

Independent Remuneration Panel  
5 September 2018

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL\* held on Wednesday 5 September 2018 at 3.30pm at the Council Offices, Welwyn Garden City.

\* Reporting to Council

PRESENT: C. Novelli  
P.Raynsford  
D.Tabraham-Palmer

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (R.Bridge)  
PRESENT: Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) (N.Long)  
Legal Services Manager (F.Hussain)  
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)

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1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN:

The Panel continued with the previously agreed arrangement not to appoint a Chairman.

2. WELWYN HATFIELD MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME:

2.1. Review of the Scheme

The report of the Chief Executive sought recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel on a review of the level of allowances to be paid to Members for 2018/19 with effect from 1 July 2018 plus the introduction of a new Care Allowance.

**(1) Members Basic and Responsibility Allowances**

The current level of payments set out in the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2017/18 is attached at Appendix A and the proposed level of payments for 2018/19 is attached at Appendix B.

If the level of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances were increased by 2% as recommended in the report in line with the national agreement for staff, the additional cost was estimated to be £ 7,110. The estimated additional cost in 2018/19 could be offset by a saving in special responsibility allowances because there were two Lead Members last year and none had been appointed this year and as certain Members held more than one office and the Scheme provided that they would receive only one special responsibility allowance being the highest of the allowances due. The cost of the recommended increases could therefore be contained within the current overall annual budget of £355,750.

The Panel discussed the special responsibility allowance for Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and agreed that the existing level of allowance remained compatible with the current role and duties of the posts.

Since the review by the Panel of the level of allowances for 2013/14, it had adopted the convention to recommend annual increases in line with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services annual employee pay award and this approach had been agreed by the Council.

Before then allowances had been frozen since 2008/09.

In 2016 the Panel revisited the increases in allowances recommended by the review previously undertaken by an independent consultant in 2009 and agreed increases to move towards the Hertfordshire median rates.

## **(2) Care Allowance**

The Panel had previously agreed with the recommendation made in the independent consultant's review to introduce a care allowance at a rate of £6.00 per hour for children and £10.00 per hour for adults. This recommendation had not been taken up, but it remained open to the Council to do so.

The Liberal Democrat Group had requested that this recommendation now be reconsidered by the Panel as part of this year's review and this had been supported by the Leader of the Council.

The cost of this would depend on take-up which had not been quantified and was currently unknown. It was expected however that take-up would be limited and on this basis the cost was likely to be able to be met within the existing budget in 2018/19 because of the savings in special responsibility allowances, but this would need to be monitored.

The Panel agreed to recommend to the Council the introduction of a new Care Allowance as previously recommended and now requested in the interests of facilitating all Members to carry out their duties effectively and equitably.

The Panel reviewed the rate identified in 2009 together with criteria for payment in line with some comparative information received from other local authorities.

The Panel agreed to recommend to the Council that maximum hourly rates of £7.83 for childcare for children up to 14 years of age and £11.83 for dependent care could be claimed with a cap of 20 hours per week for official duties defined as attendance at evening meetings of the Council, Committees (to include Cabinet, Committees, Panels and Boards) and Outside Bodies where the Member was the Council's appointed representative.

The allowance would be administered on the basis that claims must be supported by a valid receipt and submitted on the Member Monthly Expenses Form to the Governance Services Manager which would be updated accordingly. Payments to other members of the household would be excluded.

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The operation of the allowance and the rates payable would in future form part of the Panel's annual review.

The Panel's recommendations would be submitted to the Council meeting on 19 September 2018 for consideration.

**Recommendations**

- (1) That the Panel recommends to the Council that the proposed level of Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances to be paid with effect from 1 July 2018 be as set out in Appendix B attached and that no other changes be made.
- (2) That the Panel recommends to the Council that a Care Allowance be introduced with effect from 20 September 2018 as set out in Appendix C attached.

Meeting ended 4.15pm  
GS

**WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL**

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

1. **ENQUIRIES**

- 1.1. Enquiries about allowances may be addressed to Graham Seal, Governance Services Manager (01707) 357444.

2. **BASIC ALLOWANCE**

- 2.1. Basic allowance is payable at a flat rate to all elected Members of the Council.
- 2.2. If a councillor is elected to or leaves the Council during the year, basic allowance will be paid pro-rata for the proportion of the year during which the councillor has been a serving Member of the Council.
- 2.3. With effect from 1 July 2017, basic allowance will be paid at the rate of £5,051 per annum. Payment will be made in monthly instalments of £420.92.

