



REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL APPOINTED TO REVIEW THE ALLOWANCES PAID TO COUNCILLORS OF READING BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR 2022/23

FOR SUBMISSION TO COUNCIL ON 27 JANUARY
2022

Background

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provide for the payment of Allowances to Members of the Council in connection with their work as Councillors. Before the Council can make or amend a scheme of allowances, it should consider the recommendations made in relation to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

The Council, on 13 November 2001, set up an Independent Remuneration Panel to review annually the Council's scheme for Councillor's Allowances. The Local Government (Local Authority Members in England) Regulation 2003, stated that Independent Remuneration Panels established by local authorities should make recommendations for a scheme of allowances to include:

- The amount of basic allowance (BA) to be paid to all Councillors;
- The duties in respect of which Councillors should receive a special responsibility allowance (SRA), and the amount of such an allowance.
- Allowances for the care of children or dependants.

The Independent Remuneration Panel

The Remuneration Panel's current membership is as follows:

- Francis Connolly - member with experience of the local voluntary sector and local business
- Lady Audrey Durant - member with experience of the local voluntary sector
- Linda Fort - member with experience of the local media
- Mick Pollek - member with experience of the local trade union movement

The Panel was supported by the following council officers:

- Michael Popham (Democratic Services Manager)
- Jemma Durkan (Committee Services)

Background

In 2019/20 the Panel undertook a full review of the scheme. As part of that review, the Panel recommended that the BA and the SRAs should be increased at the beginning of each new

financial year in accordance with the Local Government Pay Settlement (LGPS). It also recommended that the carers allowance, which is available to councillors to cover the cost of looking after dependants, whilst they are undertaking approved duties on behalf of the Council, should be increased in line with the 'Real Living Wage'. The review was reported to Council on 25 June 2019 when it accepted that recommendation. The new scheme came into effect on 1 October 2019.

In 2021 the BA and SRAs were increased in line with the LGPS and the 'Real Living Wage' in line with Government recommendations.

Recommendations

The Panel met via Microsoft Teams on 24 November 2021. Councillor Brock also attended the meeting and asked the Panel to also consider the Local Government Association's Parental Leave Policy for Councils.

The Panel was provided with the following information in advance of the meeting:

- Recommendations report Remuneration Panel 2021-22 and Councillor's Allowance Scheme 2021-22.
- Extract from Council minutes 23 March 2021 in relation to the scheme.
- South East Employers Members' Allowances Survey 2020-2021.
- Parental Leave Policy for Councils - Local Government Association (LGA)

The Panel discussed the current scheme and the previous full review that took place in 2019/20. They considered that as a thorough review had taken place in 2019/20 the scheme should continue as published for another year with BA and SRAs increased in line with the LGPS. It was understood that the LGPS was yet to be finalised for 1 April 2022.

The Panel also considered the LGAs Parental Leave Policy for Councils, and they were unanimous in agreement that the Policy would be beneficial to councillors and fully endorsed the policy to Council for adoption.