

Summons to attend meeting of Full Council



Date: Tuesday, 10 January 2023

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: The Council Chamber - City Hall, College Green,
Bristol, BS1 5TR

To: All Members of Council

Issued by: Oliver Harrison, Democratic Services

City Hall, PO Box 3399, Bristol, BS1 9NE

Tel: 0117 3526162

E-mail: democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

Date: Thursday, 22 December 2022



Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions

(Pages 6 - 8)

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

To note any declarations of interest from the Councillors. They are asked to indicate the relevant agenda item, the nature of the interest and in particular whether it is a **disclosable pecuniary interest**.

Any declarations of interest made at the meeting which is not on the register of interests should be notified to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To agree the minutes of following previous meetings as a correct record: (Pages 9 - 23)

13 December 2022 Extraordinary Full Council

13 December 2022 Full Council

5. Lord Mayor's Business

To note any announcements from the Lord Mayor

6. Public Petitions, Statements and Questions

Public forum items can be about any matter the Council is responsible for or which directly affects the city. Submissions will be treated in order of receipt and **as many people shall be called upon as is possible within the time allowed within the meeting (normally 30 minutes)**.

Further rules can be found within our Council Procedure Rules within the Constitution.

Please note that the following deadlines apply to this meeting:

a. Public petitions and statements: Petitions and written statements



must be received by **12 noon on Friday 6 January 2023** at latest. One written statement per member of the public is permitted.

b. Public questions: Written public questions must be received by **5pm on Wednesday 4 January 2022** at latest. A maximum of 2 questions per member of the public is permitted. Questions should be addressed to the Mayor or relevant Cabinet Member.

Public forum items should be e-mailed to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

7. Petitions Notified by Councillors

Please note: Up to 10 minutes is allowed for this item.

Petitions notified by Councillors can be about any matter the Council is responsible for or which directly affects the city. The deadline for the notification of petitions to this meeting is **12 noon on Monday 9 January 2023**.

8. Petition Debate: No More Building on Green Spaces in the City of Bristol

Recommendation

That Full Council debates the petition and refers it to the Mayor / relevant Cabinet member for a formal response.

(Pages 24 - 26)

9. Council Tax Base 2023/24

Recommendation

1. Agree, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Bristol City Council as its Council Tax base for the financial year 2023/24 shall be 129,654

(Pages 27 - 36)

10. Collection Fund Surplus / Deficit 2022/23

Recommendation

1. That an estimated surplus as at 31 March 2023 on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund of £1.960m be declared for 2022/23 and shared between this Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and the Avon Fire and Rescue Service in proportion

(Pages 37 - 51)



to their 2022/23 precepts on the Collection Fund.

2. That an estimated deficit as at 31 March 2023 on the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) element of the Collection Fund, net of grants, of £3.358m be declared for 2022/23 and shared between this Council, Avon Fire and Rescue Service and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) in proportion to the appropriate year demands (Bristol 95%, WECA 4%, Avon Fire and Rescue Service 1%).

11. Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Recommendation

(Pages 52 - 101)

That Full Council considers the recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel regarding Members' allowances (as set out in Appendix 1).

12. Motions

Motions to Follow.

Note:

Under the Council's constitution, 30 minutes are available for the consideration of motions. In practice, this realistically means that there is usually only time for one, or possibly two motions to be considered.

With the agreement of the Lord Mayor, motion 1 below will be considered at this meeting, and motion 2 is likely to be considered, subject to time.

Details of other motions submitted, (which, due to time constraints, are very unlikely to be considered at this meeting) are also set out for information.

MOTIONS RECEIVED FOR FULL COUNCIL

Signed





Proper Officer
Thursday, 29 December 2022



Public Information Sheet - Full Council

Public meetings include Cabinet, Full Council, regulatory meetings (where planning and licensing decisions are made) and scrutiny are held at City Hall.

Members of the press and public who plan to attend City Hall are advised that you may be asked to watch the meeting on a screen in another room should the numbers attending exceed the maximum occupancy of the meeting venue.

Fire Safety Information

In event of alarm please calmly leave by the nearest fire exit. The assembly point is by the side of the Cathedral.

COVID-19 Prevention Measures at City Hall (June 2022)

When attending a meeting at City Hall, the following COVID-19 prevention guidance is advised:

- promotion of good hand hygiene: washing and disinfecting hands frequently
- while face coverings are no longer mandatory, we will continue to recommend their use in venues and workplaces with limited ventilation or large groups of people.
- although legal restrictions have been removed, we should continue to be mindful of others as we navigate this next phase of the pandemic.

COVID-19 Safety Measures for Attendance at Council Meetings (June 2022)

We request that no one attends a Council Meeting if they:

- are required to self-isolate from another country
- are suffering from symptoms of COVID-19 or
- have tested positive for COVID-19

Public Forum – Full Council

You can find papers for all our meetings on our website at www.bristol.gov.uk.

Members of the public who live or own a business in Bristol may present a petition, make a written statement or ask a question at Full Council meetings. Please submit it to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk.

Petitions, Statements and Questions must be about a matter the Council has responsibility for or which directly affects the city. For further information about procedure rules please refer to our Constitution <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/how-council-decisions-are-made/constitution>



Petitions from members of the public

- Petitions will be presented to the Council first.
- Petitions must include name, address and details for the wording of the petition.
- The person presenting a petition will be asked to read out the objectives of the petition with one minute allowed.
- A written reply will be provided to the lead petitioner within 10 working days of the Full Council meeting.

Statements

- Statements should be received no later than **12.00 noon two working days before the meeting**.
- There can be one statement per person and subject to overall time constraints, a maximum of one minute is allocated for presentation.
- Any statement submitted should be no longer than one side of A4 paper.
- For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce or publish newspaper or magazine articles that may be attached to statements.

Questions

- Questions should be received no later than **three clear working days before the meeting**.
- A maximum of two written questions per person can be submitted.
- At the meeting, a maximum of one supplementary question per question may be asked, arising directly out of the original question or reply.

By participating in public forum business, we will assume that you have consented to your name and the details of your submission being recorded and circulated to the Committee and published within the minutes. Your statement or question will also be made available to the public via publication on the Council's website and may be provided upon request in response to Freedom of Information Act requests in the future.

We will try to remove personal and identifiable information. However, because of time constraints we cannot guarantee this, and you may therefore wish to consider if your statement contains information that you would prefer not to be in the public domain. Committee information on the council's website may be searchable on the internet.

The information contained within public forum submissions are the views of those individuals and do not reflect the views of Bristol City Council.

Process during the meeting:

- The Lord Mayor will call each submission in turn. When you are invited to speak, please make sure that your presentation focuses on the key issues that you would like Members to consider. This will have the greatest impact.
- If there are a large number of submissions on one matter a representative may be requested to speak on the groups behalf.
- There will be no debate on statements or petitions.
- If you do not attend or speak at the meeting at which your public forum submission is being taken your statement will be noted by Members.
- As part of the drive to reduce single-use plastics in council-owned buildings, please bring your own water bottle in order to fill up from the water dispenser.



Other formats and languages and assistance for those with hearing impairment

You can get committee papers in other formats (e.g. large print, audio tape, braille etc) or in community languages by contacting the Democratic Services Officer. Please give as much notice as possible. We cannot guarantee re-formatting or translation of papers before the date of a particular meeting.

Committee rooms are fitted with induction loops to assist people with hearing impairment. If you require any assistance with this please speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

Arrangements for Full Council

The allocated public gallery for Full Council is available for members of the public to observe the Full Council meeting.

The Lord Mayor has determined:

- Attendees should please be quiet and not interrupt proceedings.
- Large bags will be left at reception.
- All loud hailers, banners, and placards must be left at the main entrance and will not be permitted to be brought into the building.
- The Council reserves the right to remove any person who disrupts the proceedings. In appropriate circumstances, the police may be called.

Under our security arrangements, all members of the public (and bags) will be searched. This applies to all members of the public attending the meeting in the interests of helping to ensure a safe meeting environment for all attending. Visitors' bags are liable to be searched prior to entry, and entry is conditional upon visitors consenting to be searched. Searches are carried out to ensure that no items which may interrupt proceedings are brought into the building. Small notices may be acceptable if they are not obstructive or offensive (no more than A4 size).

The privacy notice for Democratic Services can be viewed at www.bristol.gov.uk/about-our-website/privacy-and-processing-notice-for-resource-services



Bristol City Council Minutes of the Full Council

13 December 2022 at 12.45 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Mayor Marvin Rees, Lord Mayor Paula O'Rourke, Amal Ali, Donald Alexander, Lesley Alexander, Kerry Bailes, Nicola Beech, Mark Bradshaw, Fabian Breckels, Andrew Brown, Craig Cheney, Jos Clark, Sarah Classick, Amirah Cole, Asher Craig, Chris Davies, Carla Denyer, Kye Dudd, Richard Eddy, Jude English, Martin Fodor, Lorraine Francis, John Geater, Paul Goggin, Geoff Gollop, Zoe Goodman, John Goulandris, Fi Hance, Alex Hartley, Tom Hathway, Helen Holland, Gary Hopkins, Katja Hornchen, Jonathan Hucker, Philippa Hulme, Farah Hussain, Chris Jackson, Hibaq Jama, Ellie King, Heather Mack, Mohamed Makawi, Brenda Massey, Henry Michallat, Yassin Mohamud, Graham Morris, Steve Pearce, Ed Plowden, Guy Poultney, Kevin Quartley, Tom Renhard, Tim Rippington, James Scott, Sharon Scott, Steve Smith, Ani Stafford-Townsend, Lisa Stone, Christine Townsend, Andrew Varney, Mark Weston, David Wilcox, Chris Windows and Tim Wye

1 Welcome and Introductions

The Lord Mayor welcomed all attendees to the meeting and made a safety announcement in relation to the fire/emergency evacuation procedure.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were heard from Councillors Bennett, Dyer, Edwards, Fitzjohn, Kent, Grant, Fitzgibbon, Parsons and Bartle.

3 Declarations of Interest

None received.

4 Freedom of the City - Guy Bailey OBE, Barbara Dettering, Roy Hackett MBE, Owen Henry, Prince Brown and Audley Evans

The Council considered a report recommending conferring Freedom of the City to Guy Bailey OBE, Barbara Dettering and posthumously to Roy Hackett MBE, Owen Henry, Prince Brown and Audley Evans



The Lord Mayor introduced the report and moved the recommendation.

The motion was seconded by Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Steve Smith.

Following speeches from Councillors Craig, Francis, Weston, Clark and Hopkins in support of the recommendation, it was

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the Freedom of the City of Bristol be conferred upon Guy Bailey OBE, Barbara Dettering and posthumously to Roy Hackett MBE, Owen Henry, Prince Brown and Audley Evans.**
- 2. That their names be placed on the Roll of Honorary Freemen of the City.**

Meeting ended at 1.30 pm

CHAIR _____



Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Full Council

13 December 2022 at 2.00 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Mayor Marvin Rees, Lord Mayor Paula O'Rourke, Amal Ali, Donald Alexander, Lesley Alexander, Kerry Bailes, Jenny Bartle, Nicola Beech, Mark Bradshaw, Fabian Breckels, Andrew Brown, Craig Cheney, Jos Clark, Sarah Classick, Amirah Cole, Chris Davies, Carla Denyer, Kye Dudd, Richard Eddy, Jude English, Martin Fodor, Lorraine Francis, John Geater, Paul Goggin, Geoff Gollop, Zoe Goodman, John Goulandris, Fi Hance, Alex Hartley, Tom Hathway, Helen Holland, Gary Hopkins, Katja Hornchen, Jonathan Hucker, Philippa Hulme, Farah Hussain, Chris Jackson, Hibaq Jama, Ellie King, Heather Mack, Mohamed Makawi, Brenda Massey, Henry Michallat, Yassin Mohamud, Graham Morris, Steve Pearce, Ed Plowden, Guy Poultney, Kevin Quartley, Tom Renhard, Tim Ripington, James Scott, Sharon Scott, Steve Smith, Ani Stafford-Townsend, Lisa Stone, Christine Townsend, Andrew Varney, Mark Weston, David Wilcox, Chris Windows and Tim Wye

1 Welcome and Introductions

The Lord Mayor welcomed all attendees to the meeting and issued the safety information.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were heard from Councillors Bennett, Craig, Dyer, Edwards, Fitzjohn, Kent, Grant, Fitzgibbon and Parsons.

3 Declarations of Interest

None received.

4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

It was agreed that the minutes of 18 October 2022 Item 12 be amended to read "There was a debate".

On the motion of the Lord Mayor, seconded by Councillor Hance, it was



RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on the 18 October 2022 and 8 November 2022 be confirmed as correct record and signed by the Lord Mayor.

5 Lord Mayor's Business

Full Council noted the sad news that former Councillors Alf Havcock and Tony Carey had recently passed away. Full Council also noted the passing of George 'Johnny' Johnson, the last surviving Dambuster. Members paid tribute to their memory and a minutes' silence was observed.

