

## **TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Tewkesbury Borough Council Independent Remuneration Panel was established pursuant to the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

1.2 The Panel comprised:

Mr Paul Johnstone (Chairman)

Mrs Margaret Styles

Mr Stephen Lodge

Mr Stuart Macphie

#### **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

2.1 The Panel approved the following Terms of Reference:

1. To make recommendations to Council on the appropriate level and nature of allowances payable to Tewkesbury Borough Councillors under the Scheme of Allowances for implementation in May 2011 which:-
  - a) conform to the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003;
  - b) recognise the duties and levels of responsibility which fall upon them; and,
  - c) are clear, unambiguous, easy to administer, explain and justify to the local community.

The recommendations will cover as a minimum :-

- i) The Basic Allowance.
- ii) The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances.
- iii) Travel Allowances.
- iv) Subsistence Allowances.
- v) Dependent Carers Allowances.
- vi) Pensions.
- vii) Suspension of Allowances.
- viii) Duration of Scheme.

2. To undertake the role of Parish Remuneration Panel and make recommendations on the following:-
  - i) the amounts of Parish Basic, Travel and Subsistence Allowances;
  - ii) whether the Parish Basic Allowance should be available to all Members of the Parish Council or only to the Chairman; and,
  - iii) the duties for which Travel and Subsistence Allowance may be claimed.

### **3. THE REVIEW**

#### **(a) Preparation**

- 3.1 Prior to the commencement of the Review, the Panel was provided with a briefing on its role and task. This was delivered by Graham Russell, Independent Local Government Adviser, Chair of the West Dorset Independent Remuneration Panel, Chair of the Regional Meeting of Chairs of the Independent Remuneration Panels and Independent Adviser to South Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset Independent Panels.

#### **(b) Evidence Reviewed**

- 3.2 To assist with the Review, a variety of information was considered which included:

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| Guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Council Constitutions – Government Guidance on Consolidated Regulations.</li><li>• South West Councils – A Practical Guide for those involved in the work of Independent Remuneration Panels.</li></ul> |
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Tewkesbury Borough Council Political Structure, Make-Up and Roles.

Current Scheme of Allowances.

Independent Remuneration Panel Reports 2004, 2006 & 2008.

Survey of Allowances 2010/11.

- 3.3 The Panel composed a questionnaire that was sent to all 38 Members of the Council.

- 3.4 21 responses were received, the main points from which are set out below:

- There was a significant variation in the number of hours spent on undertaking the role of a Councillor which ranged from 8 hours per week to 50 hours per week.

- The majority felt Special Responsibility Allowances should be included in the Scheme but there was no majority view on who should receive them and what percentages of the Basic Allowance would be appropriate for each post. Most felt that only one Special Responsibility Allowance should be received regardless as to how many roles an individual Councillor undertook.
- There was little support for the Government guidance that part of a Councillors' commitment should be regarded as 'public service' unpaid voluntary work, but if there was to be a voluntary element it should be between 10%-20% and certainly not 30% as suggested in the guidance.
- There was a lot of support for a minimum level of activity by a Councillor in order to qualify for a Basic Allowance, together with support for the voluntary repayment of a proportion of the Basic Allowance, but there was no consensus on how any repayment should be calculated.
- The main barrier to people standing as Councillors was identified as meetings taking place during the day.
- Most felt that Tewkesbury could not be compared to any other Authority but some identified the Forest of Dean, Cotswold and Wychavon Authorities as being comparable.
- Senior Managers, Company Directors and Chief Executives were believed to be comparable roles between that of a Councillor and an equivalent position in the private sector.
- Many Councillors who responded to the questionnaire were not in favour of cutting allowances in line with the 13% grant reduction received by the Council, although some indicated that lesser cuts could be considered.
- The reasons for not accepting previous Panel Reports included a perceived lack of understanding on the part of the Panel of a Councillors' role and workload, too much emphasis on Special Responsibility Allowances and unfairness in the distribution of the overall pot.

