

### THE PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

14. We feel strongly that the role of the councillor across Wales should be respected as a professional one. In the interests of equity and consistency the Panel encourages all councils to pay the maximum Basic Allowance and also the maximum SRAs, by band and population grouping, that we have set (paragraphs 6.11 and 7.16).

15. We recommend that all councils make the Care Allowance available, take steps to publicise its availability and ensure that administrative arrangements are not a limiting factor to take-up (paragraph 8.8).

16. Councils are also encouraged to ensure that their councillors (and in particular those newly elected) are made aware that the Care Allowance is available for the care of dependants over the age of 15 as well as for children (paragraph 8.8).

17. We recommend that councils make arrangements so that it would be normal practice for council members to arrange their overnight accommodation via the council's members' services department, using a central booking service for accommodation (paragraph 9.15).

18. We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government seeks to make audit committees a statutory requirement with lay members accorded full voting rights and accordingly entitled to relevant remuneration (paragraph 10.9).

19. We recommend that the present pension arrangements should continue in that all current and future elected members of councils should be entitled to join the Local Government Pension Scheme and that their Basic Allowance, and where appropriate SRA, should be pensionable (paragraph 11.4).

20. We further recommend that all councils should now enable their councillors to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (paragraph 11.5).

21. To reflect the modern professional role of the councillor we consider that the term 'allowances' should be replaced by 'remuneration' and we would wish to see this adopted in any future legislative changes (paragraph 12.1).

22. We recommend to the Welsh Assembly Government that it seeks measuremaking powers on councillors' allowances to enable the possibility of significant reform to the existing structure of these allowances. Such legislative change would provide the Panel with the ability to prescribe levels of allowances, rather than to set maximums (paragraph 12.1).

23. With regard to the publicity requirement concerning allowances in Regulation 25(2) and (3) of the 2007 Regulations, we recommend that 'As soon as practicable after the end of a year...' be regarded as at the time of the approval of the council's Statement of Account, which we understand is around the end of June. We further recommend that a council should publish details of the total sum of each allowance paid in that year to each council member both on the council website and in an appropriate newspaper (paragraph 12.2).