6 Public Petitions, Statements and Questions**Public Statements**

Full Council received and noted the following statements, which were also referred to the Mayor for his consideration and information.

Ref No	Name	Title
AS01	Ald Anthony Negus	Take back control of our bus services
PS01	Haydn Gill	Leadership for cycling
PS02	Rob Bryher	Suspend the Deregulated Bus Market
PS03	Louise Polledri	The Lack of Public Access Automatic External Defibrillators (AED's) in and around Bristol
PS04	Simon Brookes	Promoting More Practical Awareness of CPR
PS05	Craig Lamkin	Resident statement on the proposed changes to the A4018
PS06	Liv Fortune	Bristol Central Library
PS07	Sian Ellis-Thomas	Better Facilities in Redcatch Park
PS08	Suzanne Audrey	The Financialisation of Housing
PS09	Janet Croucher	Protect our green spaces
PS10	Angie Yeo	Save our green spaces.
PS11	Janet Poole	The Iron Bridge Kingsweston
PS12	Deborah Hurst	NO MORE BUILDING ON BRISTOLS GREEN SPACES. INFACT INCREASE THEM
PS13	David Redgewell	City region bus services
PS14	Louise Somerville	Trans Rights are Human Rights



PS15	Clive Stevens	Committee Model Working Group
PS16	Dr Tim Godfrey / Joe Hughes	Improving AED provision and knowledge
PS17	Stephen McNamara	Trans Right Motion
PS18	Hannah Mishan	Bristol Cycling Delivery Plan
PS19	Christina Biggs / Katrina Billings	Bristol Clean Air Alliance (BCAA)

Within the time available, statements AS01, PS01, PS02, PS03, PS04, PS06, PS07, PS14 and PS16 were presented by individuals present at the meeting.

Public Questions

Full Council noted that the following questions had been submitted:

Ref No	Name	Title
PQ01	Michael Owen	Councillors and Council Tax
PQ02	John Broomhead	Property Question St Peters Hospice
PQ03	Liv Fortune	Central Library
PQ04	Alison Allan	Citizen Assembly Recommendations
PQ05	Nigel Shipley	City Leap
PQ06	Rick Alden	City Leap
PQ07	Harriet Williams	Climate Emergency Strategy
PQ08	Clive Weston	Cycling and Pedestrian Plan
PQ09	Haydn Gill	Lorry direct vision standard and Metro (un)feasibility
PQ10	Rob Bryher	Bus Services
PQ11	Sarah Cemlyn	Cycling and Pedestrian Plan
PQ12	Claire Gronow	Private Car Journeys
PQ13	Andrea MacKay	Cycling on Gloucester Road
PQ14	Taru Silvonon	Heat Network
PQ15	Suzanne Audrey	House Building
PQ16	Anne de Verteuil	Footpath maintenance
PQ17	Isabeau Kenmuir	City Leap Energy Supply
PQ18	Isabeau Kenmuir	Public Transport
PQ19	Greg Cooper	Carbon Emissions
PQ20	Tom Bosanquet	Leaves
PQ21	Tom Bosanquet	Attitudes Towards Cyclists
PQ22	Catherine Whiteman	Cycling Plan
PQ23	Stephen Lowis	Cycling Plan
PQ24	David Redgewell	WECA Transfer



PQ25	Gaby Solly	Tree Protection
PQ26	Ald Antony Negus	Central Library
PQ27	Ald Antony Negus	Street Lighting in Cotham
PQ28	Dave Mitchell	Climate Emergency

Within the time available, the Mayor responded verbally to questions PQ02, PQ03, PQ05, PQ09, PQ10 also responding to supplementary questions.

7 Petitions Notified by Councillors

The Full Council received and noted the following petitions:

Petition CP01 – Save Central Library – petition presented by Councillor Alex Hartley

8 Committee Model of Governance Working Group Update

Full Council considered a report on the Committee Model of Governance.

Councillor Helen Holland moved the report and the recommendations therein.

There was a debate, and it was:

RESOLVED: That Full Council note the report.

9 Audit Committee Half-Year Report to Full Council

Full Council considered the Audit Committee Half-Year Report.

Councillor Andrew Brown moved the report and the recommendations therein.

There was a debate, and it was:

RESOLVED: That Full Council note the report.

10 Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22

Full Council considered the Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22.

Councillor Craig Cheney moved the report and the recommendations therein.



There was a debate on both this item and item 11, and it was:

RESOLVED: That Full Council note the report.

11 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2022/23

Full Council considered the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2022/23.

Councillor Craig Cheney moved the report and the recommendations therein.

There was a debate on both this item and item 10, and it was:

RESOLVED: That Full Council note the report.

12 HR Committee Annual Report 2021/22

Full Council considered the HR Committee Annual Report for 2021/22

Councillor Lorraine Francis moved the report and the recommendations therein.

There was a debate, and it was:

RESOLVED: That Full Council note the report.

13 Motions

Following a short adjournment, it was then moved by the Lord Mayor that standing order CPR2.1(xi) be suspended to allow the meeting to go past the 2 hour 30 minute time limit. Following a vote, it was agreed to proceed for an additional 30 minutes.

Motion 1 – Golden Motion: Taking Back Public Control of Our Buses

Councillor Andrew Brown moved the following motion:

Full Council notes that:

1. A comprehensive bus service, providing a reliable and economical means of travel to all parts of the city for work, child support, health care, leisure, and other purposes is of vital importance to the city's residents.



2. There are multiple economic and social benefits of maintaining an effective and accessible bus service including
 - a. providing a reliable means of travel for commuters and consumers contributing to the local economy.
 - b. allowing those who would otherwise be isolated more freedom to access safe and social ways to participate in community and city life, improving their wellbeing and aiding independent living. This includes, but is not restricted to, those with physical or other disabilities, the elderly, and those on low incomes.
 - c. reducing traffic, congestion, and air pollution through the removal of private vehicles from the roads.
3. The Bus Services Act 2017 allows for alternative models to the provision of bus services where these were previously required to be operated solely by private companies whose working relationship with local authorities was strictly limited. The revised options are Enhanced Partnership, Advanced Quality Partnerships, and Bus Franchising.
4. Bus Franchising offers the opportunity for public direction of innovation of fares, routes, and bus quality.
5. Bus Franchising is being implemented or explored by a number of city and regional authorities across the country including the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Full Council believes that:

1. There are significant speed and cost advantages in implementing a more comprehensive mass transit solution based on buses as opposed to alternatives that are dependent on costly and disruptive infrastructure.
2. Implementing bus franchising would provide the opportunity to comprehensively re-think and re-design how the bus service can best serve our citizens, the city, and the region.
3. Services provided under a franchising model would be better designed to meet the needs of the city rather than those of the bus operator(s).
4. Bus Franchising could provide the improvements and innovation required to achieve modal shift, increasing bus usage and reducing private car journeys.
5. Bus Franchising would strengthen the West of England Combined Authority's position in discharging its responsibilities for planning and transport across the region.
6. The West of England Combined Authority's previous dismissal of franchising in favour of developing an Enhanced Partnership was not the result of a comprehensive review of its potential benefits.
7. The Enhanced Partnership model is compromised by the power of veto that the region's major bus provider will have over decision-making.

Full Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the WECA Mayor requesting that he commissions a comprehensive feasibility study of all aspects of adopting and financing a system of franchising bus services in the region. The commission should also consider how the existing knowledge and experience of each member Authority could also be maximised in the consultation and design of such an approach.



2. Request that the Mayor seeks consensus from the leaders of the other WECA authorities, and the WECA Mayor, in order to facilitate the delivery of a feasibility study as soon as possible.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Andrew Varney.

Councillor Tim Rippington then moved the following amendment:

‘That the motion be amended to read as follows:

Full Council notes that:

1. A comprehensive bus service, providing a reliable and economical means of travel to all parts of the city for work, child support, health care, leisure, and other purposes is a vital part of any city’s integrated transport network and of great importance to the city’s residents.
2. There are multiple economic and social benefits of maintaining an effective and accessible bus service including
 - a. providing a reliable means of travel for commuters and consumers contributing to the local economy.
 - b. allowing those who would otherwise be isolated more freedom to access safe and social ways to participate in community and city life, improving their wellbeing and aiding independent living. This includes, but is not restricted to, those with physical or other disabilities, the elderly, and those on low incomes.
 - c. reducing traffic, congestion, and air pollution through the removal of private vehicles from the roads.
3. The Bus Services Act 2017 prohibits ‘relevant authorities’, such as councils and combined authorities, from establishing municipal (publicly owned) bus companies. However, it allows for some alternative models to the provision of bus services where these were previously required to be operated solely by private companies whose working relationship with local authorities was strictly limited. The revised options are Enhanced Partnership, Advanced Quality Partnerships, and Bus Franchising.
4. Bus Franchising offers the opportunity for public direction of innovation of fares, routes, and bus quality.
5. Bus Franchising is being implemented or explored by a number of city and regional authorities across the country including the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
6. Franchising the region’s bus network and building the necessary infrastructure to facilitate a reliable, efficient bus service will be costly and time consuming – Greater Manchester’s franchising



scheme will take eight years to materialise. Therefore, further measures are needed to address the bus crisis in the immediate term. Bristol City Council should support WECA in this endeavour wherever possible.

Full Council believes that:

7. As a key public service, bus services should ideally be publicly owned and publicly run. The Government should overturn the ban on councils and combined authorities establishing municipal bus companies.
8. Pending any new government overturning the current legislation, Bus Franchising could provide some of the improvements and innovation required to achieve modal shift, increasing bus usage and reducing private car journeys.
9. Implementing bus franchising would provide the opportunity to comprehensively re-think and re-design how the bus service can best serve our citizens, the city, and the region.
10. Services provided under a franchising model would be better designed to meet the needs of the city rather than those of the bus operator(s).
11. Bus Franchising would strengthen the West of England Combined Authority's position in discharging its responsibilities for planning and transport across the region.
12. The West of England Combined Authority's previous dismissal of franchising in favour of developing an Enhanced Partnership was not the result of a comprehensive review of its potential benefits. The Enhanced Partnership model is compromised by the power of veto that the region's major bus provider will have over decision-making.
13. While a franchised bus service presents a considerable number of upsides, a publicly owned, municipal bus company is preferable, as it offers the same benefits but allows profits to be directly reinvested into the service. This is in contrast to a franchised system, where profits are paid to private shareholders.

Full Council resolves to:

1. Call on Party Group Leaders to write to the Government to ask it overturns the 2017 ban on councils and combined authorities establishing municipal bus companies.
2. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the WECA Mayor requesting that he commissions a comprehensive feasibility study of all aspects of adopting and financing a system of franchising bus services in the region. The commission should also consider how the existing knowledge and experience of each member Authority could also be maximised in the consultation and design of such an approach.



3. Should the government overturn the ban on the establishment of municipal bus companies, Bristol City Council resolves to work with WECA to commission a feasibility study for a publicly owned bus network. If it is found to be feasible, WECA should prioritise establishing a publicly owned bus network over a franchised network. This view should be reflected in the Chief Executive's letter to the WECA Mayor.

4. Request that the Mayor seeks consensus from the leaders of the other WECA authorities, and the WECA Mayor, in order to facilitate the delivery of a feasibility study as soon as possible.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Fabian Breckels.

Following debate, upon being put to the vote, the amendment was CARRIED (41 For, 15 Against, 1 Abstention).

The Lord Mayor then invited a debate on the Motion as Amended.

Following final remarks, upon being put to the vote, the Motion as Amended was CARRIED (40 For, 14 Against, 2 Abstention) and it was

RESOLVED:

Full Council notes that:

1. **A comprehensive bus service, providing a reliable and economical means of travel to all parts of the city for work, child support, health care, leisure, and other purposes is a vital part of any city's integrated transport network and of great importance to the city's residents.**
2. **There are multiple economic and social benefits of maintaining an effective and accessible bus service including**
 - a. **providing a reliable means of travel for commuters and consumers contributing to the local economy.**
 - b. **allowing those who would otherwise be isolated more freedom to access safe and social ways to participate in community and city life, improving their wellbeing and aiding independent living. This includes, but is not restricted to, those with physical or other disabilities, the elderly, and those on low incomes.**
 - c. **reducing traffic, congestion, and air pollution through the removal of private vehicles from the roads.**
3. **The Bus Services Act 2017 prohibits 'relevant authorities', such as councils and combined authorities, from establishing municipal (publicly owned) bus companies. However, it allows for some**



alternative models to the provision of bus services where these were previously required to be operated solely by private companies whose working relationship with local authorities was strictly limited. The revised options are Enhanced Partnership, Advanced Quality Partnerships, and Bus Franchising.

4. Bus Franchising offers the opportunity for public direction of innovation of fares, routes, and bus quality.
5. Bus Franchising is being implemented or explored by a number of city and regional authorities across the country including the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
6. Franchising the region's bus network and building the necessary infrastructure to facilitate a reliable, efficient bus service will be costly and time consuming – Greater Manchester's franchising scheme will take eight years to materialise. Therefore, further measures are needed to address the bus crisis in the immediate term. Bristol City Council should support WECA in this endeavour wherever possible.

