

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL – FEBRUARY 2018**

1. The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) has been asked by the Council to review the existing scheme of Allowances for the Elected Mayor and Councillors to ensure it remains up to date. The law requires the Council to make a scheme that provides for the payment of allowances each year to each member of the authority. Where the Council seeks to review any aspect of its scheme it must first take account of any recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel established for this purpose. The last comprehensive review of the scheme was undertaken in 2011 and a further review undertaken in 2014 to consider specific aspects of the scheme e.g. an annual inflationary indexing and allowances payable to Co-opted members.

2. The membership of the IRP comprises:

Keith Marriott (Chair),  
Stuart Highfield  
Carolyn Richardson  
Ranjan Talukder  
Sue Williams

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Panel was provided with extensive benchmarking information relating to Members Allowances from across a range of local authorities, including both neighbouring authorities and other Mayoral authorities. Information was also provided on the work undertaken by Councillors and various Council Committees (including terms of reference and the frequency and length of meetings.). Whilst this has been helpful the Panel recognised the difficulty of making direct comparisons with other Councils due to such issues as different Governance models, socio economic conditions, culture, geographical area etc.. Similarly the Panel recognised the differences that exist between many of the wards in the Borough with Councillors facing their own unique challenges in serving their constituents.

4. The IRP is aware of the financial pressures facing the Council. However, the extent to which this and other political factors impact on remuneration is a matter for Council alone to determine when it considers the Panel's recommendations.

5. As part of the review all Members were given the opportunity to meet with the Panel and provide written submissions on any aspect of the scheme. The Panel also considered feedback from the Chief Executive and former Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

6. This report sets out the areas the IRP is required to consider as part of its review and any recommendations. A table detailing the proposed changes to the payment of allowances is attached at Appendix A.

7. The Panel wish to thank those Members and Officers who have contributed to the review by meeting with them to discuss, or submit in writing, their observations regarding the current allowance scheme.

## **REQUIREMENTS OF THE IRP'S REVIEW**

8. The IRP is required to make recommendations on the following aspects of the Members Allowance Scheme:
  - The level of basic allowance;
  - Special Responsibility Allowances and the amounts payable.
  - Duties for which travelling and subsistence allowances can be paid and the amounts
  - The level of co-optees' (or non-councillor) allowance
  - Whether the scheme should include a dependants allowance and the level of that allowance;
  - Whether allowances should be backdated to the start of the financial year.
  - The nature of any indexing and for how long this should apply.
9. The proposed changes to Members' Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances are detailed at Appendix A. The Panel would recommend that any changes to the scheme be applied with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

## **PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Basic Allowance**

**RECOMMENDATION 1: The Panel recommend an additional 2% increase to the current Basic Allowance with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.**

10. In recognising the voluntary nature of the Councillor's role the IRP was mindful that the basic allowance should provide reasonable recompense for the time and effort taken in undertaking their duties and individuals should not be out of pocket for expenses incurred. The Panel believed the basic allowance should not be set at a level that discourages individuals to put themselves forward as Councillors but also recognised the voluntary nature of the role. Whilst recognising that personal circumstances and the wards served may vary from Councillor to Councillor the Panel recognised it is required to propose a basic allowance that is applicable to all Councillors. The IRP was also keen not to reintroduce a claiming expenses process which was seen to be overly bureaucratic
11. In comparing the allowances paid by Doncaster Council with those paid in a number of other local authorities (regional, national and Mayoral), the Panel considered a 2 % increase would maintain the basic rate at a reasonable level that was in line with other authorities..
12. Since 2015, the number of Councillors in the Borough has reduced from 63 Councillors with 3 Councillors representing 21 wards, plus the Mayor to 55 Councillors plus the Mayor, with 8 of the 21 wards now represented by 2 Councillors. Whilst it is difficult to quantify the impact this may have had on

particular Members, the Panel believed this overall reduction in capacity was relevant.