### 3.5 The Panel also met with the following Councillors:

- Councillor Robert Vines – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Phil Taylor – Deputy Leader of the Council
- Councillor Bill Whelan – Lead Member for Community Development
- Councillor Allen Keyte – Lead Member for Finance & Asset Management
- Councillor Jim Mason – Lead Member for Clean & Green Environment
- Councillor Derek Davies – Lead Member for Built Environment
- Councillor Peter Richmond – Frontline Member
- Councillor Mrs Kay Berry – Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Ms Audrey Ricks – Lead Member for Organisational Development
- Councillor Gordon Shurmer – Frontline Member

3.6 A summary of the main points from these discussions are as follows:

- There was no consensus but it was clear that many of the Councillors who took on additional roles felt that this created extra work for them. Those Councillors who did not take on extra roles did not recognise that additional work was involved with these roles.
- All Councillors felt that they were not compensated adequately for the time and effort that they put in and that the public did not fully understand the commitment required to be a Councillor.
- Many Councillors felt that Tewkesbury was unique in the way it transacted its business, it was different from all other Authorities and comparisons were not valid.
- Most Councillors felt that a high Basic Allowance with very few Special Responsibility Allowances suited the way that the Council operated and should not be changed.
- Some Councillors felt that the public had little interest in allowances paid to Members.
- Several Councillors accepted that a cut in the Basic Allowance was appropriate but no more than £1,000.
- Many Councillors were doubtful that the Review would result in any major change to the Scheme of Allowances.

3.7 A discussion also took place with Mike Dawson, the Council's Chief Executive, who explained in more detail the Political Structure of the Council and the roles of Members.

#### **4. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

##### **(a) Basic Allowance**

4.1 Each Local Authority must make provision in its Scheme of Allowances for a basic, flat rate allowance payable to all Councillors of the Authority. The allowance must be the same for each Councillor. The allowance may be paid in a lump sum or in instalments through the year.

4.2 The Panel had a significant amount of deliberation on the amount Councillors should be able to claim as a Basic Allowance. The Panel was mindful of Government guidance which states that the Basic Allowance *“is intended to recognise the time commitment of all Councillors including such inevitable calls on their time, such as meetings with Officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings”* and *“it is important that some element of the work of Members continues to be voluntary – that some hours are not remunerated. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by Elected Members, and further to ensure that, despite the input required, people are encouraged to come forward as Elected Members and that their service to the community is retained”*. The guidance also suggests that Authorities may wish to be guided by the Local Government Association daily rate, or local/regional wage rates, or other members of the voluntary sector e.g. members of local health trusts.

4.3 In determining a Basic Allowance, the Panel took into account the Government guidance but also the current public expenditure cuts and the Council's reduction in Government grant of 13% in 2011/12. It was noted that the current budget for the payment of Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances was £344,250 and each Councillor received a Basic Allowance of £9,000 compared against a survey of 4<sup>th</sup> Option Councils in the South West where the Basic Allowance ranged from £3,600 - £4,779.

4.4 The Panel decided upon a formula for the Basic Allowance in accordance with the following:

- The Office of National Statistics 2010 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings found that the full-time weekly earnings for men was £538 compared with £439 for women. The median of these figures resulted in a figure of £489 per week.
- The normal working week in the public sector was based on 37 hours. Taking out the extremes of the number of hours worked by Councillors, according to the questionnaire, resulted in an average working week of 15 hours. This was based solely on work directly attributable to the role of a Borough Councillor without additional roles such as Lead Member which should be accommodated via a Special Responsibility Allowance. Councillors do a lot of other community work on Parish Councils, voluntary bodies etc. which was not included in the Basic Allowance as this was solely to recognise the role of Borough Councillor.
- It is quite clear from the guidance that the role is voluntary, it is not a salaried position, it is something that people volunteered to undertake when they stand for election. On this basis, the voluntary element of 30% was still valid and should be applied.

4.5 The outcome of this gave a Basic Allowance of:-

$$£489 \div 37^{\text{hrs}} \times 15^{\text{hrs}} = £198 \text{ per week}$$

$$£198 \times 52 \text{ weeks} = £10,296$$

$$£10,296 - 30\% = £7,207$$

4.6 In proposing a Basic Allowance of £7,200 the Panel was keen to point out that this was still significantly higher than other Authorities but, taking account of all the information provided by Councillors, the significant financial impact on Councillors of bringing the Basic Allowance in line with other Authorities, and the comments about all Councillors having similar workloads regardless of extra roles, this was felt to be justifiable. Nevertheless, the Panel wished to express the view that the Council should aim for comparability in the future, particularly if a formal Cabinet structure was proposed following the Election on which change a further remuneration scheme would need to be devised.