Full Council believes that:

7. As a key public service, bus services should ideally be publicly owned and publicly run. The Government should overturn the ban on councils and combined authorities establishing municipal bus companies.
8. Pending any new government overturning the current legislation, Bus Franchising could provide some of the improvements and innovation required to achieve modal shift, increasing bus usage and reducing private car journeys.
9. Implementing bus franchising would provide the opportunity to comprehensively re-think and re-design how the bus service can best serve our citizens, the city, and the region.
10. Services provided under a franchising model would be better designed to meet the needs of the city rather than those of the bus operator(s).
11. Bus Franchising would strengthen the West of England Combined Authority's position in discharging its responsibilities for planning and transport across the region.
12. The West of England Combined Authority's previous dismissal of franchising in favour of developing an Enhanced Partnership was not the result of a comprehensive review of its potential benefits. The Enhanced Partnership model is compromised by the power of veto that the region's major bus provider will have over decision-making.
13. While a franchised bus service presents a considerable number of upsides, a publicly owned, municipal bus company is preferable, as it offers the same benefits but allows profits to be directly



reinvested into the service. This is in contrast to a franchised system, where profits are paid to private shareholders.

Full Council resolves to:

1. **Call on Party Group Leaders to write to the Government to ask it overturns the 2017 ban on councils and combined authorities establishing municipal bus companies.**
2. **Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the WECA Mayor requesting that he commissions a comprehensive feasibility study of all aspects of adopting and financing a system of franchising bus services in the region. The commission should also consider how the existing knowledge and experience of each member Authority could also be maximised in the consultation and design of such an approach.**
3. **Should the government overturn the ban on the establishment of municipal bus companies, Bristol City Council resolves to work with WECA to commission a feasibility study for a publicly owned bus network. If it is found to be feasible, WECA should prioritise establishing a publicly owned bus network over a franchised network. This view should be reflected in the Chief Executive's letter to the WECA Mayor.**
4. **Request that the Mayor seeks consensus from the leaders of the other WECA authorities, and the WECA Mayor, in order to facilitate the delivery of a feasibility study as soon as possible.**

Motion 2 – Silver Motion: Making Bristol a CPR Friendly City

Councillor Steve Smith moved the following motion:

“This Council was saddened to learn of the sudden death – by cardiac arrest - of Sam Polledri in Millennium Square last February. It was even more tragic to discover that this loss might have been averted if there had been public access to a defibrillator and general knowledge on how to use such a machine.

Consequently, Council welcomes the training now being given to Members on CPR and defibrillation by the Great Western Air Ambulance Charity to highlight this issue. However, a great deal more can and must be done.

In order to make Bristol a leading local authority in this field, and mirroring the work already undertaken in Swansea, Council calls on the Mayor to support and help develop the following proposals:-

- (i) Support and collaborate in a partnership as exists in Swansea with a charitable partner who can fundraise and organise the installation and maintenance of public access defibrillators and raise public awareness around their use



- (ii) Request that the Licensing Committee explore the option of making basic CPR/Defib skills a condition for granting drivers a license to operate a taxi in Bristol
- (iii) Ask the Local Plan Working Group to examine whether new building developments above a pre-determined size should be required to also include an accessible defibrillator
- (iv) Work with One City partners to make available basic CPR and / or defibrillator training in our local schools, colleges, and universities
- (v) Agree to install a defibrillator – available 24/7 – outside City Hall to not only provide an additional life-saving resource but also demonstrate a genuine commitment to this worthwhile cause.”

Councillor Graham Morris seconded the motion.

Following debate, upon being put to the vote, the motion was CARRIED (58 for, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions) and it was

RESOLVED:

“This Council was saddened to learn of the sudden death – by cardiac arrest - of Sam Polledri in Millennium Square last February. It was even more tragic to discover that this loss might have been averted if there had been public access to a defibrillator and general knowledge on how to use such a machine.

Consequently, Council welcomes the training now being given to Members on CPR and defibrillation by the Great Western Air Ambulance Charity to highlight this issue. However, a great deal more can and must be done.

In order to make Bristol a leading local authority in this field, and mirroring the work already undertaken in Swansea, Council calls on the Mayor to support and help develop the following proposals:-

- (i) **Support and collaborate in a partnership as exists in Swansea with a charitable partner who can fundraise and organise the installation and maintenance of public access defibrillators and raise public awareness around their use**
- (ii) **Request that the Licensing Committee explore the option of making basic CPR/Defib skills a condition for granting drivers a license to operate a taxi in Bristol**
- (iii) **Ask the Local Plan Working Group to examine whether new building developments above a pre-determined size should be required to also include an accessible defibrillator**
- (iv) **Work with One City partners to make available basic CPR and / or defibrillator training in our local schools, colleges, and universities**
- (v) **Agree to install a defibrillator – available 24/7 – outside City Hall to not only provide an additional life-saving resource but also demonstrate a genuine commitment to this worthwhile cause.”**



Meeting ended at 5.20 pm

CHAIR _____



Full Council

10 January 2022



Report of: Director Legal and Democratic Services

Title: Petition Debate – ‘No more building on green spaces in the City of Bristol.’

Recommendation

That Full Council debates the petition and refers it to the Mayor / relevant Cabinet member for a formal response.

Summary

Under the Council’s petitions scheme, where a petition has 3,500 or more signatures from people who live, work or study in Bristol, the petition organiser can request a Full Council debate.

The Council has received a petition with the title ‘No more building on green spaces in the City of Bristol’.

The petition organisers have requested that Full Council debates the petition.



Details of the petition

1. The wording of the petition is as follows:

Petition title / subject: **‘No more building on green spaces in the City of Bristol’**

Petition wording:

We, the undersigned, call upon Bristol City Council to halt any further development on green spaces in the city.

In February 2020, Bristol City Council proudly declared an Ecological Emergency in response to escalating threats to wildlife and ecosystems. There has been a worrying decline in numbers and diversity of wildlife in the city and more widely in recent years, with 15% of British wildlife now at risk of extinction.

The declaration was jointly made by Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol and Ian Barrett, CEO of Avon and Wildlife Trust, at a city council Cabinet meeting.

This declaration came with much fanfare, but in the meantime, we see an alarming increase in developments on valuable green spaces and yet more green spaces are under threat. **This flies in the face of the Ecological Emergency declaration.**

Green spaces within the city that have recently been lost, impacted or under threat include:

Bonnington Walk open space

The Northern Slopes

The Western Slopes

Ashton Vale

Brislington Meadows

We are thankful for the recent vote in favour of the Golden Motion, passed by councillors in September 2021. It was widely supported by Bristolians and councillors alike, and showed acknowledgement of the commitment to protecting more green space. However, we are still witnessing the loss of Brislington Meadows and potentially The Western Slopes too, which is still listed as a development site under Goram Homes and subject to a private developer application, despite city-wide public outcry. It is an absolute travesty that we are seeing these highly biodiverse and ecologically important urban green spaces potentially destroyed and where mitigation strategies would be completely futile.

We are therefore continuing to question the commitment to saving green spaces by those in charge of our this city and hence why this petition is being presented today.

This massacre of green spaces appears to be unrelenting and needs to be stopped NOW!

Furthermore, Bristol City Council needs to LISTEN to residents. So called “public consultations” are anything but; decisions are often seemingly already made and the consultation with the public merely a tick-box exercise. There have been too many instances where views and concerns arising from supposed "public consultations" have been completely ignored.

We do not deny that the City of Bristol has a housing crisis due to an increasing population and unregulated university expansion, but the solution is NOT to continually build on valuable green spaces. Once they are gone, they are gone for good and no amount of “bee-boxes” or “wildflower patches” can make up their loss. Many people who have signed this petition do not own their own home, but still understand the importance of protecting our green spaces. This petition is asking for better use of brownfield sites and redundant previously developed buildings/areas - we want less luxury apartments and offices and more genuinely affordable homes on these non-green space sites and we want solid commitment from our elected leaders to see this acknowledged.

We call for the overwhelming support for the Golden Motion and the content of this petition to be prioritised urgently within a review of the Local Plan. We urge planning committees to seize the opportunity to make decisions with this extended protection for green spaces.

STOP BUILDING ON VALUABLE GREEN SPACES!

2. The petition has been organised by Martyn Cordey
3. The petition has secured 7366 signatures to date, 3751 from Bristol residents. Verified as of 20 December 2022.
4. The Full Council is asked to debate the petition.
5. Under the petition scheme, the petition organiser is permitted up to 5 minutes to present and speak to the petition. The petition scheme allows a further period of up to 15 minutes for discussion of the petition by councillors at the Full Council meeting.
6. The Full Council has agreed the following in relation to dealing with petitions with over 3500 signatures: The topic of the debate should be referred to the Mayor/Cabinet, or other relevant body with the petitioner’s views and Full Council’s views.

RECOMMENDATION

Following the debate, the Full Council is recommended to refer the petition to the Mayor, in order that the Mayor can consider his response, in liaison with the relevant Cabinet member.



Full Council

10 January 2023

Report of: Denise Murray – Director of Finance (S151 Officer)

Title: Council Tax Base 2023/24

Ward: City Wide

Member Presenting Report: Councillor Craig Cheney, Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance, Property and Culture

Recommendation

1. Agree, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Bristol City Council as its Council Tax base for the financial year 2023/24 shall be 129,654

Summary

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) requires the Council as the Billing Authority to calculate a Council Tax Collection Fund estimate by 31 January each year.

The significant issues in the report are:

The number of Band D equivalent properties, net of exemptions, reductions, and discounts, in the Tax Base for 2023/24 is 129,654 an increase of 1.36% Band D equivalent properties from 2022/23.



Policy

Bristol City Council has the power in statute to raise a tax on households in its area to pay for the provision of local services. It is designated as the Billing Authority for the area. This means that it is responsible for levying a council tax to meet its own demands and to meet the precepts of other authorities in the area. The major precepting bodies are Avon Police and Crime Commissioner and Avon Fire Authority.

Consultation

1. Internal

Resources Scrutiny
Head of Revenues and Benefits - Resources

2. External

Not applicable

3. Context

3.1. Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) requires the Council to determine its tax base for council tax purposes each year. Properties are recorded in eight national bands by value (A to H) as determined the Valuation Office Agency. Band H taxpayers pay twice as much as those in Band D and three times as much as those in Band A. The number of properties is expressed as a number of Band D equivalent properties.

3.2. In accordance with regulations the Council must set a tax base for council tax purposes and notify major precepting bodies by 31 January each year.

4. Calculation of council tax base

4.1. The calculation has been prepared in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 which came into force on 30 November 2012. In October each year the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) requires a snapshot, which is based on the number of properties, of the Tax Base at a specified date in October, net of exemptions, reductions, and discounts. This is known as the CTB1 return. A copy of the return for October 2022 is attached as Appendix B to this report. This calculates the number of chargeable properties in the city.

4.2. This is based on figures as of October 2022 and therefore adjustments are then based on forecast changes expected over the following 18 months for changes in the number of dwellings, changes in discounts and exemptions including those for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The adjusted numbers of properties in each of the eight valuation bands A to H are expressed as numbers of band D equivalents so they may be added together to produce a single figure. The table below shows the tax base and associated year on year percentage increase for the last five years

Year	Tax Base (Budget Report)	Percentage Increase
2019/20	126,999	0.95%
2020/21	128,566	1.23%
2021/22	127,950	(0.48%)
2022/23	127,917	(0.02%)
2023/24	129,654	1.36%

5. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

5.1. Bristol is one of the few local authorities that implements a fully funded Local Council Tax Reduction scheme (CTRS). Prior to the pandemic, there had been year on year reductions in both the numbers of working age and pensioner claimants to the CTRS. During the pandemic, we saw a significant increase in CTRS working age claimants and caseload. Since then both pensioner and working age numbers have continued to drop on a month-by-month basis. This is particularly noticeable amongst working age claimants. Both the pensioner and working age caseloads are now below pre pandemic levels.

5.2. The table below shows the number of pensioner and working age claimants for the last five years

	Oct-18	Oct-19	Oct-20	Oct-21	Oct-22
Working Age	24,026	23,506	25,114	25,211	23,399
Pensioners	11,844	11,239	10,755	10,436	10,166
Total	35,870	34,745	35,869	35,647	33,565

5.3. Numbers of working age claimants had been predicted to increase from October 21, however they have actually reduced, with a consequent reduction in the value of CTRS awards. It should also be noted that a reduction in claimants increases the amount of council tax to be collected and therefore may be contributing to increased levels of arrears. It is difficult to estimate how the Cost of Living Crisis will impact on future caseloads, however, employment in Bristol remains high. Therefore, it is assumed the existing caseload will remain stable during 2023/24.