3. **SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE (SRA)**

- 3.1. The Council has authorised the following payments in addition to Members' basic allowance: -

	<b><u>Per Annum (£)</u></b>	<b><u>Monthly (£)</u></b>
	<b><u>2017/18</u></b>	<b><u>2017/18</u></b>
Leader of the Council	15,152	1,262.66
Deputy Leader	10,605	883.75
Cabinet Member	9,676	806.33
Lead Member	3,884	323.66
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees	4,499	374.92
Chairman of Development Management Committee	5,051	420.92
Chairman of Hackney Carriage Committee	3,884	323.66
Chairman of Cabinet Panel	3,884	323.66
Chairman of Audit Committee	3,801	316.75
Chairman of Liquor and Regulated Entertainment Licensing Committee	3,884	323.66
Leader of First Opposition Group	5,788	482.33
Leader of Second Opposition Group	1,888	157.33
Chairman of Standards Committee	2,040	170.00
Mayor	6,277	N/A
Deputy Mayor	1,570	N/A

**WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL**

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

2. **ENQUIRIES**

3.2. Enquiries about allowances may be addressed to Graham Seal, Governance Services Manager (01707) 357444.

4. **BASIC ALLOWANCE**

4.1. Basic allowance is payable at a flat rate to all elected Members of the Council.

4.2. If a councillor is elected to or leaves the Council during the year, basic allowance will be paid pro-rata for the proportion of the year during which the councillor has been a serving Member of the Council.

4.3. With effect from 1 July 2018, basic allowance will be paid at the rate of £5,152 per annum. Payment will be made in monthly instalments of £429.33.

5. **SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE (SRA)**

5.1. The Council has authorised the following payments in addition to Members' basic allowance: -

	<b><u>Per Annum (£)</u></b>	<b><u>Monthly (£)</u></b>
	<b><u>2018/19</u></b>	<b><u>2018/19</u></b>
Leader of the Council	15,455	1,287.91
Deputy Leader	10,817	901.41
Cabinet Member	9,869	822.41
Lead Member	3,961	330.08
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees	4,588	382.33
Chairman of Development Management Committee	5,152	429.33
Chairman of Hackney Carriage Committee	3,961	330.08
Chairman of Cabinet Panel	3,961	330.08
Chairman of Audit Committee	3,877	323.08
Chairman of Liquor and Regulated Entertainment Licensing Committee	3,961	330.08
Leader of First Opposition Group	5,739	478.25
Leader of Second Opposition Group	2,288	190.66
Chairman of Standards Committee	2,080	173.33
Mayor	6,402	N/A
Deputy Mayor	1,601	N/A

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**CARE ALLOWANCE**

**This allowance may be claimed against the cost of child (up to age of 14 years) or dependent adult care that a Member may incur whilst they are on official duties defined as attendance at evening meetings of the Council, Committees (to include Cabinet, Committees, Panels and Boards) and Outside Bodies where the Member is the Council's appointed representative.**

**The following rates may be claimed:-**

**Childcare - Maximum of £7.83 per hour**

**Dependent Care – Maximum of £11.83 per hour**

**A maximum of 20 hours per month may be claimed. Claims must be supported by a valid receipt. Payments to other members of the household will be excluded. Claims should be made to the Governance Services Manager monthly on the official claim form provided.**

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL – 5 SEPTEMBER 2018  
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

WELWYN HATFIELD MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks a recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel on a review of the level of allowances to be paid to Members for 2018/19 with effect from 1 July 2018.

**2 Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The current level of payments set out in the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2017/18 is attached at Appendix A and the proposed level of payments for 2018/19 is attached at Appendix B.
- 2.2 If the level of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances are increased by 2% as recommended in this report in line with the national agreement for staff, the additional cost will be £ 7,110. This will be offset by a saving in special responsibility allowances of £7, 768 as there were two Lead Members last year and none have been appointed this year plus £2080 as the Leader of the Council is Chairman of the Standards Committee. The cost of the increase can therefore be contained within the current overall annual budget of £355,750.

**3 Background**

- 3.1 Since the review by the Panel of the level of allowances for 2013/14, the Panel had adopted the convention to recommend annual increases in line with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services annual employee pay award and this approach had been agreed by the Council.
- 3.2 Before then allowances had been frozen since 2008/09.
- 3.3 In 2016 the Panel revisited the increases in allowances recommended by the review previously undertaken by an independent consultant in 2009 and agreed increases to move towards the Hertfordshire median rates.
- 3.4 The Panel has previously agreed with the recommendation by the independent consultant's review to introduce a care allowance at a rate of £6.00 per hour for children and £10.00 per hour for adults to be claimed by any Member of the Council where there was a child of under 14 years residing at home or a dependent relative in need of special attention by reason of disability. This recommendation had not been taken up, but it remained open to the Council to do so.
- 3.5 The Liberal Democrat Group have requested that this be reconsidered by the Panel as part of this year's review and this has been supported by the Leader of the Council.

- 3.6** The cost of this would depend on take-up which has not been quantified and is currently unknown. It is expected however that take-up will be limited and on that basis the cost is likely to be able to be met within the existing budget but this will need to be monitored.
- 3.7** If this is agreed, the rate recommended in 2009 will also need to be reviewed by the Panel. Some comparative information from Hertfordshire local authorities is attached at Appendix C.

#### **4 Conclusion**

- 4.1** The Panel is recommended therefore to increase Members' Allowances by 2% will effect from 1 July 2018 in line with this year's national agreement for staff.
- 4.2** The Panel is recommended to consider the introduction of a care allowance, and if agreed, what the rate of the allowance should be.
- 4.3** The Panel's recommendations will be reported for consideration to the Council meeting on 19 September 2018.

Rob Bridge  
Chief Executive  
August 2018