

These notes refer to the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (c.10) which received Royal Assent on 16 March 2011

Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Sections 31 to 36 - Payments to councillors

To consolidate all of the provisions dealing with payments to councillors into one Act, the Act re-enacts, with amendments, the relevant provisions of the 1972 Act.

Section 31 re-enacts section 36 of the 1972 Act, enabling the Department to make regulations about the allowances that may be paid to councillors and to determine the maximum amount that may be paid for each allowance. The Department may also make regulations requiring a council to make and publish a scheme of the allowances it intends to pay to its councillors and to make this available to members of the public.

Section 34 replaces section 38 of the 1972 Act by making provision in respect of the payment of expenses incurred by councillors and officers in attending conferences and meetings. Under the 1972 Act, payment of expenses for conferences was restricted to conferences for the purpose of discussing matters connected with the discharge of the functions of the council or the development of trade, industry or commerce in the district or otherwise affecting the district or its inhabitants. This restriction gave rise to disagreements in the past about the payment of expenses of councillors attending certain meetings or conferences in Great Britain.

Section 34 removes this restriction, so that it will now be a matter for a council to determine whether a particular conference deals with matters that relate to the interests of the district or the inhabitants of that district.

Section 35 confers a power on the Department to make regulations to establish an independent remuneration panel to advise the Department on the framework of allowances which should be payable to councillors and to make provision about the membership and functions of the panel. It is intended that the chairperson and members of the Northern Ireland remuneration panel will be appointed by the Department and that the public appointments process will be used for the competition.