

**Meeting:           AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
**Date:               22 JULY 2010**

**Agenda Item:    4**

## **PAYMENTS MADE UNDER THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

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### **1.     PURPOSE**

To update the Committee on the operation of the new Members' Allowances recording system, as requested at the meeting of the Committee held on 22 September 2009 together with details of action taken following the Review of Members' Allowances, Payments and Support

### **2.     RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee note the arrangements for the recording and reporting of payments/expenditure made under the Members' Allowances Scheme; actions arising from the recommendations of the 2009 Review of Members' Allowances, Payments and Support; and the current Guide to the Members' Allowances Scheme and Other Assistance.

### **3.     BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Standards Committee, at its meeting in July 2009 considered a report concerning the payment of allowances to Members with particular reference to travel and subsistence claims (copy attached – Appendix A) the conclusions of which were noted and approved.
- 3.2 Resulting from this report a Guide to the Members' Allowances Scheme and Other Assistance was produced and circulated to all Members and a copy placed on the website. Additionally, an electronic recording system for all payments made under the Members' Allowances Scheme was also introduced.

### **4.     REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Actions arising from the recommendations of the Review are detailed in Appendix B, all the recommendations have been addressed and action taken, much of which is included in the Guide to the Members' Allowances Scheme and Other Assistance shown at Appendix C. Members' response to the guide has been very positive.
- 4.2 An electronic system for recording all payments to Members under the Allowances Scheme, together with details of events attended and related expenditure was developed in-house and went live in October 2009. Drop-in sessions were arranged for all Members to have the opportunity to see how the system operated

- 4.3 The system requires all expenditure for individual Members, together with details of individual events attended to be logged through the Members' Services Office.
- 4.4 Using this system officers were able to produce details of Payments etc. for the statutory annual publication much more quickly with the details of the 2009/2010 payments being published in May 2010, rather than in August in previous years. Furthermore these figures are now to be published on the web site on a quarterly basis. Before publication each Member is sent the records held in relation to their payments and any expenditure incurred to confirm and therefore ensure that there are no errors in the records held.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial Implications**

The costs of the Members' Allowances Scheme and Mayoral Allowances are contained within the current budget provision.

### **5.2 Legal Implications**

The Council's Members' Allowances Scheme is operated in accordance with the statutory Regulations.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Standards Committee agenda 7 July 2009

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix A - The 2009 Review of Members' Allowances, Payments and Support
- Appendix B - Actions arising from the 2009 Review
- Appendix C – Guide to the Members' Allowances Scheme and other assistance.