

**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
**Council**  
**21 February 2024**

---

**Members' Allowances – Report of the Independent  
Remuneration Panel**

**Head of Service** Gavin Ramtohal – Head of Legal & Democratic Services  
**Report Author:** Rachel Whillis – Democratic Services Manager  
**Wards Affected:** n/a

---

**Summary and purpose**

To consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the Members' Allowance Scheme.

**Recommendation**

The Council is advised to RESOLVE that

- (i) a basic allowance of £5,834 per annum for all Members be agreed;
- (ii) no councillor be entitled to receive at any time more than one Special Responsibility Allowance;
- (iii) the maximum number of Special Responsibility Allowances payable at any one time does not exceed 50% of Council Members, equivalent to 17 Members;
- (iv) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 260% of the basic allowance be paid to the Leader as a Tier 1 role, equating to £15,168 per annum;
- (v) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Deputy Leader as a Tier 2 role, equating to £7,584 per annum;
- (vi) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 40% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to all Tier 3 roles, namely the Mayor and members of the Executive, equating to £6,067 per annum per role;
- (vii) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 35% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to all Tier 4 roles, namely the Chair of Planning Applications Committee and Political Group Leaders with 10% or more of the Council's membership, equating to £5,309 per annum per role;

- (viii) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 30% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to all Tier 5 roles, namely the Chair of Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee and the Chair of Audit, Standards and Risk Committee, equating to £4,550 per annum per role;
- (ix) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 25% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to all Tier 6 roles, namely the Chair of External Partnerships Select Committee, the Chair of Licensing Committee, and the Chair of the Employment Committee, equating to £3,792 per annum per role;
- (x) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 30% of the Mayor's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Deputy Mayor, equating to £1,820 per annum;
- (xi) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 40% of the Chair of Planning Application Committee's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Vice Chair of the Planning Applications Committee, equating to £2,123 per annum;
- (xii) no Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to Political Group Leaders with less than 10% of the Council's membership;
- (xiii) car and motorcycle mileage payments be at the maximum rate per mile that can be paid tax-free as defined by HM Revenue and Customs or the rate for officers, whichever is the lower;
- (xiv) the amounts payable in respect of taxi travel, travel by air and European Travel, and the terms and conditions of those payments, be as those set for officers of the Council;
- (xv) eligibility for Travel and Subsistence Allowances continue to be payable to councillors and any co-opted members in connection with any Approved Councillor Duties;
- (xvi) dependant carer's allowances be paid as follows:
  - a. Childcare – Up to £13.00 per hour, with no monthly maximum claim;
  - b. Specialist Care – based on cost, subject to the production of receipts and evidence that this type of care is required;
- (xvii) eligibility for Dependants' Carers' Allowances continue to be payable to councillors and any co-opted members in connection with any Approved Councillor Duties;
- (xviii) the Panel's recommendation that the Dependants' Carers' Allowance should be actively promoted to prospective and new councillors be endorsed;
- (xix) the parental leave policy for councillors set out in the existing Members' Allowances Scheme be continued;

- (xx) The basic allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances and the Dependants' Carers Allowances (Childcare) be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries until 2028, at which time the Scheme be reviewed again by an Independent Remuneration Panel; and
- (xxi) The new scheme of allowances be implemented with effect from the beginning of the 2024/25 financial year, at which time the current scheme will be revoked.

