

THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

REPORT TO THE DISTRICT OF BOLSOVER JULY 2023

MEMBERS: -

Amanda Orchard- works as an Independent Person for a number of authorities across the country as well as experienced in undertaking a number of remuneration reviews. She works in conflict resolution adjudicating complaints, sitting on fitness to practice panels for a number of healthcare regulators as well as being a trained mediator. She also sits as a JP in crime and family court.

Graham Hudson- 38 years in HR Management at Sheffield City Council. HR lead officer for all outsourcing projects. Latterly seconded as Head of Corporate Resources for Renaissance South Yorkshire on Behalf of the 4 South Yorkshire District Councils and Yorkshire Forward-The Regional Development Agency. He is also an Independent Person at a neighbouring authority.

David Richardson- currently works in Further and Higher Education and is the Student Success Facilitator in the Faculty of Health at the University of Bradford. Previously he was an investigator with the Local Government Ombudsman. He is also an Independent Person at a neighbouring authority.

1. INTRODUCTION

We, the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) were invited to participate by the Monitoring Officer of Bolsover District Council. This was done in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. These regulations require that before making or amending a Members' Allowance Scheme, the Authority must have regard to the recommendations of an independent remuneration panel.

The Panel comprises three members all of which are Independent Person of a neighbouring authority; one of whom has been a panel member of other authorities Independent Remuneration Panels

We represent a broad range of disciplines and have significant knowledge of local government. We are also independent from the Authority and are able to look at the matter of members' allowances objectively, with no self-interest. We have also been able to bring the experience of our own spheres to bear on the discussions.

We have been supplied with a range of information to consider during the formulation of our recommendations.

2. THE PANEL'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

These terms of reference have been compiled with reference to The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ('the Regulations').

In accordance with regulation 21 the Independent Remuneration Panel is required to make recommendations on the Members' Allowance Scheme in the form of a report to the Authority on the following:-

Basic Allowance

- The amount of Basic Allowance which should be payable to its elected members.

Special Responsibility Allowance

- Whether Special Responsibility Allowances shall be included in the scheme.
- The responsibilities or duties for which a Special Responsibility Allowance should be payable and the amount of each allowance.

Travelling and subsistence Allowances

- Whether travelling and subsistence allowances shall be included in the scheme.
- The responsibilities or duties for which travelling and subsistence allowances should be payable and the amount of each allowance.
- The effect on the Members' Allowance Scheme on proposed changes to the employees mileage allowances.

Dependants' carers' allowance

Whether dependants' carers' allowances should be payable to members of the authority and the amount of such an allowance.

Reviews

- Whether the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and if so which index.
- How long the mechanism should be applied (subject to a maximum of four years) before its application should be reviewed.

We have been asked to review and make recommendations on Bolsover District Council's Members' Allowance Scheme which we will consider in later meetings and provide the Council with a further report.

In the meantime, we have been asked to provide an interim report addressing whether the role of Junior Executive Member should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance and if so what the level of allowance should be. Set out below are our findings and recommendations on this.

3. THE PANEL'S METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 We were provided with detail of the Council's proposal to introduce a new role of Junior Executive Member that we were informed is due to be considered at a meeting of the Council on 2nd August 2023. This included the proposed role description.

3.2 We were also provided with a table showing what other local authorities paid members in similar roles and how this compared to that authorities basic allowance or Executive member SRA. This is reproduced below.

Comparison of Junior Executive Members SRAs paid by other authorities

Authority	Basic Allowance	Executive	Junior Executive	Percentage
Tameside	£14,712	£22,081	£9176	No clear pattern
Nottingham City	£13,052	£21,210	£7,070	33% of Executive Allowance
Blackpool	£11,0944	£14,977	£5,547	50% of Basic Allowance
Chesterfield Borough	£6,286	£7,993	£3,996	50% of Executive Allowance
London Borough of Harrow	£8,711	£20,861	£2,179	25% of Basic Allowance
Rochdale	£11,172	£15,082	£3,016	20% of Executive
Blackburn with Darwen	£7,336	£7,336	£3144	No clear pattern
Huntingdonshire District Council*	£4,500	£8,394	£840	10% of Executive
London Borough of Bromley	£11,393	£21,380	£3746	No clear patter

*This was paid up to 2022. The Executive Assistant Role is no longer a role.

3.3 We first considered whether the role should attract a Special Responsibility Allowance. We are happy that the role fell within the criteria set out by the Regulations for payment of Special Responsibility Allowance and we are happy that members undertaking that role should receive an allowance.

3.4 We do have concern about the number of members who receive a special responsibility allowance and are conscious of guidance stating that if the majority of members of a council receive a special responsibility allowance the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified. This is something we will consider when we review the scheme as a whole.

- 3.5 Having agreed to attribute an SRA to the role of Junior Executive Member we then considered what the level of that SRA should be. The IRP considered the current list of roles and SRAs paid by Bolsover District Council and whether the new role should be a percentage of one of the existing SRAs. We agreed it would seem sensible for the Junior Executive Member to attract a percentage of the SRA that a Member of the Executive received.
- 3.6 We also considered the level of SRA that a similar role attracted at other local authorities, including Chesterfield Borough Council which paid Junior Executive Members 50% of the Executive's SRA.
- 3.7 We looked at the SRA paid to the Vice Chairs and how they compared to the SRA paid to the Chair of the same Committee.
- 3.8 We debated at what level to recommend the SRA be paid, between 33% and 50% of that paid to Members of the Executive and we agreed to recommend that the Junior Executive Member SRA should be 50% of the SRA paid to Members of the Executive. Members of the Executive received £4890.72, therefore the recommended SRA for the Junior Executive Members would be £2445.36.
- 3.9 In making our decision it should be noted that we will want to review the Junior Executive Member SRA as part of the full review.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: -

For the reasons set out above our recommendations are that the role of Junior Executive Member should attract a Special Responsibility Allowance of £2445.36 (50% of an Executive Member SRA).