6. Single Person Discounts

6.1. Regular reviews continue to monitor the number of properties attracting single person discounts. Currently around 30% of domestic properties are claiming single person discount. This equates to an estimated 63,510 properties or 43,086 band D equivalents. Regular data matching from the National Fraud Initiative identifies where there might be multiple occupants in properties claiming single person discount, and this helps to ensure that the Council Tax Base properly reflects entitlements to this discount. The annual National Fraud Office review is being carried out during 2022/23 and is expected to identify further reductions but trends suggest these are likely to be balanced by a further

general increase in legitimate applications for single person discount. Therefore, no further adjustments have been made to the council tax base.

7. Student Exemptions

7.1. Students are entitled to an exemption from paying council tax if everyone in the property is a full-time student. Alternatively, they may be entitled to a discount if some of the people occupying a property are full time students. Bristol has a large student population, and as at the end of October the status of all students has not been evidenced to the Council. It is therefore necessary to estimate the number of additional students likely to be eligible for exemptions. Any estimate to be included in the tax base will also take account of any known student related property developments. The adjustment of 2,485 comprises of an estimated increase in student exemptions of 1,866 properties due to existing student households where exemptions need to be re-instated, an additional 619 student properties under construction and likely to be added to the rating list for 2023/24. This is equivalent reduction in Band D properties of 2,021 as shown below and in the table at paragraph 10. The construction work relates to 6 major sites across the city.

	All Bands	Band D Equivalent
Number of student dwellings registered per CTB1	7,169	6,180
Existing student households yet to register	1,866	1,608
New student dwellings likely to be added to the rating list by the end of 2022/23	538	359
New student dwellings likely to be added to the rating list in 2023/24	81	54
	9,654	8,201

7.2. Student accommodation can take the form of either private housing or halls of residence. The table below sets out both the actual number of properties (houses/flats and halls of residence) receiving student exemptions at the end of the financial year along with an estimate of the Band D equivalents based on these figures. The 2022/23 figures are an estimate of the position at the end of the financial year and the 2023/24 is an estimate of anticipated numbers given as part of the council tax base calculations. Any new dwellings coming online before 1 April 2024 are assumed to be Band A.

Year	Property Numbers	
	Actual/Estimated	
	Student Exemptions	Band D Equivalents
2020/21	9,024	7,750
2021/22	8,674	7,722
2022/23	9,573	8,147
2023/24	9,654	8,201

8. Growth

8.1. In determining the Tax Base for the forthcoming year, the Council can take into account any increase in Tax Base that may arise from the completion of new properties. Given the amount of the ongoing property development across the city and, in view of this continuing trend, it is considered reasonable to allow for an element of growth in the Tax Base due to the anticipated completion of new properties in respect of known developments. In estimating the effect on the Tax Base of new properties it is prudent to assume most new properties will be in lower valuation Bands. Allowances must also be made for discounts that will apply in respect of new properties, including Council Tax Reduction discounts, and for the fact that council tax will only be payable for new properties from the date of completion rather than for a full financial year.

8.2. The table in paragraph 10 already shows significant growth in the tax base between the CTB1 return for October 2021 and the return for October 2022. This is largely as a result of two factors, the reduction in CTRS claimants during this period and a change in the methodology the Valuation Office Agency use to value “cluster” flats. This is where there are several units within one property that share a kitchen – these would previously have been valued as one higher band dwelling, but each unit is now being individually assessed in a lower band. As an example, a group of flats in St Thomas Street, which we had estimated would be banded at 35 x Band A and 30 x Band D, have been banded as 343 Band A’s under this new VOA practice.

8.3. The 2023/24 estimate for growth uses information provided by the Council’s Valuation and Inspection team and is based on the number of new developments in the city where work has commenced. Assumptions are then made as to whether these properties will be banded by the end of the financial year, the actual date during the year they may be banded and the number of exemptions, discounts, and Council Tax Reduction they might attract.

8.4. The estimate of properties likely to be banded by March 2024 is anticipated to be around 5,787. We estimate 3,618 dwellings will be banded by March 2023, 1,157 by September 2023 and 1,012 dwellings will be banded by March 2024. The numbers are further reduced to 4,631 to factor in the dwellings will not be banded for the entire period. A 26% reduction has been factored in for loss in revenue due to exemptions, discounts, and Council Tax Reduction. The final figure is converted into the Band “D” equivalent of 2,726

8.5. The total estimated equivalent Band D growth in the tax base is therefore estimated at 2,726.

	Total Dwellings
Identified new dwellings under construction not complete	5,787
Estimated number of dwellings with full year charge	4,631
Reduction of 26% to take account of discounts, exemptions and CTRS	(1,204)
Total Growth	3,427
Total Growth - Band D Equivalents	2,726

9. Losses on Collection

9.1. In estimating the provision for losses on collection the Council makes an estimate of debts which, after full recovery measures have been affected will be uncollectable in the longer term and therefore recommended for write-off. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic this was estimated to be an in-year net loss against the tax base of 1.5%. However due to the on-going effects of the pandemic this was revised in 2022/23 to 3%.

9.2. Bristol, like many major cities, have seen collection rates fall during the pandemic, with a slow recovery to date. As at the end of 2021/22 all Core Cities had seen a fall in collection rates when compared to pre pandemic levels. Bristol has seen a 4.1% reduction, Manchester a 3% reduction and Liverpool an 8.7% reduction. Authorities with a lower pre pandemic collection rate have tended to see lower proportional reductions.

9.3. The collection rate for 2022/23 is likely to be around 92.2%, with a further 1.7% collected against arrears. Arrear's collection rates are slightly higher than anticipated because some citizens have elected to have their energy rebates credited to their accounts. At the end of 2022/23 there will be potentially over £23m in uncollected in-year arrears. During 2023/24 we expect to see an on-going recovery and for collection rates to increase. Therefore for 2023/24 the collection rate has been set at 94%. The collection of arrears is also expected to improve during 2023/24, contributing a further 1% to the forecast tax base.

10. Calculation of the Council Tax Base

	2023/24 Band D Equivalent Properties	2022/23 Band D Equivalent Properties	Difference
Tax Base as per attached CTB 1 Return	135,773	132,800	2,973
Adjustment due to anticipated growth	2,726	1,983	743
Adjustment due to increase in working age CTS claimants		(493)	493
Adjustment due to reduction in pensioner CTS claimants	0	0	0
Reduction due to reinstatement of existing student properties not recorded on CTB1	(2,021)	(2,417)	396
Long Term Empty Property Premium (in CTB1 for 22/23)			0
Adjusted Tax Base	<u>136,478</u>	<u>131,873</u>	<u>4,605</u>
LESS losses on collection (5% for 2023/24)	(6,824)	(3,956)	(2,868)
Recommended Tax Base	<u>129,654</u>	<u>127,917</u>	<u>1,737</u>

10.1. This is an increase of 1,737 (1.36%) Band D equivalent properties since the last Tax Base calculation in October 2021.

Other Options Considered

11. Not Applicable

Risk Assessment

12. There are a number of risks associated with estimating the amount of Council Tax collected during the year. These include.

- Difficulty in estimating Council Tax discounts and exemptions.
- Estimate of collection rates, arrears and rate of recovery.
- Impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis

Summary of Equalities Impact of the Proposed Decision

There are no proposals in this report which require either a statement as to the relevance of public sector equality duties or an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

The tax base calculations for 2023/24 set out in this report comply with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council tax base) Regulations 2012. The report will enable the Council to meet the requirement under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) to determine the Council Tax base by no later than 31st January in the preceding financial year.

(Legal advice provided by Husinara Jones – Solicitor/Team Leader)

Financial

(a) Revenue

The calculation of the Council Tax Base is calculated based on data extracted from the CTB1 return completed in mid-October. This is then adjusted for fluctuations in both the housing market and the estimated effect of levels of Council Tax Support, discounts, and exemptions. The impact of each of these is set out in detail in the report. The adjusted tax base of 129,654 represents an increase of 1.36% on the base when compared with 2022/23.

(b) Capital

Not applicable

(Financial advice provided by Tony Whitlock – Finance Business Partner)

Land

Not applicable

Personnel

Not Applicable

(Personnel advice provided by James Brereton – Head of HR)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Copy of the CTB return submitted to the DLUHC October 2022

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: Working papers held in Corporate Finance

CTB(October 2022)

Calculation of Council Tax Base

Please e-mail to: ctb.stats@levellingup.gov.uk
Please enter your details after checking that you have selected the correct local authority name

Ver 1.0

Please select your local authority's name from this list

- Backland
- Bant
- Barmston
- Bawtry & Hwa
- Bessing
- Broadland

Check that this is your authority:

Local authority name:	Bristol
E-code:	E0102
Local authority contact name:	Graham Clapp
Local authority contact telephone number:	0117 3578356
Local authority contact e-mail address:	graham.clapp@bristol.gov.uk

CTB(October 2022) form for 4 Bristol

Completed forms should be received by DL/UC by Friday 14 October 2022

Dwellings shown on the Valuation List for the authority on Monday 12 September 2022	Band A entitled to disabled relief reduction COLUMN 1	Band A COLUMN 2	Band B COLUMN 3	Band C COLUMN 4	Band D COLUMN 5	Band E COLUMN 6	Band F COLUMN 7	Band G COLUMN 8	Band H COLUMN 9	TOTAL COLUMN 10
Part 1										
1. Total number of dwellings on the Valuation List		54,862	75,421	40,611	19,416	9,959	4,876	2,877	350	208,372
2. Number of dwellings on valuation list exempt on 3 October 2022 (Class B & D to W exemptions)		3,266	1,571	1,398	1,227	1,094	165	46	13	8,780
3. Number of demolished dwellings and dwellings outside area of authority on 3 October 2022 (please see notes)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Number of chargeable dwellings on 3 October 2022 (treating demolished dwellings etc as exempt) (lines 1-2-3)		51,596	73,850	39,213	18,189	8,865	4,711	2,831	337	199,592
5. Number of chargeable dwellings in line 4 subject to disabled reduction on 3 October 2022		40	192	144	80	51	26	26	24	583
6. Number of dwellings effectively subject to council tax for this band by virtue of disabled relief (line 5 after reduction)	40	192	144	80	51	26	26	24		583
7. Number of chargeable dwellings adjusted in accordance with lines 5 and 6 (lines 4-5-6 or in the case of column 1, line 6)	40	51,748	73,802	39,149	18,160	8,840	4,711	2,829	313	199,592
8. Number of dwellings in line 7 entitled to a single adult household 25% discount on 3 October 2022	18	24,204	22,046	10,211	4,170	1,755	710	366	30	63,510
9. Number of dwellings in line 7 entitled to a 25% discount on 3 October 2022 due to all but one resident being disregarded for council tax purposes	1	449	891	481	232	105	45	10	2	2,216
10. Number of dwellings in line 7 entitled to a 50% discount on 3 October 2022 due to all residents being disregarded for council tax purposes	1	42	78	63	33	27	29	40	24	337
11. Number of dwellings in line 7 classed as second homes on 3 October 2022 (b/fwd from Flex Empty tab)		780	677	484	325	129	40	16	5	2,456
12. Number of dwellings in line 7 classed as empty and receiving a zero% discount on 3 October 2022 (b/fwd from Flex Empty tab)		1,241	1,169	538	312	124	42	18	3	3,447
13. Number of dwellings in line 7 classed as empty and receiving a discount on 3 October 2022 and not shown in line 12 (b/fwd from Flex Empty tab)		24	41	25	17	4	6	4	1	122
14. Number of dwellings in line 7 classed as empty and being charged the Empty Homes Premium on 3 October 2022 (b/fwd from Flex Empty tab)		115	92	28	23	6	4	0	1	269
15. Total number of dwellings in line 7 classed as empty on 3 October 2022 (lines 12, 13 & 14)		1,380	1,302	591	352	134	52	22	5	3,838
16. Number of dwellings that are classed as empty on 3 October 2022 and have been for more than 6 months. NB These properties should have already been included in line 15 above.		626	591	261	152	54	25	14	4	1,727
16a. The number of dwellings included in line 16 above which are empty on 3 October 2022 because of the flooding that occurred between 1 December 2015 and 31 March 2016 and are only empty because of the flooding.		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16b. The number of dwellings included in line 16 above which are empty on 3 October 2022 because of the flooding that occurred between November 2019 and February 2020 and are only empty because of the flooding.		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17. Number of dwellings that are classed as empty on 3 October 2022 and have been for more than 6 months and are eligible to be treated under empty homes discount class D (formerly Class A exemptions). NB These properties should have already been included in line 15 above. Do NOT include any dwellings included in line 16a above.		20	37	19	13	3	5	4	1	102
18. Number of dwellings that are classed as empty and have been empty for more than 6 months excluding those that are subject to empty homes discount class D or empty due to flooding (Line 16 - line 16a - line 16b - line 17) (equivalent to Line 18 in previous forms).		606	554	242	139	51	20	10	3	1,625
19. Number of dwellings in line 7 where there is liability to pay 100% council tax before Family Annexe discount	20	26,912	50,653	28,340	13,685	6,943	3,917	2,409	255	133,134
20. Number of dwellings in line 7 that are assumed to be subject to a discount or a premium before Family Annexe discount	20	24,836	23,149	10,809	4,475	1,897	794	420	58	66,458
21. Reduction in taxbase as a result of the Family Annexe discount (b/fwd from Family Annexe tab)	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5
22. Number of dwellings equivalents after applying discounts and premiums to calculate taxbase	34.8	45,716.0	68,122.3	36,461.5	17,656.0	8,368.5	4,506.8	2,711.0	294.0	163,270.8
23. Ratio to band D	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	
24. Total number of band D equivalents (to 1 decimal place) (line 22 x line 23)	19.3	30,477.3	52,984.0	32,410.2	17,056.0	10,228.2	6,509.8	4,518.3	588.0	154,791.1
25. Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (in respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2022-23 (to 1 decimal place)										18.5
26. Tax base (to 1 decimal place) (line 24 col 10 + line 25)										154,809.6

