

Report to:	Independent Remuneration Panel	Date of Meeting:	10 June 2024
Subject:	Deputy Leaders of the Council – Payment of Special Responsibility Allowances; and Chair of the Planning Committee		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek the views of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the payment of special responsibility allowances to Deputy Leaders of the Council; and to seek confirmation of the special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Planning Committee.

Recommendation(s):

That:

- (1) the Panel consider whether special responsibility allowances should be made to the Deputy Leaders of the Council; and if so, at what level;
- (2) the special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Planning Committee be confirmed as 100% of the basic allowance; and
- (3) the Panel gives consideration to the backdating of the SRAs to 16 May 2024.

Reason for Recommendation(s):

The Independent Remuneration Panel's views must be sought on the approval of any policy impacting on the allowances made to elected Members.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

None. The Independent Remuneration Panel is requested to either approve or not approve the payment of special responsibility allowances to Deputy Leaders of the Council; and to confirm the rate of special responsibility allowance payable to the Chair of the Planning Committee.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs – Inflationary adjustments in respect of the Scheme of Members’ Allowances are made annually and built into the revenue budget. The payment of an SRA to Deputy Leaders of the Council and to the Chair of the Planning Committee will increase the cost to the revenue budget. The level of budgetary increase will be dependent on the decision of the Panel (and then Council) if it agrees to introduce an SRA for the Deputy Leaders. As a guide and using benchmark figures from across the Liverpool City Region, this could result in the highest cost of £6530 or the lowest cost of £3548 per annum (see paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5).

If the Panel confirm the payment of the SRA to the Chair of the Planning Committee this will result in an increase this year to the revenue budget of £11,006.76.

However, The Leader of the Council has agreed a restructure of Cabinet portfolios commencing in the 2024/25 municipal year. This restructure has resulted in the removal of one Cabinet position. This will result in a saving to the Members’ Allowances budget of £18,137. It is therefore anticipated that overall, there will be a saving to revenue costs associated with the Members’ Allowance budget.

(B) Capital Costs - None

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): See revenue costs section above.	
Legal Implications: The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) require authorities to make a scheme for the payment of allowances for members and before it makes or amends a scheme, to have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel.	
Equality Implications: None	
Impact on Children and Young People: None	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report.	

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Not applicable
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Not applicable

Commission, broker and provide core services: Not applicable
Place – leadership and influencer: Not applicable
Drivers of change and reform: Not applicable
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable
Greater income for social investment: Not applicable
Cleaner Greener: Not applicable

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7669/24) has been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report. The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5769/24) is the author of this report.

(B) External Consultations – Liverpool City Region local authorities. Implementation Date for the Decision

With immediate effect. The decision of the Independent Remuneration Panel will however be submitted to Council for consideration and approval.

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Appendices:

The following appendix is attached to this report:

Appendix 1 – Statistics of SRA's made to Deputy Leaders of Liverpool City Region local authorities.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Councillor Atkinson, Leader of the Council, has proposed that an SRA be payable to the two Deputy Leader positions.
- 1.2 An exercise has been undertaken with Liverpool City Region local authorities (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool St. Helens and Wirral) to find out if the positions of Deputy Leaders in those authorities attract an SRA.

1.3 With the exception of Knowsley, Deputy Leader positions in Liverpool City Region local authorities do attract an SRA. The levels of SRA are detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Levels of SRA to Deputy Leaders

2.1 Due to the additional responsibilities that Deputy Leaders would undertake over and above their Cabinet Member responsibilities, it could be considered appropriate to increase the SRA accordingly. This would be in keeping with SRAs made in other Liverpool City Region local authorities.

2.2 As a general rule of thumb, when calculating SRAs a multiplier of the Basic Allowance is used. However, as can be seen from Appendix 1 this is not the case in respect of Deputy Leader SRAs across the City Region.

2.3 Appendix 1 shows the additional amount Deputy Leaders receive above Cabinet Members/Chairs of Policy Service Committees. (Note: Wirral operates a Committee system and therefore it does not have Executive/Cabinet Members).

As can be seen, the additional payment varies from £2431 to £3000.

2.4 A calculation has been made to show the difference between SRAs made to Deputy Leaders and Cabinet Members/Chairs of Policy Service Committees as a % of Leader SRAs. This information is detailed in Appendix 1; and the costs to Sefton are set out.

2.5 As the proposal in Sefton is to have two Deputy Leaders, then the costs detailed in the Appendix would need to be doubled. Based on levels across the Liverpool City Region this could result in the highest cost of £6530 or the lowest cost of £3548.

2.6 Panel members will be aware that in June 2023 it was agreed that the Local Government Pay Settlement be used as the indexation option for uplifts in Members' allowances. No agreement has yet been reached between the national employers and the trade unions (the National Joint Council – NJC) on the 2024 pay claim so if an option detailed in Appendix 1 is selected, then the actual costs will be higher to reflect the uplift.

3. Special Responsibility Allowance to the Chair of the Planning Committee

3.1 As referred to above, the Leader of the Council has amended the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members and in doing so, has also reduced the number of Members on the Cabinet from 10 to 9.

3.2 As part of the reallocation of roles, the Leader has agreed that the duty performed by the former Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control in chairing the Planning Committee be now undertaken by a newly appointed chair of that Committee. This will attract a payment of a SRA.

3.3 Prior to 2015/16, the SRA attached to the Chair of Planning Committee was 100% of the basic allowance.

Councillor Veidman, the former Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control therefore chaired the Planning Committee from 2015/16 to 2023/24. In accordance with the Scheme of Members' Allowances only one Special Responsibility Allowance was paid

and therefore no allowance was claimed for the responsibility of chairing the Planning Committee.

- 3.4 Because of the above circumstances the Members' Allowance Scheme and Members' Allowances Statements have not specified SRA's to the Chair of Planning Committee since 2015/16 because none were paid.
- 3.5 In order to formalise matters, and in accordance with past arrangements, it is recommended that the position of Chair of the Planning Committee attract a SRA of 100% of the basic allowance.

5. Backdating of Allowances

- 5.1 The issues associated with the payment of SRAs to the Deputy Leaders and the chair of the Planning Committee as referred to above were confirmed at the meeting of the Council held on 16 May 2024; and the Councillors appointed to the roles have been undertaking their additional roles and responsibilities since that date.
- 5.2 Any decisions of the Panel in respect of these matters will have to be reported to Council for consideration and approval. The next meeting of the Council will be held on 11 July 2024.
- 5.3 Where a Councillor takes on duties entitling them to a different level of allowances the new level of allowances may be applied retrospectively to the time at which the circumstances changed; and the Panel may make recommendations, where relevant, as to whether the payments on which they have made a recommendation may be backdated.
- 5.4 If the Panel is minded to amend the SRAs referred to in this report then it is recommended that the Panel gives consideration to the backdating of the SRAs to 16 May 2024.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The views of the Panel are sought on:
- (a) whether special responsibility allowances should be made to the Deputy Leaders of the Council; and if so, at what level;
 - (b) the confirmation of the rate of special responsibility allowance payable to the Chair of the Planning Committee; and
 - (c) the backdating of allowances to 16 May 2024.