated with training events, Members will be entitled to claim expenses if that conference attendance is approved by the Chief Executive. In the first instance, the request should be passed to the Staff Officer to the Chief Executive.
 8. It is open, at any time, to an individual member to attend a conference on their own initiative provided they meet all travel, subsistence and attendance costs including registration fees.
 9. Attendance by Officers at Conferences will be a matter for the relevant Directorate both in arrangement and funding terms.

Recommended Allowances - 2011/12

	<u>NO OF UNITS</u>	<u>RECOMMENDED 2011/12 ALLOWANCE</u>	<u>Number Of Allowances</u>	<u>TOTAL COST OF RECOMMENDED ALLOWANCE 2011/12</u>
		£		£
Value of a Unit		1,544		
BASIC ALLOWANCE	5.825	8,994	72	647,554
SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES				
Chairman of the County Council	6	9,264	1	9,264
Vice Chairman of the County Council	2	3,088	1	3,088
Leader of the County Council	16	24,704	1	24,704
Deputy Leader	10	15,440	1	15,440
Other Executive Members (Note 1)	9	13,896	5	69,480
Chairman Of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Note 2)	6	9,264	1	9,264
Chairman of Other Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Note 2)	3	4,632	4	18,528
Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Note 2)	1	1,544	5	7,720
Chairman of Area Committees	2	3,088	7	21,616
Chairman of Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee	2	3,088	1	3,088
Chairman of Appeals Committee	2	3,088	1	3,088
Chairman of Employment Appeals Committee	1	1,544	1	1,544
Chairman of Pensions Committee	3	4,632	1	4,632
Chairman of Scrutiny Board	1	1,544	1	1,544
Chairman of Audit Committee	2	3,088	1	3,088
Champion for Young People	3	4,632	1	4,632
Champion for Older People	3	4,632	1	4,632
<u>Leaders of Political Groups</u>				
Second largest group membership (Liberal Democrats)	3	4,632	1	4,632
Third largest group membership (Independent)	1.5	2,316	1	2,316
<u>Secretaries of Political Groups</u>				
Largest Group Membership (Conservatives)	1.5	2,316	1	2,316
Second largest group membership (Liberal Democrats)	1	1,544	1	1,544
Third largest group membership (Independent)	0.5	772	1	772
CO-OPTEE ALLOWANCES				
Chairman of Standards Committee	2	3,088	1	3,088
Independent Members of the Standards Committee	0.5	772	3	2,316
Total Basic Allowances			72	647,554
Total Special Responsibility Allowances			39	216,932
Total Co-Optee Allowances			4	5,404
National Insurance Costs				62,000
Pension Scheme Costs				59,000
Estimated Travel and Subsistence (Note 3)				150,000
Total Costs				1,140,890

Note 1 : The number of Executive Members was reduced by the County Council in July 2010 from 7 to 5

Note 2 : In July 2010, the review of Overview and Scrutiny arrangements led to a reduction in the number of Committees from 9 to 5 (including the Scrutiny of Health Committee)

Note 3: The cost of travelling and subsistence includes claims made by Co-opted Members as well as Elected Councillors