Part 2

27. Number of dwellings equivalents after applying discounts and premiums to calculate tax base (Line 22)	34.8	45,716.0	68,122.3	36,461.5	17,056.0	8,368.5	4,506.8	2,711.0	294.0	183,270.8
28. Reduction in tax base as a result of local council tax support (billed from CT Support tab)	14.1	12,982.8	9,573.4	2,461.2	505.0	138.9	39.7	4.6	0.0	25,719.7
29. Number of dwellings equivalents after applying discounts, premiums and local tax support to calculate tax base	20.7	32,733.2	58,548.8	34,000.3	16,551.0	8,229.6	4,467.1	2,706.4	294.0	157,551.1
30. Ratio to band D	59	69	79	89	99	119	139	159	189	
31. Total number of band D equivalents after allowance for council tax support (to 1 decimal place) (line 29 x line 30)	11.5	21,822.2	45,538.0	30,222.5	16,551.0	10,058.4	6,452.4	4,510.7	588.0	135,754.7
32. Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu (in respect of Class O exempt dwellings) in 2022-23 (to 1 decimal place)(line 25)										18.5
33. Tax base after allowance for council tax support (to 1 decimal place) (line 31 col 10 + line 32)										135,773.2

Certificate of Chief Financial Officer

I certify that the information provided on this form is based on the dwellings shown in the Valuation List for my authority on 12 September 2022 and that it accurately reflects information available to me about exemptions, demolished dwellings, disabled relief, discounts and premiums applicable on 3 October 2022 and, where appropriate, has been completed in a manner consistent with the form for 2021.

Chief Financial Officer : Date :



Full Council

10 December 2023

Report of: Denise Murray – Director of Finance (S151 Officer)

Title: Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit 2022/23

Ward: City Wide

Member Presenting Report: Councillor Craig Cheney, Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance, Property and Culture

Recommendation

1. That an estimated surplus as at 31 March 2023 on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund of £1.960m be declared for 2022/23 and shared between this Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and the Avon Fire and Rescue Service in proportion to their 2022/23 precepts on the Collection Fund.
2. That an estimated deficit as at 31 March 2023 on the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) element of the Collection Fund, net of grants, of £3.358m be declared for 2022/23 and shared between this Council, Avon Fire and Rescue Service and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) in proportion to the appropriate year demands (Bristol 95%, WECA 4%, Avon Fire and Rescue Service 1%).

The significant issues in the report are:

The total estimated surplus on the Collection Fund for 2022/23, including any brought forward balances is £5.318m. The Bristol share of this surplus, credited to the general fund in 2023/24, is £4.827m.



Policy

1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) requires the Council to determine the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax by 15 January. This will enable the precepting authorities (the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and Avon Fire and Rescue) to factor in their share of any surplus or deficit before finalising their precepts for 2023/24.

Similarly, following the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme from April 2013, in accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013, the Council must determine the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Business Rates prior to 31 January.

Consultation

2. Internal

Resources Scrutiny
Head of Revenues and Benefits - Resources

3. External

Not applicable

Context

4. Income from Council Tax and Business Rates are fixed at the start of each financial year. Any variations from this are realised through the Collection Fund and will now be distributed in the following three financial years. The Council is required by statute to maintain a Collection Fund separate from the General Fund. The Collection Fund accounts independently for:
 - Income into the Fund: The Fund is credited with the amount of receipts of Council Tax and (Non-Domestic Rates) NDR it collects.
 - Payments out of the Fund: in relation to Council Tax payments that are made to the Council and the two major precepting authorities (Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner and Avon Fire and Rescue). In relation to NDR payments that are made to the Council, Avon Fire and Rescue Service and WECA.

2022/23 estimated surplus for Council Tax

5. For the year ending 31 March 2023 we are forecasting a surplus of £1.038m for the council tax element of the Collection Fund. After taking account of balances brought forward in the collection fund, and the final year of spreading 2020/21 additional losses attributable to Covid-19, this is increased to a surplus of £1.960m. Under current arrangements this surplus will be distributed in 2023/24.

Composition of Council Tax surplus 2022/23

6. The table below details the major elements making up the in-year element of the council tax surplus in 2022/23.

	£m
Reduction in the estimated cost of Council Tax Support	(4.7)
Increase in the number of chargeable dwellings	(0.5)
Net increase in discounts, exemptions and reliefs	1.1
Increase in the allowance for impairment of debts (net of budgeted allowance of £8.8m)	3.1
Total Surplus	(1.0)

Details are set out below.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

7. Bristol is one of the few local authorities that implements a fully funded Local Council Tax Reduction scheme (CTRS). Prior to the pandemic, there had been year on year reductions in both the numbers of working age and pensioner claimants to the CTRS. During the pandemic, we saw a significant increase in CTRS working age claimants and caseload. Since then both pensioner and working age numbers have continued to drop on a month-by-month basis. This is particularly noticeable amongst working age claimants. Both the pensioner and working age caseloads are now below pre pandemic levels.

Table 1 below shows the number of pensioner and working age claimants for the last five years, while table 2 shows the value (net of the Hardship Fund where applicable) for each of the last three years.

Table 1

	Oct-18	Oct-19	Oct-20	Oct-21	Oct-22
Working Age	24,026	23,506	25,114	25,211	23,399
Pensioners	11,844	11,239	10,755	10,436	10,166
Total	35,870	34,745	35,869	35,647	33,565

Table 2

	Value of Claims			
	Working Age Pensioners	Hardship	Fund	Total
	£'000	£'000		
01-Oct-20	30,489	13,012	(1,289)	42,212
01-Oct-21	31,167	13,252	(730)	43,689
01-Oct-22	29,170	13,288	0	42,458

8. The value of benefits awarded through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23 was originally estimated at £46.9m. It is anticipated that the actual cost of the scheme by the end of March will be £42.2m. The original estimate, based on September 2021 figures, assumed a further 2.5% increase in working age claimants going into 2022/23. This increase did not materialise, and instead has fallen month on month. This accounts for the £4.7m saving in the cost of the scheme.
9. It is difficult to estimate how the Cost of Living Crisis will impact on future caseloads. However, employment in Bristol remains high. It should also be noted that a reduction in claimants increases the amount of council tax to be collected and therefore may be contributing to increased levels of arrears.

Growth

10. When setting the amount of Council Tax collectable for the year ahead an estimate is made on new properties being built which will pay Council Tax during the year. The Council Tax Base report for 2022/23 estimated a further 1,983 band D equivalent dwellings would be completed, added to the rating list and chargeable for council tax during the year. Current estimates would suggest this number will see an increase of 244 band D equivalents. The Valuation Office Agency have changed the way they value 'cluster flats'. This is where there are several units within one property that share a kitchen – these would previously have been valued as one higher band dwelling, but each unit is now being individually assessed in a lower band. As an example, flats in St Thomas Street, which we had estimated would be banded at 35 x Band A and 30 x Band D, have been banded as 343 Band A's under this new VOA practice.

Discounts and Exemptions

11. There is a net increase of around £1.073m in discounts and exemptions forecast for year-end, predominantly from an increase in Single Person Discount (SPD). We normally undertake a review of SPD every two years; however, the last review was undertaken before the pandemic. Regular National Fraud Initiative data matches identify potential multiple occupants in properties claiming single person discount, which the council tax team follow up on, helping to ensure that the Council Tax Base properly reflects entitlements to this discount.

The annual National Fraud Office review is now being carried out for 2022/23 and is expected to identify further reductions but trends suggest these are likely to be balanced by a further general increase in legitimate applications for single person discount.

Losses on Collection and contribution to the provision for the impairment of debts

- 12.** Council Tax collection for 2022/23 is likely to show a shortfall of £23.2m against the annual billing debit, potentially increasing arrears at year-end to £38m. The figures in the table below assume around £5m will be collected against arrears during the year. £3m has already been allocated against arrears. This is an improvement on the previous financial year. However, the £5m is inclusive of citizens electing to offset their energy rebate against balances on their account.
- 13.** Pre-pandemic, collection would normally keep pace with, and slightly exceed, the annual increase in council tax, year on year, however collection since 2020/21 has slipped whilst recovery action was paused to support households manage the impact of the pandemic. As recovery action continues officers will focus on supporting citizens to maintain their ongoing payments, but are confident arrears will also start to reduce, with an on-going improved position continuing throughout 2022/23. However, it must be recognised, over time this debt will become more difficult to collect, although clearly the Council will seek to recover as much of the arrears as it is possible to do.
- 14.** Last year, to ensure the provision is sufficient to provide for year-end arrears, we increased the annual percentage of debt provided for by five percent. So, for example, the Council might expect, over time, to recover 53 percent of current year arrears. This has been reduced to 48 percent. All balances over three years old are fully provided for. Given the current level of arrears we have decided to retain these percentages. These will however remain under review based on recovery experience. All impairment provisions are the subject of scrutiny by the Council's External Auditor at year end.
- 15.** The total requirement for the provision is estimated at £38m. As at the 1 April 2022 the provision stood at £25m. After adjustments for write offs and further arrears collection, an increase of £11.9m is required. (Note, the original tax base allowed for £8.8m) This additional sum reduces net receipts, reducing the surplus for the council tax element of the collection fund.
- 16.** Only after full investigations have been completed will debt be recommended for write-off if deemed uncollectable in the longer term. Debt written off during 2022/23 is largely due to citizens who have moved where we are unable to trace them.

17. Calculation of the council tax debt impairment provision

Year	Arrears	Percentage Provided	Provision
	£'000		£'000
To 14/15	239	100%	239
2015/16	306	100%	306
2016/17	679	100%	679
2017/18	1,149	100%	1,149
2018/19	1,941	100%	1,941
2019/20	3,842	100%	3,842
2020/21	7,542	84%	6,335
2021/22	15,619	73%	11,402
2022/23	23,290	52%	12,111
Total	54,606		38,003
Provision opening balance 1.4.22			25,053
Additional in-year write offs			(1,000)
Additional arrears collection			2,000
Total remaining in provision			26,053
Required as above			<u>38,003</u>
Additional required to top up provision			11,950
Budgeted Provision for 2022/23			(8,822)
Additional required over budget 31.3.23			<u>3,128</u>

Distribution of the Council Tax Surplus

- 18.** The estimated surplus is distributed to the major precepting authorities in proportion to the current year's demands and precepts on the Collection Fund. A detailed determination of the estimated Council Tax Collection Fund surplus for 2022/23 is shown in Appendix A. The allocation of the estimated surplus to each of the major precepting authorities, is summarised below:

	2022/23 £m
Council Tax	
22/23 Surplus	(1,038)
(Surplus)/Deficit carried forward	(2,215)
Spreading Adjustment	1,293
Total Surplus	(1,960)
Apportionment of Surplus	
Bristol City Council	(1,671)
Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon & Somerset	(220)
Avon Fire Authority	(69)
	(1,960)

2022/23 Estimated Surplus for Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)

19. Since 2017/18 Bristol has been piloting 100% retention of business rates. Only authorities with signed devolution deals were eligible to participate in a pilot: the pilot for the West of England (WoE) therefore includes Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES), Bristol City Council (BCC), South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). The 100% pilot gives the WoE the opportunity to retain 100% of any business rates growth.
20. December 2021 the government made one further relief available to support businesses affected by the pandemic. The Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) allocated £1.7bn of grant to local authorities. Bristol received £13.7m to award as discretionary rate relief to accounts for the 2021-22 financial year. As at October 2022, £0.5m has reduced 2021/22 arrears, £10m of credit on accounts has been transferred to this year's liability, and £2.7m has been refunded where accounts were paid up to date. Unspent grant will need to be returned to government.

Composition of the Business Rates in-year deficit for 2022/23

21. The table below details the major elements making up the business rates in-year deficit for 2022/23. Note that all CARF reliefs will be fully funded by S31 Grant reducing the deficit accordingly.

	£m
Net changes in the liability	(1.3)
Increase in contribution to business rates pool	0.5
CARF Relief given (Funded by S31 Grant)	12.9
Reduction in the allowance for impairment of debts (net of budgeted allowance of £5.4m)	(2.4)
Increase to the appeals provision	2.0
Total	11.7

The net increase in in-year liability includes a significant increase of £2m relating to warehouse developments in Avonmouth pared back by a delay in the completion of a number of office developments in Bristol.

