

**LABOUR GROUP COMMENTS TO INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON  
CAMBRIDGE CITY MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2010/11**

Dear Panel members

We also look forward to explaining our Group's points below, and responding to any questions.

**1 SIMPLER, FAIRER, TRANSPARENT SYSTEM NEEDED - AND PERFECTLY DOABLE**

We appreciate that finances are very tight but major benefits can be obtained from overdue changes to the current system from the limited funds available that will make arrangements

- simpler, so the myriad of different formulae and devices are made simple
- fairer, and
- transparent, so the public can see what we are paid.

You earlier supported some of our points. We support the principles and changes proposed by the Panel in November 2008, and were astonished when these were then rejected en bloc with no discussion or debate by the majority party on the Council, and rejected since each time they have been raised in Committee

We also re-attach BELOW our Labour Group comments to the Panel at that time. Sadly, EIGHTEEN MONTHS LATER - no progress has been made on these issues either, so we will talk through them all over again.

This includes inaction by the Council by failing to provide Councillors with the basic computer and email systems that are needed to perform effectively, though maybe progress can be made later in 2010.

**2 INDEPENDENT PANEL NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED BY COUNCIL TO TAKE THE DECISIONS - NOT THE MAJORITY PARTY IN SECRET**

We want to see an end to the majority party annually undermining the Independent Remuneration Panel, by making allowances decisions in secret in their own party group on issues affecting the rights of ALL Councillors not just their members. The way the Panel's annual report is treated and commonly rejected has to change.

As in Parliament, it is not the right of a single political party on Cambridge City Council to decide allowances, and to impose their 'remuneration policies'. These appear to include a Liberal Democrat policy that none of their people should ever take an allowance cut, as was stated during the last Civic Affairs Committee allowance discussion in March 2010.

**3 REDISTRIBUTION FROM EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS TO ALL COUNCILLORS**

As the ATTACHED thorough Excel spreadsheet by the UK Local Government Association shows - Cambridge has about the lowest basic Councillor allowance in England - despite this, Cambridge Executive Councillors enjoy a higher payment than a large number of adjacent District Councils in East England.

Majority party decisions including a year when Executive Councillors gained 27% mean an undue and unfair high share of the Allowances budget is paid to 7 Executive Councillors rather than shared more fairly between 42 Councillors. This is despite their chosen committee system diluting the workload of Executive Councillors by operating pre-2000 style non-scrutiny

Committees.

Cambridge Executive Councillors are paid over three times the amount of other Councillors, and it is questionable how some of their work contributions compare to that of many non-Executive Councillors.

Perhaps the Panel would also support trialling a diary system first with the 7 Executive Councillors.

Our further November 2008 points are below. Happy to explain any point.

Regards

Councillor Lewis Herbert  
Leader of the Labour Group

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#### INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - LABOUR GROUP COMMENTS IN NOVEMBER 2008

Still valid because nothing has changed and Panel's recommendations were rejected by the Liberal Democrats

- 1 The square root principle only had/has legitimacy if applies across all Councillors. It is not now being applied fairly
- 2 The basic allowance should be increased and be more in line with that for corresponding councils. Most councillors are recompensed by less than the equivalent minimum wage per hour. This needs to include
  - a breaking its use as the unit for calculating all special allowances

The Panel showed this by getting around it/in adding a special allowance for membership of Area Committees

- b if necessary, reducing payments to the seven Executive Councillors who are now being paid over £10,000/year

Council governance continues to act via a version of Committees and has not adopted the 2000 Executive Councillor/Cabinet model of governance.

#### On Other Issues

- 3 The council needs to provide Councillors with better tools to do their jobs e.g. Broadband is still not connected for all Councillors, better email needed as Council system works badly when used remotely including with 20MB emails, and Blackberrys should be available for remote working, diary management etc
- 4 A range of inconsistencies need to be removed in allowance %s eg. For Minority Spokes that should be the same for all Committees, including so the system is transparent for the public
- 5 Labour Councillors are not against a straightforward time recording system.