

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 19 JUNE 2001 AT 10.30 A.M.

Agenda Item No:

10

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - INDEPENDENT PANEL

Report of the County Secretary

1. Purpose of Report

To ask the Council to authorise the appointment of an Independent Panel to deal with any amendments to the Scheme of Members Allowances.

2. Background

The Council at its meeting on 27 February 2001 agreed the recommendations of an Independent Panel set up to look at Members Allowances.

The Panel comprised:

Don Latham (Chairman), Private Local Government Consultant

Greg Grant, Regional Secretary, UNISON

Peter Setterfield, Chairman of the Hertfordshire Magistrates' Courts' Committee.

In accordance with the decision of the Council, the County Secretary made a new Members Allowances Scheme on 1 May, to take effect on 11 June 2001.

3. Information

In May 2001, the Government issued new Regulations which require all Councils to set up Independent Panels to make recommendations on allowances. In future, a Scheme of Allowances cannot be made, or amended, without such a Panel having first considered the matter and made recommendations. The Regulations are accompanied by guidance which advises that the Panel should be representative of the community and should be appointed following public advertisement.

By law, the Scheme of Allowances has to be re-made each financial year, and the Council will therefore have to set up an Independent Panel which complies with the new rules in time for April 2002. The current Scheme can stand until then. But if there is any wish to amend the current Scheme during 2001/2, an Independent Panel would be required earlier.

The Council may wish to authorise the County Secretary to appoint the previous Panel to consider any amendments which may be required during 2001/2.

There can then be discussions between Group Leaders about the constitution of the Independent Panel for future years, taking into account the Government's guidance. The possibility of a joint Panel with District Councils could also be explored. A proposal on the way forward would then be brought to the Council Meeting on 27 November 2001.

4. Financial Implications

None directly arising from this report.