22. Any estimated surplus/deficit is distributed in accordance with the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Agreement between the West of England authorities, so 94% Bristol City Council, 5% WECA and 1% Avon Fire and Rescue.
23. The detailed determination of the estimated NDR Collection Fund surplus (after the application of CARF) for 2022/23 is shown in Appendix B and the allocation of the estimated deficit to the relevant precepting authorities is summarised in the table below.

	2022/23 £m
Business Rates	
22/23 losses	11,737
(Surplus)/Deficit carried forward	(8,704)
Spreading Adjustment	2,961
Adjust of repayment of overclaimed S31 Grant	3,548
Allocation of CARF	(12,900)
Total Surplus	(3,358)
Apportionment of Surplus	
Bristol City Council	(3,156)
West of England Combined Authority	(168)
Avon Fire Authority	(34)
	(3,358)

24. The business rates income which each billing authority collects is determined by reference to local rating lists maintained by the Valuation Office Agency. These lists are subject to variation between revaluations because of physical changes (either to the property or the locality) and appeals. The amount of business rates income collected by billing authorities therefore varies year on year. The main factors affecting this year's business rates income are outlined below.

Losses on Collection and contribution to the provision for the impairment of debts

- 25.** The ability of businesses to recover from the pandemic the impact of Cost-of-Living crisis on businesses remains uncertain. As already outlined, during 2022/23 the government have continued to support businesses affected by the pandemic, albeit the reliefs have reduced significantly. Once these reliefs cease completely, and if no further support will be available in 2023/24, the impact on collection rates will become clearer. The outstanding debt position has not escalated as much as it might due to the allocation of CARF to arrears, £10m against in-year arrears and £0.5m against 2021/22 arrears.
- 26.** As at the end of September 2022, prior year arrears stood at £17.2m. £10.5m of CARF has been allocated to outstanding liabilities on accounts for both 2021/22 and 2022/23. This has resulted in a lowering of outstanding debt. However, overall collection for 2022/23, even after the allocation of CARF is likely to show a shortfall of £11.2m against the annual billing debit. Prior to the pandemic, arrears carried forward would usually be in the region of £2.4m.
- 27.** As with council tax, officers have reassessed the impairment provision for doubtful debts and have left the potential recovery percentages as they were in 2021/22. For the most recent three years, this is 5% lower than pre pandemic recovery levels. All debt over three years old is fully provided for.
- 28.** The total requirement for the provision as at 31 March 2023 is estimated at £19.5m. As at the 1 April 2022 the provision stood at £17.3m. After taking into account an adjustment for write offs of £800k, an increase of £3m is required, this is less than the original budgeted contribution of £5.4m. This reduction is in the main due to the allocation of CARF to arrears. The £2.4m not required reduces the in-year deficit for the business rates element of the collection fund.

Year	Arrears	Percentage Provided	Provision
	£'000		£'000
To 14/15	73	100%	73
2015/16	55	100%	55
2016/17	108	100%	108
2017/18	390	100%	390
2018/19	841	100%	841
2019/20	2,466	100%	2,466
2020/21	5,086	89%	4,527
2021/22	8,206	60%	4,923
2022/23	11,188	55%	6,153
Total	28,413		19,537
Provision opening balance 1.4.22			17,318
Written off in year			(800)
Total remaining in provision			16,518
Required as above			19,537
Additional required to top up provision			3,018
Budgeted Provision for 2022/23			(5,414)
Reduction in budgeted requirement 31.3.23			(2,396)

29. Officers are predicting an in-year collection rate of 95%. This compares with an actual collection rate of 91.25% for 2021/22 and 98% pre the pandemic.

Business Rates Appeals

30. The Council is required to provide for potential appeals from its business rates income. Calculations for the provision are based upon the Valuation Office Agency ‘Settled and Outstanding’ proposals at end March reports. These reports show all appeals that have been lodged for each authority against the 2017 valuation listing along with the very small number of appeals outstanding on the 2010 list, including those which were agreed, dismissed, withdrawn or are still outstanding. This list is analysed into “types” of appeal. The average success rate and the percentage reduction in rateable value for those appeals which were successful is considered along with the potential for the backdating of any appeals decisions and the estimated annual cost was then adjusted by the ratings multiplier for the relevant year. Local intelligence is used alongside statistical modelling to inform decision making.
31. As at the end of 2021/22 the appeals provision stood at £25.3m. As this is a significant amount this provision is reviewed against valuation lists on a quarterly basis and is compared

to that of both our nearest neighbours and similar sized authorities nationally. The Government recommends that 4.7% of net rates should be set aside in the provision to cover potential, and yet unknown, appeals relating to the 2017 list. This amounts to an annual sum of £10.5m. However, it should be noted that the appeals position remains extremely volatile with potentially large fluctuations occurring from one year to the next.

- 32.** To illustrate the point, in 2021/22 over £20m of successful appeals were charged to the provision. Most of this was related to office accommodation within the city. This situation was repeated across many of the major cities in the UK as office accommodation was particularly targeted by agents. This results in the appeals provision needing to be topped up, with a further £19.3m added to it at the end of 2021/22. This effectively reduces the amount of business rates available to fund services.
- 33.** However, for the first six months of 2022/23 activity seems have slowed to a degree with successful appeals amounting to £6m by the end of September. Discussions with the VOA have suggested that appeal applications have slowed in comparison to 2021/22. However, to ensure any calls on the provision are adequately covered, it is prudent to increase the provision by a further £2m. This will be further reviewed at year-end. The impact on the provision is shown in the table below.
- 34.** Charging to the provision protects the “net rates” position including growth into the business rates pool. However, any replenishment to the provision needs to be charged to the income received from business rates and therefore contributes to the overall in-year deficit.

Appeals Provision	£'000
Opening balance 1 April 2022	26.8
Budgeted increase to the provision	10.2
Appeals to 1 October 2021	(6.0)
Additional to 31 March 2022	(6.0)
Balance remaining 31 March 2023	25.0
Top-up required	2.0
Balance as at 31 March 2023	27.0

Bristol’s share of the total surplus on the collection Fund for 2022/23

- 35.** Bristol City Council’s share of the total surplus on the collection fund, after allocation of CARF, credited in 2023/24 is as follows

	2022/23 £m
Council Tax	(1,671)
Business Rates	(3,156)
Total	(4,827)

Other Options Considered

36. Not applicable

Risk Assessment

There are risks associated with estimating the amount of Council Tax and Business Rates collected during the year. These include,

- The volatility of business rates appeals. Once settled the Council may have to settle several years business rates from a single year's income. This is a significant financial risk as the Council is now required to fund 94% of any award. Furthermore, the Government have yet to set out clear proposals as to how the appeals process will be dealt with going forward.
- Changes to the rateable values of very large business properties such as power stations, hospitals and large office blocks can have a material effect on business rate collection.
- Business Properties switching between rating lists. This can include large cross boundary properties switching from one list to another or joining the central list.
- Difficulty in estimating Council Tax discounts and exemptions, including the take-up of the Council Tax Support Scheme.
- Post pandemic and Cost of Living crisis on employment and businesses on collection rates and Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Summary of Equalities Impact of the Proposed Decision

There are no proposals in this report which require either a statement as to the relevance of public sector equality duties or an Equalities Impact Assessment

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

This report enables the Council to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992(as amended), to determine the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax prior to 15 January. This is so that the precepting authorities (the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and Avon Fire and Rescue) can take into account their share of any surplus or deficit before finalising their precepts for 2023/24.

The report also enables the Council to comply with the requirements of the Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013, to determine the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Business Rates prior to 31 January.

(Legal advice provided by Husinara Jones – Solicitor/Team Manager)

Financial

(a) Revenue

The total estimated surplus on the Collection Fund for 2022/23, including any brought forward balances is £5.308m. The Bristol share of this surplus, net of adjustments and grant, credited to the general fund in 2023/24 is £4,818m.

(b) Capital

None

(Financial advice provided by Tony Whitlock – Finance Business Partner)

Land

Not Applicable

Personnel

Not Applicable

Appendices:

Appendix I – Estimated Council Tax Collection Fund Account 2022/23

Appendix II – Estimated Non-Domestic Rates Collection Fund Account 2022/23

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: Working papers held in Corporate Finance

APPENDIX 1

ESTIMATED COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION FUND ACCOUNT					
2020/21		2021/22	2021/22	2022/23	
Actual		Estimate as per Surplus/Deficit Report	Actual	Estimated Outturn	
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	
	Income				
(264,793)	Council Tax Income (in year liability)	(281,285)	(283,272)	(298,290)	
(1,563)	Additional S31 Grant (Hardship Fund) ended in 21/22	(985)			
	Expenditure				
	Precepts				
226,055	Bristol City Council	236,197	236,197	243,198	
29,289	Police	30,862	30,862	32,133	
9,635	Fire	9,779	9,779	9,971	
	Bad and Doubtful Debts				
4,960	Losses on Collection	15,448	12,942	11,950	
269,939	Total Expenditure	292,286	289,780	297,252	
3,583	(Surplus)/Deficit for the year	10,016	6,508	(1,038)	
1,695	Accumulated surplus/deficit Bfwd (Actual)	5,321	5,321	8,841	
43	Distribution of prior years estimated surplus/deficit	(5,574)	(2,988)	(9,763)	
3,583	(Surplus)/Deficit for the year	10,016	6,508	(1,038)	
5,321		9,763	8,841	(1,960)	
		BCC	Police	Avon Fire	Total
	In year(surplus)/deficit	(885)	(117)	(36)	(1,038)
	Residual prior-year (surplus)/deficit	(786)	(104)	(32)	(922)
	Total Estimated (Surplus)/Deficit at the end of 22/23 for dis	(1,671)	(221)	(69)	(1,960)

Full Council

13th January 2023



Report of: Monitoring Officer

Title: Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Ward: Not applicable

Member Presenting Report: Not applicable

Recommendation

That Full Council considers the recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel regarding Members' allowances (as set out in Appendix 1).

Summary

The report sets out a recommendation to increase the basic and special responsibilities allowances paid to elected representatives by 4.04%, to be back dated to 1st April 2022.

The significant issues in the report are:

The proposed increase to Members' allowances, as set out at Appendix 1.



Policy

1. The policy and procedure for the Independent Remuneration Panel are governed by The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and subsequent amendments to the regulations.

Consultation**Internal**

1. Not applicable

External

2. Not applicable

Context

3. The Panel was convened under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021). These Regulations require all local authorities to set up and maintain an advisory Independent Remuneration Panel to review and provide recommendations on Members' allowances, prior to any changes or amendments being made to the Members' Allowances Scheme.
4. The legislation requires that recommendations be sought from the Independent Remuneration Panel at least once every four years. The Panel conducted their last full review of Members Allowances in September 2019, with supplementary recommendations considered in March 2020.
5. This report sets out a recommendation from the Panel in respect of the uplift to Members Allowances for 22/23.
6. The next full review of Members' Allowances will take place during 23/24.

Other Options Considered

7. Not applicable.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 7a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
 - i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under

the Equality Act 2010.

- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- 7b) Public Sector Equality Duties were taken into account by the Panel as part of its deliberations.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

Legal comments contained throughout the report.

Legal advice provided by Tim O’Gara, Monitoring Officer.

Financial

(a) Revenue

The recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel is to increase basic allowances and special responsibility allowances by 4.04%. This recommended increase gives rise to a budget pressure of circa.£57,000 to £63,000 on the Councils Budget. The council is currently experiencing financial challenges and the panel is of the view that elected representatives must be remunerated fairly for duties they undertake also considering the rising cost of living.

There is no budget provision over and above the annual inflationary provision for members allowances therefore the recommended increase will need to be met from general reserves in the current financial year.

Financial advice provided by Olubunmi Kupoluyi, Finance Business Partner

(b) Capital

Not applicable.

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not applicable.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None.

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL: INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

REPORT ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – SUPPLEMENTARY RECOMMENDATION

12th DECEMBER 22

This report complements the comprehensive reviews of recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) that were accepted by Full Council on 10th September 2019 and 19th March 2020. Additional information can be found at Appendix A and B.

RECOMMENDATION

That the basic allowances and special responsibility allowances paid to elected representatives be increased by 4.04%, to be back dated to 1st April 22.

Overview

1. Following recommendations from the IRP, Bristol City Council's Scheme of Members Allowances (see Appendix C) includes the commitment that:

The basic councillors, special responsibility and co-optees allowances will be automatically increased in line with any officer pay increases

2. As the officer pay increase for 22/23 was a flat rate of £1925 per employee (pro rata for part time workers), the IRP were asked to make a recommendation about how this should be applied to Members for 22/23.
3. Following a request from Bath and North East Somerset Council, the Panel reviewed the uplift for both Local Authorities simultaneously as the membership of the Panels was the same, except for Keira Stobie who only sat for Bristol.
4. The Panel met and considered benchmarking for other Councils both in the Southwest and other parts of the UK. They noted that the NJC pay offer included a figure of a 4.04% increase for staff allowances such as subsistence etc (which does not apply directly to Members' allowances as they are outside the NJC scheme), but like a number of Councils, they considered this an appropriate starting point for consideration. They were advised that a number of Local Authorities hadn't yet decided how they would apply the increase, but of those that had agreed a percentage uplift, many had adopted the 4.04%, including London Councils.
5. The recommendation set out in this report will increase the overall spend on Members' allowances by approximately £63k. The Panel are aware that the Local Government sector is experiencing financial challenges but are strongly of the view that elected representatives must be remunerated fairly for the duties they undertake, particularly with the current pressures impacting the cost of living.

