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To: Standards Committee – 28 May 2009

Subject: MEMBERS' ANNUAL REPORTS

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report contains the comments of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Members' Annual reports for 2008/09

#### FOR INFORMATION

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1. The Independent Remuneration Panel met on 8 May to consider the 2008/09 Members' Annual Reports. The Panel was very pleased with the overall response rate this year, with 82 reports being received before the Panel met, compared to 78 Members having completed their 2007/08 reports before the Panel met last year. The Panel noted the sickness of two Members.
2. The Panel was also pleased that the overall the standard was high and the vast majority of Members had taken the need to account for their time on County Council work seriously. For the first time this year, the Panel has written to Group Leaders individually, highlighting those reports submitted by Members of their groups that the Panel thought were of very high quality, and also those of poor quality, so that best practice examples can be shared within each group, with the expectation that the general quality will improve further next year. Sadly, the Panel noted that there were still a handful of reports that were so lacking in any detail that they presented little idea of the activities of the Members concerned, from the perspective of their constituents.
3. Many members sent an annual letter to their constituents, including details of how they spent the Local Community Grant, and some Members mentioned that they maintain their own websites to provide information to constituents and a means of contact. The Panel considered that this was excellent practice.
4. The following issues were raised by the Panel:
  - (a) Approximately one quarter of Members did not provide sufficient detail of how their individual Member grant allocation had been spent.
  - (b) The Panel intends to undertake a full review of the annual report format and guidance notes on the completion of annual reports during the autumn. Group Leaders will be invited to comment on

the changes that they would like to see, in order to inform the review.

- (c) The Panel was concerned that some Members had stated that there was no training and development available to them. The Panel is aware that a significant amount of work is currently being undertaken with regard to Member Induction and Development and it hopes to see much more detail about training and development in next year's annual reports.

*Copies of the Members' Annual Reports are attached for Members of the Standards Committee. Additional copies, if required, can be obtained from Peter Sass (01622 694002).*