13. Members had in the past waived their entitlement to an increase on their allowances (2.2% for the period 1st January 2015 to 31st March 2016 and 1% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017).
14. The Panel believed that this increase in the basic allowance would also go some way to meeting increased travel and parking costs that were raised during the review.

### **Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)**

15. The Panel agreed that the Councillors' basic allowance (as recommended by the Panel) should be used as the baseline for determining SRAs for Chairs and Vice Chairs, Group Leaders and Co-opted Members. The revised amounts are detailed at Appendix A. A summary of the Panel's proposals are detailed below:

#### **Elected Mayor, Deputy Elected Mayor, Cabinet Member, Civic Mayor and Deputy Civic Mayor.**

**RECOMMENDATION 2: That the SRAs relating to the above positions should remain unchanged, other than the application of the 2% increase on allowances.**

16. The Panel note that both the current Elected Mayor and her predecessor volunteered to accept only a proportion of their Annual Allowance. It is the view of the Panel that the Allowance entitlement under the current scheme should be retained at the present level (base x 4). The personal decisions of the past and present incumbents may not be applicable for any future applicant. Any reduction is the personal decision of the post holder and should not affect either the level of the entitlement or any decisions of future post holders.

#### **SRAs for Chairs – Proposed Changes**

17. Having received feedback from Members and officers, considered the roles and expectations of each respective Chair and Vice Chair and reviewed allowances paid in other local authorities, the Panel believed there was some merit in establishing a more equitable approach to setting the SRAs for the following Chairs taking account of **R**esponsibility, **A**ccountability, **T**ime involved and **E**ffort ('RATE'). The Panel recognised that for certain Committees some or all of these criteria would be more applicable than others.

#### **Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC)**

**RECOMMENDATION 3: That the SRA for the Chair of OSMC be reduced from 100% to 60% of the basic allowance.**

18. Whilst recognising the importance of Overview and Scrutiny in providing checks and balance within a Mayoral Governance model the Panel believed the allowance should be more in line with the allowances paid to Chairs of the other main Council Committees such as Licensing and Audit. The Panel also believe the role of Overview and Scrutiny has matured since the last review when the Council was on an improvement journey and it is acknowledged that the organisation now has greater stability. The Panel was also mindful that a

reduction would go some way in supporting the additional costs of increasing other SRAs to provide a more equitable allocation of Chairs' and Vice-Chairs' SRAs.

### **Chairs of Licensing and Audit Committees**

**RECOMMENDATION 4: That the SRAs for the Chair of Licensing Committee and the Chair of Audit Committee be increased from 50% to 60% of the basic allowance.**

19. In receiving evidence and reviewing the SRAs for Chairs the Panel recommended that these increases would more equitably reflect the time requirements and responsibility of the roles carried out by the Chairs in supporting the work of these Committees.

### **Chair of Planning Committee**

**RECOMMENDATION 5: That the SRA for the Chair of Planning Committee be increased from 50% to 64% of the basic allowance.**

20. If agreed this SRA would be set slightly higher than Chair of Licensing which also carries out a quasi-judicial role however, this is to recognise the number of meetings and additional preparation for meetings including site visits, pre meeting briefings and training.

### **Chairs of Standing Overview and Scrutiny Panels**

**RECOMMENDATION 6: The Panel recommended this remain at 25% of the basic allowance.**

### **Special Responsibility Allowances - Vice Chairs**

#### **Vice Chair of Audit Committee**

**RECOMMENDATION 7: That a new SRA be allocated to the Vice Chair of Audit Committee and be set at 19% of the basic allowance.**

21. There has previously been no SRA for the Vice Chair of Audit Committee. This appears an anomaly when compared to the other Council Committees. In view of this the Panel considered it appropriate that the Vice Chair should receive an SRA. As well as supporting the Chair, attending briefings and supporting the smooth running of the meeting this would recognise occasions when the Vice Chair would have to act up in absence of the Chair. However, as meetings of the Audit committee are less frequent than Licensing or Planning it is recommended that the Vice Chair's allowance be less than the Vice Chair of Licensing or Planning.