Next Steps

6. The Independent Remuneration Panel are planning to undertake their next full review of Members Allowances in 23/24 to conclude once details of the Committee Model of governance are available.

The Panel

7. The Panel Members are:

Wendy Stephenson - Chair
Graham Russell – Vice Chair
Ronnie Alexander
Keira Stobie

8. Support to the Panel was provided by Bryony Houlden, Chief Executive of South West Councils as an independent adviser and Lucy Fleming, Head of Democratic Engagement at Bristol City Council. Jo Morrison, Democratic Services Manager at Bath and North East Somerset Council, was also in attendance.

Appendices

Appendix A – IRP recommendations September 2019
Appendix B - IRP recommendations May 2020
Appendix C – Members Allowances Scheme

REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
ALLOWANCES

Independent
Remuneration Panel

Ronnie Alexander
Graham Russell
Canon Doctor John Savage
Wendy Stephenson

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL: INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

REPORT ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2019/20

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: Timetable for Changes

That the role of elected Members should be valued and rewarded accordingly, but the Panel acknowledge the difficulty of Councillors voting directly for their own remuneration. In view of this the Panel recommend adopting the principle that all key pay decisions be made prior to an election, for implementation directly after, thereby setting some distance from existing Councillors (whilst recognising some would be re-elected). For the recommendations within this report, the changes would be voted on in autumn 2019 but implemented following the next election in May 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Inflationary Increases

That, in line with existing arrangements, the Basic Allowance should be automatically updated each year for inflation in line with the National Joint Council increase applied to staff salaries.

The next increase would be applied in April 2020

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Basic Allowance

That the Basic Allowance be increased to £13,946 following the elections in May 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The Executive Mayor

That the allowance for the Executive Mayor of Bristol be increased to £65,522 (plus the basic allowance of £13,946, which totals £79,468) following the elections in May 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Deputy Mayors/Cabinet Members

That allowances for the Deputy Mayors and Cabinet Members should remain at £21,550, however, a full review of the role and remuneration of the Deputy Mayors and Cabinet Members would take place in the 19/20 Municipal Year.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Scrutiny

1. That the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be increased to £8,000 following the elections in May 2020;
2. That the SRA for the Chairs of the Scrutiny Commissions remain at £6,465, with the Chairs of the Task Groups unremunerated. These arrangements would be reviewed before the start of the 20/21 Municipal Year.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Regulatory Committees

1. That the SRA for the Chairs of the Development Control Committees and Public Safety and Protection Committee remain at £6,465;
2. That the Chair of the Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee remain unremunerated;
3. That, following the elections in May 2020, the Licensing Committee Chair no longer receive an SRA with the total of £6,465 being shared out between all

those Members who sat on Licensing Sub Committee hearings (the Council to design an appropriate payment model, based on that used for employee appeal hearings).

RECOMMENDATION 8: Party Group Leaders

1. That the Party Group Leaders' SRAs remain unchanged at £12,929 but that an additional SRA be permitted for the Party Group Leader of whichever party also held the post of Directly Elected Mayor (currently the Labour party), to take effect from May 2020.
2. That, in line with existing arrangements, no SRA be paid to the Deputy Party Group Leaders.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Whips

That the SRA for the Whips be increased to £8,000 following the elections in May 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Lord Mayor/Deputy Lord Mayor

That the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor's SRAs remain unchanged at £21,550 and £6,465 respectively.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Audit Committee

That the Audit Committee Chair SRA remain unchanged at £6,465.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Human Resources Committee

That the Chair of the Human Resources Committee receive an SRA of £6,465 with effect from May 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Co-optees' Allowance

That the co-optees' allowance of £577 per annum remain unchanged, although this would be reviewed before the end of the 20/21 Municipal Year.

RECOMMENDATION 14: Travel and Subsistence

1. The Panel believes that a fairer approach is to separate travel from the Councillors' Basic Allowance and introduce direct invoicing for expenses claims for mileage (including cycling) and other travel costs. As per current arrangements, a car parking pass will be offered but a bus pass could be provided as an alternative.
2. For travel outside of the city, within England, the Panel recommends no change to the current scheme.
3. In line with Bristol City Council's policy for officers, it is recommended that no subsistence expenses be paid for trips within the UK.

RECOMMENDATION 15: Overseas Travel

That the overseas policy for elected Members be the same as that for officers.

RECOMMENDATION 16: Dependant Carers' Allowances

That the Dependant Carer Scheme details be clarified and promoted (particularly to those considering standing for election) but the current provisions of the Scheme in relation to dependant carers' allowance (including the list of approved duties to which it applies) remain unchanged.

RECOMMENDATION 17; Future Work Priorities

The Panel recommend that the following SRAs be reviewed as part of a second tranche of work to commence late 2019;

- Scrutiny Chairs, including Task Group Chairs and the Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
- Deputy Mayors and Cabinet
- Co-optees Allowances

RECOMMENDATION 18: Advisory Observations

To note the Panel's advisory observations at Appendix A, and respond to these in due course.

Introduction

1. The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to make a Scheme of Allowances over which they can exercise local discretion as to the amounts being paid. Under the Local Government (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations, 2003, Councils have to set up an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations on Councillors' allowances. Bristol City Council appointed the following Panel in April 2018;

Ronnie Alexander

Ronnie Alexander left Welsh Government in 2013 to pursue a variety of other interests, including consultancy. He is a member of the National Assembly for Wales Remuneration Board and is Independent Chair of the Standards Committee for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. Ronnie had a civil service career spanning over 20 years and prior to that worked for a number of local authorities. He has a considerable track record of engaging with the public, professionals and politicians at all levels, to influence policy.

Graham Russell

Graham Russell is a former Head of Democratic Services with Bath and North East Somerset Council. He has written some regional guidance for Independent Remuneration Panels and officers. Graham has served on a number of similar Panels around the South West. He is currently a marriage celebrant in Bath and North East Somerset Council.

Canon Doctor John Savage

John has a wealth of experience of senior roles in both the public and private sector. They include; Chairman - Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative; Chairman - Destination Bristol; Chairman - John Wesley New Room Trust; Chairman - Learning Partnership West; and Chairman – UHBT Hospitals.

Wendy Stephenson

From 2005 to 2017 Wendy was Chief Executive of Voscur, the support and development organisation for Bristol's voluntary and community sector. In this role Wendy gained a good knowledge of the workings of the local authority and the roles and responsibilities of Councillors. Wendy has participated in Bristol City Council assessment Panels during the recruitment of senior officers, and worked with Councillors and officers in a number of different policy areas.

2. The Panel elected Wendy Stephenson as the Chair. The Panel was supported by Bryony Houlden, Chief Executive of South West Councils as an independent adviser. The Panel was grateful to the officer team for their support. The Panel particularly wished to acknowledge Lucy Fleming, Head of Democratic Engagement who co-ordinated survey information, organised and attended meetings and provided factual background and guidance. Lucy's timely and accurate notes throughout the Panel deliberations and her willingness to work flexibly and responsively enabled the Panel to meet its deadlines.

The Panel was asked to complete the review as soon as possible as the Member Allowances Scheme was in need of being updated in order to meet statutory requirements. The Panel initially met five times in order to progress the review but as the timescale was quite tight not every issue was explored in the depth that the

Panel would have liked. The Panel therefore recommend that a number of areas be reviewed in detail before the end of the 20/21 Municipal Year.

3. As part of their research the Panel circulated a survey to the Mayor and elected Members. The Panel was grateful to the high number who completed the survey as this informed their findings. In addition, it was also very helpful to be able to interview the Mayor and a number of Councillors in order to explore issues in more depth.
4. Following the circulation of a draft report of recommendations, the Panel conducted an additional round of meetings with representatives from each political party, with the intention of reaching consensus in as many areas as possible.
5. The Panel have made a number of recommendations that will increase the overall spend on Members' allowances by £139,926 as detailed in paragraph 64. Whilst the Panel were mindful of the ongoing financial pressures affecting public sector bodies, they also strongly felt that elected representatives were not being remunerated fairly for the work they were undertaking and this inevitably had a direct impact on those who could afford to enter public life. The Panel were of the view that if the Council was to become more diverse the Basic Allowance needed to be increased. The proposed increase of £139,926 was around 0.4 % of the Council's proposed net budget for 19/20 of £376.3 million.

Background

6. The current Allowances and Expenses Scheme is based on a Panel report from 2014, as subsequent proposed amendments to the scheme made by the then Independent Remuneration Panel were not accepted by the Council. Any changes made to the Allowances Scheme since 2014 have therefore only been inflationary increases with allowances automatically increased in line with any officer pay increase. Details as follows:
 - Nil from 1st April 2014
 - 2.2% from 1st January 2015
 - 1% from 1st April 2016
 - 1% from 1st April 2017
 - 2% from 1st April 2018
 - 2% from 1st April 2019

The Panel also noted that on a national level, MPs received a 2.69% pay rise for 2019-2020 (increasing from £77,379 to £79,468), from 1st April 2019.

General Principles of Review

7. The Panel discussed and agreed a number of general principles to guide their review:
 - The Panel would make recommendations that recognised, and were consistent with, Bristol City Council being a living wage employer;

- The Panel would make recommendations that did not of themselves create barriers to standing or returning as a Councillor and recognised the contribution the Council could make in the way it structured and managed Member roles;
- The Basic Allowance should be ascertained by a calculation based on the average number of hours worked by a Councillor, estimated to be 25 hours per week (see evidence at paragraph 29) and reduced by 20% to reflect the voluntary element of a Councillors' role;
- That an appropriate spinal column point in the officers' grading structure be used in the calculation of the Basic Allowance for the purposes of applying future cost of living rises;
- The Panel would publish a clear account of the purpose of the Basic Allowance and the types of expenditure or commitment incurred by a Councillor that it was intended to recognise;
- The Panel would make recommendations on SRAs that clearly distinguished those Member roles that qualified for such allowances, and those that were adequately recognised through a robust Basic Allowance;
- The principle of not having more than 50% of Councillors with an SRA would be followed.

Context

8. Whilst the Panel does not have a requirement upon it to develop an Allowance Scheme explicitly looking to shape the composition of the Council the Panel was mindful of the importance of Councillors reflecting the community they served. This was a point made in interviews. As background information, the Panel therefore looked at the latest National Census of Local Authority Councillors which was undertaken in 2013 (and it is understood a further Census is due in 2019 which will provide further background). The 2013 National Census of Local Authority Councillors provides the most comprehensive 'snapshot' of local government representation and analyses of trends over time.
9. The Census asked Councillors about; their work as Councillors; their views on a range of issues; and their personal background.

NATIONAL CENSUS FINDINGS

Work as a Councillor

- *Councillors spent, on average, 25 hours per week on council/political business, compared to around 22 hours over 2004-2010.*
- *53 per cent of councillors held one or more positions of leading responsibility within the council, and 36 per cent were members of local partnership groups or boards (such as Health and Wellbeing Boards).*
- *Councillors rated PCs or laptops, council e-mail addresses and smartphones as the most useful resources.*

Issues and views of Councillors

- *90 per cent of Councillors cited a desire to serve the community as their reason for wanting to become a Councillor.*
- *70 per cent thought that listening to local views was the most important thing for Councillors to do, while 65 per cent said that representing residents' views to the*

Council was the most important thing for them to do.