4.7 **Recommendation:**

**That the Basic Allowance for all Councillors be £7,200.**

## **(b) Special Responsibility Allowances**

4.8 Each Local Authority may also make provision in its Scheme for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances for those Councillors who have significant responsibilities. Special Responsibility Allowances may be payable for duties which fall within the following categories:

- Acting as Leader or Deputy Leader of a Political Group.
- Membership of the Executive, where an Authority is operating Executive Arrangements.
- Presiding at meetings of a Committee, Sub-Committee or Joint Committee.
- Representing the Authority at meetings of another body.
- Membership of a Committee or Sub-Committee that meets with exceptional frequency, or for exceptionally long periods.
- Acting as a spokesperson for a Political Group on a Committee or Sub-Committee.
- Membership of an Adoption Appeals Panel or Panel dealing with licensing or controlling any activity.
- Any other activities in relation to the discharge of the Authority's functions as to require equal or greater effort of the Member than any of the activities listed above.

4.9 A Scheme must also specify the amounts of allowance to be paid for each responsibility and, where one Political Group is in control and where an Authority has decided to pay Special Responsibility Allowances, the Authority must make the provision for payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to at least one Member of a minority group.

4.10 The Panel was aware that, under the current Scheme, only the Mayor and Deputy Mayor received a Special Responsibility Allowance of £2,000 and £1,250 respectively. However, the Council had revised its Political Structure since adopting the current Scheme which placed added responsibilities on the Leader, Deputy Leader and Lead Members, although not to the same level as a formal Cabinet structure. On this basis, the Panel identified the following roles which may be applicable for a Special Responsibility Allowance:

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- Lead Members
- Group Leaders
- Chairmen of Committees
- Mayor
- Deputy Mayor

4.11 The Panel was of the view that the calculation used for the Basic Allowance should provide the platform on which to determine amounts payable for Special Responsibility Allowances. Using the role of the Leader of the Council as the benchmark, the Panel applied the following formula:

$$£489 \div 37 \text{ hrs} \times 22 \text{ hrs} = £290.76$$

$$£290.75 \times 52 \text{ weeks} = £15,119$$

$$£15,119 - 30\% = £10,583$$

$$£10,583 - 25\%* = £7,937$$

\*the 25% further reduction recognises that the Council does not operate a formal Cabinet structure and therefore there is a reduced responsibility for individual Councillors which is reflected in a higher than average Basic Allowance which recognises a more corporate level of responsibility and the way in which the Council operates.

4.12 The Panel felt that the following roles should receive a percentage of the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Leader of the Council:

Deputy Leader	75%
Lead Members	50%
Chairmen of Committees (Planning, Overview & Scrutiny, Licensing and Audit)	25%

The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor was considered to be separate from the other roles and could not be appropriately applied to the formula for Special Responsibility Allowances used above and, accordingly, the Panel determined that no change should be made to the existing arrangements for these roles.

4.13 **Recommendation:**

**That the following Special Responsibility Allowances be payable:**

<b>Leader of the Council</b>	<b>£7,937</b>
<b>Deputy Leader</b>	<b>£5,953</b>
<b>Lead Members (7)</b>	<b>£3,969</b>
<b>Committee Chairmen (4)</b>	<b>£1,984</b>
<b>Mayor</b>	<b>£2,000</b>
<b>Deputy Mayor</b>	<b>£1,250</b>

4.14 The Panel also considered that, where a Councillor was undertaking more than one role, the Councillor should only receive one Special Responsibility Allowance based on whichever role received the highest allowance.

