



REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL APPOINTED TO
REVIEW THE ALLOWANCES PAID TO COUNCILLORS OF READING BOROUGH
COUNCIL FOR 2026/27

FOR SUBMISSION TO COUNCIL ON 27
JANUARY 2026

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 (the Panel).

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:

- Sally Swift - member with experience of the local media
- Jeanette Skeats – member with experience of local politics
- Mick Pollek – member with experience of the local trade union movement

The Panel is supported by the following council officers:

- Simon Hill (Acting Democratic Services Manager)
- Jemma Durkan (Committee Services)

Background

As part of its review of the Councillors Allowances Scheme for 2019/20, the Panel recommended that the BA and the SRAs should be increased each new financial year in accordance with the Local Government Services pay agreement. 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 and was reviewed in November 2022 after the expiry of its initial four-year term. The scheme was renewed for a further four years from April 2023.

Since 2019, the BA and SRAs have continued to be increased in line with the local government pay agreement and allowances to cover the cost of looking after dependants have risen in line with the 'Real Living Wage' as recommended by the Panel.

Meeting of the Panel

The Panel met via Microsoft Teams on 19 November 2025.

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

- The previous Councillors' Allowances Scheme report, which had been considered by Council on 28 January 2025 and extract from the Minutes of that meeting (Minute 37 refers).
- Results of the South-East Employers Members' Allowances Survey.

The Panel noted that the Council had increased Councillors' Allowances by 3.2% in 2025/26, in line with the Local Government pay agreement for 2025/26 and the Panel's previous recommendations. The Panel discussed the current scheme and considered that the existing scheme, covering the period April 2023 - March 2027, was still fit for purpose with no changes required. They noted that a fuller review would be required ahead of the 2027/28 financial year.

Recommendations

The Panel recommended that the scheme of Councillors Allowances continue in its current form for 2026/27, with the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances to be increased in line with the Local Government Services pay agreement.