

Independent Remuneration Panel

Council – 26 June 2019

1 Introduction

1.1 This report has been produced by an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) made up of members drawn from the local community. The Panel is independent of the Council and its role is to make recommendations on the level of allowances paid to councillors. The object being to promote access to all in our diverse community who may wish to stand for election to serve that community via the democratic process.

1.2 The members of the Panel:

- Richard Blamey Former head of pensions with a large multi-national industrial gas company. Currently a pensions trustee and appointed chair of the Tewkesbury IRP. Also serves as treasurer and member of his local parish council.

- Philip Lowery A former adviser to the Social Services Committee. Member of the IAG to the Gloucestershire Constabulary.

- Fiona Miles Former Clinical Nurse Specialist in Respiratory Medicine. Former Treasurer and Secretary to play groups and the Royal College of Nursing Specialist Group. Former Trustee of Gloucestershire Chest Fund and former school governor. Involved in Gloucestershire Girl Guiding and a parish councillor.

- Quentin Tallon Former Secretary of Cheltenham and District TUC. Involved with the voluntary sector.

1.3 The Panel's recommendations are in keeping with the following statutory provisions:

1.3.1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government Act 2006

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

2 Review process

- 2.1 The Panel met on 26 October 2018 to receive an update on Council developments and consider allowances paid elsewhere. Interviews with members were held on 14 November 2018 and 17 December 2018. A meeting was held on 20 December 2018 to consider their recommendations for 2019-20.
- 2.2 The interviews provided a valuable insight into the work of members. The Panel welcomed the opportunity to speak to a range of members including Group Leaders and Cabinet Members.
- 2.3 Richard Blamey presented the IRP report to the Constitution Committee on 14 January 2019. Members of the committee recommended that a free vote should be taken at Council on whether to accept the recommendations in the report.
- 2.4 Following the meeting, Mr Blamey became aware that a scrutiny review was being undertaken that could potentially impact on the level of allowances. He therefore requested that the Chairman of the Council defer consideration of the allowances until the review had been completed and the IRP had an opportunity to consider the outcome.
- 2.5 The findings of the scrutiny review were presented to the Council on 27 March 2019. Council agreed to a number of changes to the current arrangements including an increase in the overall number of scrutiny committees and the appointment of vice-chairs for each committee.
- 2.6 The IRP subsequently met on 16 April 2019 to consider the changes to the scrutiny structure and the potential impact on the allowances paid to members.

3 Allowances

- 3.1 Last year, the Council accepted the Panel's recommendation to increase the Basic Allowance by 1% and adjust the Special Responsibility Allowances for committee chairs and group leaders from 1 April 2018. The current allowances are shown at Appendix A.
- 3.2 At the request of the Panel, Democratic Services undertook a review of allowance schemes for all county councils in England. On examining the data, it remains clear that the Special Responsibility Allowance of the Leader of Council is well below the majority of other county council leaders.

- 3.3 These concerns were raised during last year's review but no formal recommendations were made due to the panel's understanding that the Leader of the Council was reluctant to accept an increase. At the meeting of the Constitution Committee held on 15 January 2018, a request was made to the Panel that a formal figure be included as part of the 2018 review.
- 3.4 Accordingly, the panel identifies that the average special responsibility allowance for the Leader of Council across the 27 county councils is £33,500. It is clear from the Panel's conversations with members from across the political divide, over a number of years, that they believe that the Leader's allowance should be brought in line with other councils.
- 3.5 Panel members recognise the level of responsibility of the Leader of Council in leading an organisation of the size of Gloucestershire County Council with an annual budget of £428 million and with a workforce of more than 3,000 people. Arguably, the role has a higher public profile than any other elected figure in Gloucestershire but the level of allowance fails to reflect this fact.
- 3.6 With regards to the scrutiny review, the Panel notes that vice-chairs will be appointed for all the committees which will be drawn from a different group to the chair. Panel members recognise the significance of the vice-chair role under the new arrangements but believe that it is premature to set an allowance for the position at the present time. Once the new scrutiny arrangements have bedded in, the Panel will be better placed to assess whether a Special Responsibility Allowance is justified and, if so, the amount it should be. During the Autumn 2019 IRP interviews, there will be a particular focus on scrutiny and committee chairs and vice-chairs will be invited to attend.
- 3.7 In making our recommendations, it is important that the allowances are set at the correct level to reflect the level of responsibility for each position. The Panel would like to remind members that they can choose to donate all or part of their allowance to a charity via suitable Gift Aid arrangements.
- 3.8 The staff pay settlement agreed this summer was 2% effective from 1 April 2018 and the Panel believe that Members' Allowances should be similarly increased.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 To increase the Basic Allowance from £10,100 to £10,300 (2%) for the 2019-20 financial year.
- 4.2 To highlight [and increase] the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Council to £33,500.

- 4.3 To increase all other Special Responsibility Allowances by 2% in line with the recommendation for the Basic Allowance.
- 4.4 To note the revised Members' Allowances Scheme for 2019-20 at Appendix B to the report.

Richard Blamey
Chairman, Independent Remuneration Panel for Gloucestershire County Council

Allowances for 2018-19

Basic Allowance payable to all 53 members: £10,100

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA)	Positions	Allowance
Leader of the Council	1	£27,570
Group leader with 5 or more members (not Leader of the Council)	2	£ 6,000
Group leader with less than 5 members (0.2 per group member – min 2 members)	1	£ 2,400
Cabinet member	9	£18,380
Scrutiny chair	5	£ 6,000
Audit and Governance Committee chair	1	£ 6,000
Planning Committee chair	1	£ 6,000
Pensions Committee chair	1	£ 6,000
Chair of Council	1	£ 9,190
Vice-chair of Council	1	£ 2,750
Fostering Panel member	1	£ 5,510

APPENDIX B

Allowances for 2019-20

Basic Allowance payable to all 53 members: £10,300

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA)	Positions	Allowance
Leader of the Council	1	£33,500
Group leader with 5 or more members (not Leader of the Council)	2	£ 6,120
Group leader with less than 5 members (0.2 per group member – min 2 members)	1	£ 2,450
Cabinet member	9	£18,750
Scrutiny chair	6	£ 6,120
Audit and Governance Committee chair	1	£ 6,120
Planning Committee chair	1	£ 6,120
Pensions Committee chair	1	£ 6,120
Chair of Council	1	£ 9,380
Vice-chair of Council	1	£ 2,800
Fostering Panel member	1	£ 5,620