4.15 **Recommendation:**

**Councillors who carry out more than one role which would attract a Special Responsibility Allowance are only entitled to claim the highest applicable Special Responsibility Allowance.**

### **(c) Independent and Parish Members of the Standards Committee**

4.16 The Independent and Parish Members of the Standards Committee currently receive an Allowance of £1,000, together with the payment of travelling at 40p per mile, which was the rate currently payable to Members of the Council.

4.17 The Panel was advised of the fact that the Localism Bill proposed the abolition of the current Standards Regime, although this was unlikely to happen for another 12 months. After this time, Authorities would have the option of establishing voluntary local arrangements. On this basis, the Panel determined that the arrangements currently in place should remain unchanged but this would be subject to review should the Council decide upon voluntary arrangements.

4.18 **Recommendation:**

**That the Independent and Parish Members of the Standards Committee receive a Co-Optees Allowance of £1,000 to be kept under review should the Council opt to introduce voluntary arrangements.**

### **(d) Co-Optees/Invitees**

4.19 The Panel considered whether payments should be made to invitees which generally tended to cover people invited to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to represent special interest groups or give a specialist view on a topic that the Committee may be scrutinising. Although invitees may take part in debate they do not have any voting rights. Whilst the Panel acknowledged the contribution that Co-Optees/invitees made, it did not feel it appropriate to pay an allowance for this role.

4.20 **Recommendation:**

**That Co-Optees/invitees should not receive an allowance but the Council should ensure that they are fully reimbursed for any travel expenses incurred in attending meetings.**

### **(e) Councillors' IT Equipment**

4.21 The Panel noted the current arrangements in place as set out below:

- Provision of a laptop, with standard office and anti-virus software, plus a combined scanner/printer and a broadband connection in a Councillors home location. A docking station, monitor and mouse are also provided, if required, plus two reams of paper and up to three printer cartridges per year.
- Councillors who already have suitable ICT provision in place which they would prefer to use in support of their role as a Councillor can elect to do so. The cost of the broadband connection will be met by the Council and a printer/scanner is provided, if required, plus two reams of paper and up to three printer cartridges per year.
- Blackberry's are made available for Members of the Executive Committee.

4.22 In view of the comprehensive arrangements already in place, the Panel did not see any need to make any recommendations in respect of IT for inclusion in the Scheme of Allowances.

4.23 **Recommendation:**

**That no reference to IT be included in the Council's Scheme of Allowances.**

**(f) Travel Allowances**

4.24 The Panel was advised of the following provisions contained within the existing Scheme:

Payable for all Approved Duties

Use of car or van 40p per mile

Motorcycle 24p per mile

Bicycle 20p per mile

Passenger Supplement Per Passenger 5p per mile

Journeys exceeding 50 miles in total within Tewkesbury Borough

1p per mile thereafter

Expenditure on tolls, public transport, taxis, parking fees etc. to be reimbursed for approved duties upon the production of receipts.

4.25 The Panel was of the view that the Travel Allowances should be the same as that for staff. Although these were currently higher than the allowances for Councillors, the Panel was advised that, for 2011/12, staff would be transferred onto the Inland Revenue Rates for the payment of mileage allowances which would bring them into line with the rates currently paid to Councillors.

4.26 **Recommendation:**

**That no change be made to the existing arrangements in respect of the payment of Travel Allowances.**

**(g) Subsistence Allowances**

4.27 The current Scheme allowed the following payments for approved duties taking place outside of the Council Offices:

Breakfast (in the case of an absence from the usual place of residence of more than 4 hours before 11am) £4.48

Lunch (in the case of an absence from the usual place of residence of more than 4 hours and including the period between 12noon and 2pm) £6.17

Tea (in the case of an absence from the usual place of residence of more than 4 hours and including the period 3pm to 5pm) £2.43

Evening meal (in the case of an absence from the usual place of residence of more than 4 hours ending after 6pm) £7.64

4.28 These were the maximum amounts payable and any claim would only be paid on the production of receipts.

4.29 The Panel was advised that, for the financial year 2010/11 (to date), only £18.00 had been claimed in subsistence and therefore the Panel did not see any need for the current arrangements to be changed.

4.30 **Recommendation:**

**That no change be made to the existing arrangements in respect of the payment of Subsistence Allowances.**

**(h) Dependant Carers' Allowance**

4.31 The current Scheme of Allowances provides for a maximum rate payable of £6.00 per hour with no overall daily maximum.