#### **Vice Chair of Licensing Committee**

**RECOMMENDATION 8: That the SRA for the Vice Chair of Licensing Committee be increased from 25% to 30% of the Basic allowance.**

22. Members received evidence that due to the number of Licensing Committee and Sub-Committee meetings that are convened during a year (5 Committee and 18

Sub-Committees during 2016/17) a number of these are chaired by the Vice Chair to ensure availability. This is slightly different to the other Committees where the Vice Chair deputises for the Chair where he/she is unavailable. There is recognition here that due to the volume of meetings, the Vice Chair will be called upon to preside over a number of meetings on a regular basis over the course of a year. The proposed increase seeks to recognise this additional level of responsibility and commitment.

### **Vice Chair of Planning Committee**

**RECOMMENDATION 9: That the SRA for the Vice Chair of Planning Committee be increased from 25% to 27% of the Basic allowance.**

23. This slight increase reflects the change in the SRA payable to the Chair of Planning and the number of meetings, briefings and site visits that the Vice Chair attends.

### **Vice Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee**

**RECOMMENDATION 10: That this SRA remain at 25% of the basic allowance.**

### **Chair and Vice Chair of South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel**

**RECOMMENDATION 11: That an SRA of £5350 be paid to any Doncaster Member appointed as Chair of the SYPCP and an allowance of £2675 be paid to any Doncaster Member appointed as Vice Chair of the SYPCP.**

24. The meeting considered a report which provided the findings of an Independent Review of Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chair and Vice Chair of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel (PCP).
25. The report recommended that an allowance of £5,350 be provided for the Chair of the PCP and an allowance of £2,675 for the Vice Chair. As the PCP did not have the ability to pay Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA), such an SRA would need to be approved by each constituent Council for inclusion within their Members' Allowances Scheme.
26. In reviewing the role of the PCP and the role and responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair of the PCP the IRP supported the proposed allowances.

### **South Yorkshire Pensions Authority**

**RECOMMENDATION 12: That an SRA continue to be paid at the current rate of £3,814 to a Member who represents the Council on the South Yorkshire Pensions Authority.**

### **Other SRAs**

**RECOMMENDATION 13: That no additional SRAs be included within the scheme for additional Councillor duties.**

27. The Panel received information from Members in respect of SRAs that could potentially be paid for additional Councillor duties such as representing the Council on outside bodies, undertaking specific task and finish work or being responsible for raising the profile on important issues both within and beyond the Council. The Panel believed that the time and expenses for undertaking these duties should be contained within the current basic allowance. It was also noted that where additional expenses were incurred that took the individual outside the Borough this could be reimbursed from within the current scheme.

#### **Duties for which Travelling and Subsistence Allowances can be paid and the amounts**

**RECOMMENDATION 14: That the current arrangements within the scheme for travelling and subsistence remain unchanged.**

28. It is the view of the Panel that any changes to the existing scheme would considerably increase the requirement for scrutiny and monitoring of travel expenses and claims.
29. A number of representations from Councillors were received in respect of travel costs particularly those Councillors whose wards are spread over a wide geographical area, or live on the outskirts of the Borough away from the town centre and incur travel and parking costs in attending Council meetings. Whilst acknowledging these issues the Panel did not want to propose different rates of travel payment which would introduce additional administration and complexity with Members making additional claims.

#### **The Level Of Co-Optees' (Or Non-Councillor) Allowance**

**RECOMMENDATION 15: That allowances for Co-optees should remain unchanged other than the application of the 2% increase on the allowance.**

#### **Consideration of a Dependants Carers Allowance and the level of that Allowance or any additional Personal Assistance Allowance.**

**RECOMMENDATION 16: That the scheme should not include any additional payment in respect of dependant carers allowances or additional personal assistance.**

30. During the review the Panel considered whether the scheme should include a carers allowance or reimbursement expenses incurred for caring or other support or assistance generally whilst carrying out their roles. The Panel recommended there should be no change to the scheme in this respect as the Panel felt this should reflect the arrangements currently available to public sector employees and in a number of cases there are other provisions available. The Panel also recognised there may be additional administrative costs and resources required in operating such a scheme.