## **1. Background and Supporting Information**

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires all local authorities to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), to advise on the terms and conditions of their Scheme of Councillors' Allowances. The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended and the Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authorities, determine how the Panels are to operate.
- 1.2 A Members Allowances Scheme can apply for up to four years and can be indexed to the Retail Price Index (RPI), the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or another formula, for example in line with staff pay awards. Members' allowances were previously reviewed in 2020.
- 1.3 The following members of the IRP were appointed by delegated authority, in consultation with party group leaders:
  - ◆ Lucy Brown – Chief Executive, Disability Initiative
  - ◆ Mark Palmer – Development Director, South East Employers (Chair)
  - ◆ Mark Selby – Director, Project Beyond Consortium
- 1.4 The IRP met on 23 and 24 January 2024 and its report on the proposed Council's Members' Allowance Scheme is attached at Annex A. A summary of the recommendations is contained at Appendix 1 of the IRP's report. The Panel has adopted the same approach to calculating allowances as its previous review in 2020, namely applying a formula to calculate the basic allowance and the tiered approach taken in respect of calculating Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA). There have been changes proposed to the tiered approach, with the inclusion of Tier 6 SRA for some chairing roles.
- 1.5 Members are asked to note the IRP's recommendation that the maximum number of SRAs payable at any one time does not exceed 50% of Council Members, which the Panel has stated is equivalent to 17 Members. If all roles attracting a SRA are held by different Members of the Council, this would currently result in 18 Members receiving a SRA.
- 1.6 The report proposes that no councillor be entitled to receive at any time more than one SRA. This is also included in the current Members' Allowances Scheme.

- 1.7 The Panel also proposes that allowances are updated in line with the percentage staff pay award until 2028, at which time a further review will be conducted and a new scheme adopted.
- 1.8 A separate report will be sent to Parish Councils on the IRP's recommendations on Members' allowances for those Councils.

## **2. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 The review of Members' Allowances has been conducted in line with legislation and guidance issues by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inland Revenue. The recommendations have been formed by an independent and impartial group following careful consideration of the legislation and supporting guidance, along with results of a survey completed by Members and interviews with a number of councillors holding positions of special responsibility.

## **3. Proposal and Alternative Options**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Council considers the report and recommendations of the IRP and adopts the proposed scheme of allowances.
- 3.2 The Council has to have regard to the IRP's report when making a new Allowance Scheme, but does not have to agree with all or any of the elements thereof. As a result, the Council has the options to adopt the recommendations of the IRP in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme, to adopt an amended or different scheme, or to ask the IRP to reconsider its recommendations.

## **4. Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy**

- 4.1 No matters arising.

## **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 If the Council decides to adopt the recommendations of the IRP without amendment this would give expenditure against the Members' Allowances budget for 2024/25 of £295,349. This expenditure is calculated on the assumption that the number of members of the Executive remains the same, and SRAs are paid to the same councillors as at present, with any second allowances disregarded accordingly.
- 5.2 This represents a slight decrease to the total of £297,439 payable in 2023/24 under the current scheme and the revised scheme of allowances can be met within the current budget. The revised scheme proposed by the IRP shows a slight increase paid for Basic Allowances, whilst reducing the total paid in Special Responsibility Allowances.

5.3 There is a requirement to publish a notice in local newspapers, on the recommendations of the IRP and how the full report can be accessed. This will be met from existing budgets.

**6. Section 151 Officer Comments:**

6.1 Growth for a 2% increase in allowances had been factored into the budget papers, considered elsewhere on this agenda. If this is no longer required, then budgets will be adjusted prior to them being loaded for the start of the next financial year.

**7. Legal and Governance Issues**

7.1 The review has been conducted and recommendations made in line with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

7.2 Members are entitled to forgo part or all of their allowance by writing to the Chief Executive.

**8. Monitoring Officer Comments:**

8.1 Under Article 4 section 4.2 (h) of the Council's Constitution approval of the Members' Allowances Scheme is a function of Full Council and should the Council approve the new Scheme as recommended in this report, either in whole or part, Part 6 (Members' Allowances Scheme) of the Constitution would need to be updated accordingly.

**9. Other Considerations and Impacts**

**Environment and Climate Change**

9.1 No matters arising.

**Equalities and Human Rights**

9.2 No specific matters arising, although it should be noted that the proposed scheme recognises caring responsibilities. Furthermore, the overall approach is designed to support there being no barrier for any member of the community to undertake this role.

**Risk Management**

9.3 No matters arising.

**Community Engagement**

9.4 No matters arising.

## **Annexes**

Annex A - IRP's report

## **Background Papers**

Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/1021/contents/made>

Members' Allowances Scheme (current)

<https://surreyheath.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s32967/Part%206%20-%20Members%20Allowances%20Scheme.pdf>