4.32 The Carers' Allowance is payable in respect of:

- a) Children aged 14 or under.
- b) Elderly relatives requiring full-time care.
- c) Relatives with disabilities or nursing requirements who require either temporary or permanent full-time care.

4.33 In each case, the dependant must normally live with the claimants as part of the family and be unable to be left unsupervised.

4.34 Claims are only payable upon the production of receipts.

4.35 There had been no claims for the Dependent Carers' Allowance over the past year and the Panel had no evidence that there was any need for change.

4.36 **Recommendation:**

**That the existing arrangements for the Dependant Carers' Allowance remain unchanged.**

**(i) Pension**

4.37 Tewkesbury Borough Councillors are not currently entitled to be part of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Panel felt that this was an issue which needed to be addressed nationally and therefore did not feel that there should be any change to the current arrangements.

4.38 **Recommendation:**

**That Tewkesbury Borough Councillors should not currently be entitled to be part of the Local Government Pension Scheme.**

## **(j) Suspension and Renunciation**

4.39 The Council's current Scheme states as follows:

### Suspension

Where a Councillor is wholly or partly suspended because of a breach of the Code of Conduct, the allowances (excluding the Dependant Carers' Allowance) payable to that Councillor shall also be suspended for the period of the suspension. In the case of partial suspension, the Standards Committee will determine the appropriate amount, if any, of the allowance to be withheld.

### Renunciation

A Councillor may, by notice in writing given to the Borough Solicitor, elect to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under this Scheme.

The Panel was of the view that these provisions were still relevant and should be retained.

4.40 **Recommendation:**

**That no change be made to the current provisions on Suspension and Renunciation.**

## **(k) Repayment**

4.41 The questionnaire to Councillors showed significant support for the repayment of a proportion of the Basic Allowance where a minimum standard of performance was not met, although there was little agreement on what the minimum standard should be. The Panel recognised that any repayment would be voluntary as the legislation required that any Basic Allowance must be the same for all Councillors and there was no provision for repayment.

4.42 **Recommendation:**

**That the following provision be included in the Council's Scheme:**

**"If a Councillor does not attend at least two-thirds of the total number of scheduled meetings of the Council, or of the Executive, or of Committees of which he/she is a Member, the Councillor concerned should be invited to pay back an appropriate percentage of his/her Basic Allowance up to a maximum of 25% of the Basic Allowance."**

**"If a Member is absent from Council business for more than one continuous month (other than on illness grounds) the Member concerned should be invited to pay back a sum equivalent to the amount of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances paid for any single period of absence which exceeds one month."**

**"For periods of long term absences due to illness the Council should review its position on a case by case basis."**

## **(l) Period of Scheme and Review**

4.43 The Panel was mindful of the fact that the current Scheme was due to expire in May 2011 and, in accordance with the Regulations, unless a Panel Report was considered, and a Scheme agreed by 31 March 2011, the Council would be unable to introduce a Scheme for 2011/12. The Panel was also aware of the fact that the current Scheme had been implemented for a three year period in order that those Councillors standing for election in May 2011 would be aware of the allowances they would be entitled to receive before putting themselves forward as candidates. However, during the discussions with Councillors, and on some of the responses to the questionnaires, the view was expressed that the Council was facing all out Elections in May that could result in a change of political make-up, and consequently political structure, and therefore this was not the right time for the Scheme to be reviewed.

4.44 **Recommendation:**

**That the Scheme be introduced for four years but, should the political structure of the Council change following the Elections in May, the Panel be reconvened to review its recommendations.**

## **(m) Other Amendments to the Scheme**

4.45 The Panel did not see the need for any other changes to the existing Scheme to be made including the Schedule of Approved Duties shown at Appendix 1.