**Whether there should be any backdating of an allowance to the start of the Financial Year.**

**RECOMMENDATION 17: That the proposed changes be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and the revised scheme revokes all previous schemes on that date.**

**The nature of any indexing and for how long this should apply.**

**RECOMMENDATION 18: That the index for determining annual increases in Member allowances be in line with the NJC pay award for Local Government employees for the period 2019 to 2023.**

31. The Panel have maintained the general principle established by previous panels that any proposed increase should reflect current increases (or decrease) in public sector pay negotiations. Therefore it is proposed that the Members Allowance Scheme be index-linked to N.J.C. pay award for Local Government employees, effective from the beginning of the year.
32. It is recommended that the changes to the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances proposed in these recommendations would be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and would not be subject to any additional inflationary increase that may be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.
33. **RECOMMENDATION 19: That the SRAs payable to Group Leaders incorporate a 2% increase.**
34. The IRP also recommend that for clarity the Scheme should state that Group Leaders with 4 or less Members in their Groups would not receive an allowance.
35. **RECOMMENDATION 20: That all other aspects of the Members Allowance Scheme Remain unchanged.**
36. The Panel wishes to thank all officers and Members who contributed to the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel in conducting this review.





**APPENDIX A**

<b>INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL – REVIEW OF DMBC MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES – EFFECTIVE FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2018</b>			
	Current Amount £ p.a.	Proposed Base Rate formula	Proposed Amount from 1/4/18 £ p.a.
<b>BASIC ALLOWANCE</b> (Note: A base rate of £12,610 is recommended which shall be used as the base (b) from which all other rates shall be calculated in accordance with the formula as shown in middle column.)	12,363	2% increase	12,610
<b>SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES (SRA)</b>			
Elected Mayor currently takes 50% of basic and Mayoral Allowance.	49,455*	b x 4	50,440*
Deputy Elected Mayor	15,455	b x 1.25	15,762
Cabinet Member (i.e. Portfolio Holder)	12,363	b x 1	12,610
Civic Mayor	12,363	b x 1	12,610
Deputy Civic Mayor	1,236	b x 0.1	1,261
<b>Chairs</b>			
Planning Committee	6,182	b x 0.64	8,070
Elections & Democratic Structures Committee	1,236	b x 0.1	1,261
Audit Committee	6,182	b x 0.6	7,566
Licensing Committee	6,182	b x 0.6	7,566
Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee	12,363	b x 0.6	7,566
Chair of standing Overview & Scrutiny Panel	3,091	b x 0.25	3,153
<b>Vice Chairs</b>			
Planning Committee	2,472	b x 0.27	3,405
Licensing Committee	2,472	b x 0.3	3,783
Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee	3,091	b x 0.25	3,153
Audit Committee	N/A	b x 0.19	2,396
<b>Group Leaders</b>			
30 or more Members	6,182	b x 0.5	6,305
15-29 Members inclusive	2,472	b x 0.2	2,522
5-14 Members inclusive	1,236	b x 0.1	1,261
Up to 4 Members inclusive	Nil	--	Nil
<b>Co-optees</b>			
Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel	618	b x 0.05	630
Audit Committee	618	b x 0.05	630
Co-optee who is also Chair of CYP O&S Panel	3,091	b x 0.25	3,153
Co-optee on any other Council Committee	618	b x 0.05	630
<b>External Bodies</b>			
Member of South Yorkshire Pensions Authority	3,814	N/A	3,814
Chair of South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel	N/A	N/A	5,350

Vice Chair of South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel	N/A	N/A	2,675
Co-opted Members on Audit Hearings Sub-Ctte: £150 all-inclusive attendance allowance per Hearing. £50 attendance allowance paid for attendance at the Audit Ctte meeting that considers the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report on complaint handling and ethical governance activity.			