**Recommendation:**

**That no other changes be made to the Scheme of Allowances, including the Schedule of Approved Duties.**

## **5. THE BUDGET**

5.1 The current budget for Basic Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances is £344,250. The Panel's proposals for a new Scheme amounted to £326,459 which is a 5.17% saving in the sum of £17,791. The Panel was of the view that this was appropriate and justifiable in the current climate.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 The Panel wished to make the following points in concluding their report:

- Councillors work extremely hard in a very challenging environment which is not always recognised or appreciated by the electorate.
- The role of a Councillor is voluntary, it is not that of an employee and it is not a salaried position. The remuneration within a Scheme of Allowances is intended to recognise the commitment of Councillors and prevent financial loss.
- Tewkesbury Borough Council is not unique, it faces the same challenges and issues as other comparable Authorities across the Country. Its remuneration scheme cannot justifiably remain so markedly different from neighbouring or similar Authorities.

- Taking account of the Council's current Scheme of Allowances, the response to the questionnaires, the face to face discussions with Councillors and the Chief Executive, the national position, the Council's Structure and role of Councillors the Panel aimed to put forward proposals that were:
  - 1) logical and pragmatic;
  - 2) fair;
  - 3) a stepping stone towards comparability with other Authorities; and,
  - 4) an acknowledgment of the current fiscal climate.

6.2 Finally the Panel wished to thank Councillors and the Chief Executive for their time and contributions to inform the Panel's work.

## 7. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Basic Allowance payable to all Councillors be £7,200.
- That the following Special Responsibility Allowances be payable:
 

Leader of the Council	£7,937
Deputy Leader	£5,953
Lead Members (7)	£3,969
Committee Chairmen (4)	£1,984
Mayor	£2,000
Deputy Mayor	£1,250
- Councillors who carry out more than one role which would attract a Special Responsibility Allowance are only entitled to claim the highest applicable Special Responsibility Allowance.
- That the Independent and Parish Members of the Standards Committee receive a Co-Optees Allowance of £1,000 to be kept under review should the Council opt to introduce voluntary arrangements.
- That Co-Optees/invitees should not receive an allowance but the Council should ensure that they are fully reimbursed for any travel expenses incurred in attending meetings.
- That no reference to IT be included in the Council's Scheme of Allowances.
- That no change be made to the existing arrangements in respect of the payment of Travel Allowances.
- That no change be made to the existing arrangements in respect of the payment of Subsistence Allowances.
- That the existing arrangements for the Dependant Carers' Allowance remain unchanged.

- That Tewkesbury Borough Councillors should not currently be entitled to be part of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- That no change be made to the current provisions on Suspension and Renunciation.
- That the following provision be included in the Council's Scheme:
 

“If a Councillor does not attend at least two-thirds of the total number of scheduled meetings of the Council, or of the Executive, or of Committees of which he/she is a Member, the Councillor concerned should be invited to pay back an appropriate percentage of his/her Basic Allowance up to a maximum of 25% of the Basic Allowance.”

“If a Member is absent from Council business for more than one continuous month (other than on illness grounds) the Member concerned should be invited to pay back a sum equivalent to the amount of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances paid for any single period of absence which exceeds one month.”

“For periods of long term absences due to illness the Council should review its position on a case by case basis.”
- That the Scheme be introduced for four years but, should the political structure of the Council change following the Elections in May, the Panel be reconvened to review its recommendations.
- That no other changes be made to the Scheme of Allowances, including the Schedule of Approved Duties.

**REVIEW OF SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

**APPROVED DUTIES**

The following are deemed to be approved duties for the purposes of claiming travelling allowances:-

- a) Formal meetings of the Council including Committees, Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Advisory Panels.
- b) Meetings of other bodies to which the Council makes appointments.
- c) Authorised training events and conferences which relate to the duties of the Council.
- d) Attendance at meetings and events relating to the duties of the Council at the request of a Borough Council Officer.
- e) Any other duty undertaken for the purpose of or in connection with the discharge of the functions of the Council or any of its Committees subject to the prior approval of the Borough Solicitor
- f) Any meetings arranged by an Officer with a Lead/Shadow Member at the Council Offices to discuss items within their Portfolio
- g) Any meeting which a Lead Officer has asked the Lead/Shadow Member to attend (whether at the Council Offices or elsewhere)
- h) Invitations to Lead/Shadow Members to attend events, seminars, presentations etc within a Member's Portfolio, subject to prior approval by the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Lead Officer