- *65 per cent of Councillors intended to stand for re-election at the end of their term in office and 82 per cent would recommend taking on the role to others.*

Personal background of Councillors

- *67 per cent of Councillors were male, 32 per cent were female. The proportion of female Councillors had increased from 29 per cent in 2001.*
- *The average age of Councillors had increased from 55 in 1997 to 60 in 2013.*
- *96 per cent of Councillors were white and 4 per cent came from an ethnic minority background.*

10. Within Bristol, the Councillor cohort is currently 41% female and 59% male. The average age is 53. The Council does not seek information about other protected characteristics and the Panel strongly suggest that this be introduced in the future to enable better monitoring of the diversity of its elected Members.
11. The Panel was also mindful that 2018 was the centenary of some women being able to vote and stand as an MP. The Panel therefore considered the Fawcett Report which had looked at Local Government in detail, in particular the aspects and stages of the process from standing as a candidate for election through to becoming the Leader of a Council. The report made a series of recommendations that would help bring more women into local government and enable them to play a full role at all levels.
12. Whilst there were many recommendations relating to improving women's representation in Local Government, for example political parties setting targets for increasing women's representation at local elections; term limits for Councillors; reasonable adjustment policies for disabled Councillors; reviews of Councillor performance; and challenging racism; the Panel focused upon the report's consideration of 'Removing Structural Barriers to Progress.' Within the report there was particular focus on concerns over the historic male domination of town halls, which had not supported women (who still had the bulk of caring responsibilities). The report called for the introduction of maternity, paternity and parental leave entitlements for Councillors across England, in line with leave available to employees. The Fawcett report also asked that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issue guidance to Independent Remuneration Panels to promote their proposed model for a comprehensive Dependant Carers' Allowance Scheme, although to date the request had not been realised. The report further recommended that the law needed to be changed so that Councillors' childcare expenses were reported separately to the main Members' Allowances data, so that reporting of them did not deter women from claiming support.
13. Finally, in terms of setting the context for the review, the Panel noted that austerity meant severe ongoing budget challenges for Bristol. There was a clear message from Councillors about the need to be cautious in budgetary terms about increasing the total spend on allowances. However, it was also apparent that the current allowances did not fairly remunerate Councillors for the level of work being undertaken. It is not the role of the Panel to make decisions on the appropriate level of budget for allowances, but the financial pressures provide a backcloth to deliberations. The Panel recognised the difficulty facing Councillors in considering their own allowances, particularly in a time of austerity. The Panel is therefore making a recommendation which would see the main changes made post-election

(i.e. in May 2020) meaning that current Councillors voting on the changes may not be beneficiaries of any increases.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Timetable for Changes

That the role of elected Members should be valued and rewarded accordingly, but the Panel acknowledged the difficulty of Councillors voting directly for their own remuneration. In view of this the Panel recommend adopting the principle that all key pay decisions be made prior to an election, for implementation directly after thereby setting some distance from existing Councillors (whilst recognising some would be re-elected). For the recommendations within this report, the changes would be voted on in autumn 2019 but implemented following the next election in May 2020.

Methodology

14. As noted above, key information was provided by the Mayor and Councillors via both a survey and a series of interviews. The response rate was 62% which was good based on previous experience from other Panels across the South West.
15. In addition, the Panel received copies of job descriptions for various roles, as well as diary extracts illustrating the duties undertaken by the Lord Mayor. They were also provided with information about the structure of the Scrutiny function.
16. The Panel had a range of benchmarking information from other Councils. This included other Mayoral Authorities (and Combined Authorities) and Unitary Councils in the South of England, although of main interest to the Panel was the information on local authorities that represented the Core Cities.

Indexing of Basic and other Allowances

17. The Panel noted that the present Scheme made provision for the Basic Allowance, SRAs and the Co-optees' Allowance to be increased in line with officers' pay.
18. The Panel has taken on board the recent pay award for officers in making its recommendation on the level of Basic Allowance in this report. The Panel sees great merit in this current provision remaining within the Scheme to provide for any future adjustments pending the next fundamental review.

RECOMMENDATION 2; Inflationary Increases

That, in line with existing arrangements, the Basic Allowance should be automatically updated each year for inflation in line with the National Joint Council increase applied to staff salaries.

The next increase would be applied in April 2020.

Basic Allowance

19. The Basic Allowance is the allowance that every Councillor in Bristol is entitled to. It is intended to realistically remunerate Councillors for time spent on Council business including attending meetings/briefings and conducting ward work i.e. all duties the public would expect a Councillor to carry out. The Basic Allowance also covers

incidental costs (such as the use of their homes) and all subsistence when travelling within the UK. The Panel also believes that a Councillor in receipt of a robust Basic Allowance should from time to time be expected to take part in the governance of the Council e.g. chairing a meeting or attending an event on behalf of the Council, without additional remuneration.

20. The present level of Basic Allowance is £12,929 which was originally set in 2014 but has since been increased in line with the cost of living rises awarded to officers.
21. The Basic Allowance will never totally compensate for all the hours spent by Councillors on Council related duties. Indeed, the Government anticipates that Independent Remuneration Panels will apply a discount (recommended to be 33 %) to the assessed total hours spent to reflect what they see as the voluntary element of a Councillor's role. The Panel considered the evidence provided and agreed that a reduction of 20% was much fairer than the common norm in view of the range of responsibilities and pressures placed on the modern day Councillor.
22. In considering changes to the Basic Allowance the Panel considered a number of pieces of evidence as set out below.
23. The Survey provided evidence that the Basic Allowance was currently insufficient to reflect the work required of each Councillor. 68 % of respondents said 'No' the allowance was not sufficient with comments about the amount of time the role took, how difficult it was to try and balance competing demands given the irregular hours, and that it didn't compensate for salaries sacrificed. Of a different view were the 25% who answered 'Yes' to the question. Some answers referred to the difficulty of increasing allowances because of the climate of austerity. The survey provided information about the workload of each Councillor and it was evidence that many were undertaking the equivalent of at least 2.5 days of a working week.
24. The benchmarking information showed considerable variation: for example, across the Core Cities Group Manchester, with a population of 545,000 and 96 Members, paid the highest Basic Allowance at £19,967. The lowest was in Newcastle with a population of 305,000 and 78 Members at £8,775.
25. The Panel further noted that Bristol City Council was a Living Wage Employer committed to the principle of fairness in remunerating work, and whilst allowances were not intended to be a salary the Panel regarded this as a key principle in considering the level of the Basic Allowance. The Panel was aware that median salary information was used routinely by other Independent Panels and were advised that £13.41 was the average median hourly wage of residents in Bristol and therefore agreed that was the rate that should be used when setting the Basic Allowance.
26. The Panel was also very concerned that whilst MPs are entitled to join a pension scheme neither the Mayor nor Councillors are now eligible to do so. The Panel considers this to be a disincentive to public service, particularly for younger representatives and suggested that Members seek advice on personal pension schemes available to them from the Money Advisory Service or Pension Advisory Service.
27. The Panel noted that the Basic Allowance in place currently included provision for travel costs of Councillors within Bristol. This approach was introduced in part for simplicity and to reduce the administrative burden, however, it could also be argued

that the arrangements were inequitable. This issue is explored later in the report (see paragraph 65 onwards).

28. The Panel also noted that some Members' Allowances Schemes incorporated the costs of IT and provision of broadband etc in the Basic Allowance. In others, including Bristol, a separate payment was made which was either a reimbursement of exact costs or a flat rate allowance. This equipment was for use for Council business and the Panel recognised the importance of Councillors having this support to undertake their role. The Panel understood that Councillors' ICT provision had recently been reviewed and upgraded (December 18) and agreed that they would look at this area in more detail during a future review.
29. The Panel balanced all issues on this matter and determined that the Basic Allowance fell short of a reasonable level when considering the requirements of the role and comparator information around the average salaries in the city. They agreed that the new rate should be set at £13,946 which was calculated based on a 25 hour week, at £13.41 with a 20 % reduction for the voluntary element.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Basic Allowance

That the Basic Allowance be increased to £13,946 following the elections in May 2020.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) – General Principles

30. These are discretionary payments within the Scheme of Allowances. They are intended to recognise the responsibility, accountability, time and effort required from those Members of the Council who perform duties significantly over and above what might reasonably be expected of them through the Basic Allowance.
31. The Panel noted the guidance of the Government that no more than 50% of Councillors in an authority should receive an SRA and the recommendations fall well below this guideline. The present Scheme also provides that a Councillor may receive no more than one SRA – with the higher-valued allowance being received - and the Panel agreed that this arrangement should continue.
32. The Panel has looked very carefully at roles in the context of the need for SRAs and;
 - Recognises that an SRA is relevant only where the role carries a significant additional responsibility, level of accountability, time or effort over and above that of a Councillor receiving only the Basic Allowance;
 - Seeks to value what the Council sees as the core roles and has reviewed the roles that currently receive an SRA to ascertain their continued relevance for such a payment;
 - Has noted where roles have changed;
 - Has made balanced judgements where there has been contrary evidence provided.

Special Responsibility Allowances – Specific Roles;

Executive Mayor (Directly Elected Mayor)

33. The role of the Directly Elected Mayor (DEM) was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 and has been in place in Bristol since 2012. The position was created in order to increase transparency around decision making by passing ultimate accountability to one individual. DEMs are often viewed as being leaders of place, rather than just the Council; play a significant role on a national level; and also often have an international profile as the figurehead of the city.
34. The Mayor can determine the size of the Cabinet (to a maximum of 9); the number and range of portfolio, including the level of any delegation; and the individual Councillors that serve in Cabinet positions. The Mayor answers to the Full Council and is held to account through the Scrutiny function.
35. In comparing the current elected Mayor's allowance of £70,604 with those of other DEMs in the UK the Panel recognised that some were smaller District Councils or less comparable in nature so they have focused on the following: Bedford, Hackney, Leicester, Lewisham, Liverpool, Newham and Watford. These range from £60,047 to £81,461 but some of these pay a Basic Allowance in addition, for example Newham and Leicester.
36. The Panel was keen to understand the legal position in relation to payment of Basic Allowances and was advised that DEMs should receive a Basic Allowance on top of their SRA, as set out in The Local Authorities (Elected Mayor and Mayor's Assistant) (England) Regulations 2002. The Panel were of the understanding that this payment should have been made since the DEM position was created in 2012.
37. The Panel also noted that when the DEM's SRA was originally set when the position was first introduced in 2012 it matched that of an MP. Over time, the DEM's SRA has not kept up to date with the MPs' basic allowance which from 1 April 2019 was set at £79,468
38. In making the recommendation regarding an allowance for the elected Mayor, the Panel was mindful that the Council needed to be able to attract high calibre candidates with the skills, knowledge and experience for this position who were also able to commit to the leadership of the City. Bristol citizens expected the DEM to lead a diverse and thriving city that had a place on the international stage. This was an extremely high profile and demanding role, not without risk, and should be rewarded as such. Whilst the Panel were initially minded to set the SRA for the elected Mayor at a higher rate, following cross party discussions they accepted there were issues around public perception which would make it difficult for politicians to support a significant increase.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The Executive Mayor

That the allowance for the Executive Mayor of Bristol be increased to £65,522 (plus the basic allowance of £13,946, which totals £79,468) following the elections in May 2020.

Deputy Mayor (s) and Cabinet Members

39. Currently there are 9 Cabinet Members, two of whom are also Deputy Mayors. The present allowance to both groups is £21,550.
40. The Panel noted that in a change since the previous incumbent the DEM has delegated decision making to these roles and increased the number of Cabinet Members from 5 to 9.
41. The Panel received some evidence that the responsibilities of different Cabinet Members were variable. In a future review the Panel may wish to explore the option of recommending that the Mayor has discretion to set SRAs at varying levels as per the model used in Leicester. Additionally, the Panel concluded that the role of the Deputy Mayors potentially carried additional responsibilities over and above the other Cabinet Members and agreed to conduct a full review prior to May 2020.
42. However, at the current time they did not feel there was compelling evidence to adjust the Cabinet Member/Deputy Mayors' SRAs from the current rates.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Deputy Mayors/Cabinet Members

That allowances for the Deputy Mayors and Cabinet Members should remain at £21,550, however, a full review of the role and remuneration of the Deputy Mayors and Cabinet Members would take place in the 19/20 Municipal Year.

Overview and Scrutiny

43. Overview and Scrutiny in Bristol has been subject to review in recent years to ensure it reflects best practice in a modern Mayoral Authority.
44. In 2018/19 a new structure was introduced, following advice from the Local Government Association. It consists of a combination of traditional Scrutiny Commissions as well as less formal 'task groups', which focus on in-depth pieces of work, usually contributing to policy development.
45. The Panel has been made aware of the statutory function and purpose of Overview and Scrutiny, introduced under the Local Government Act 2000.
46. The Panel considered the role of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, who was responsible for the functional lead management of Scrutiny, and noted that it included the following duties;
 - Prioritisation of workload;
 - Developing and delivering a balanced work programme that focuses on both corporate objectives and issues that concern local residents;
 - Liaising with the Executive and promoting an effective partnership arrangement;
 - Conflict resolution;
 - Ensuring effective use of Members' and officers' time;
 - Creating the capacity to challenge effectively; and
 - Being accountable for the effective management of the function.
47. The Panel considered the roles of the Chairs of the Scrutiny Commissions (currently remunerated under the Scheme of Allowances) and those Members who preside over Task Groups (currently unremunerated). These operational roles include responsibility for:

- Effective agenda management of meetings;
- Ensuring that work is focussed and relevant;
- Reporting to the Over and Scrutiny Management Board or Scrutiny Commission as appropriate.

48. During the course of their research the Panel received conflicting information in relation to the role, remit and workloads of the Scrutiny Task Group Chairs and concluded this was because there was currently no set way of working, with the duration and outputs from each of the existing Task Groups varying considerably. The Panel noted that the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government had recently provided statutory guidance setting out best practice arrangements for Scrutiny, and that the Council had recently participated in a Peer Challenge with the Local Government Association that had provided feedback in relation to Scrutiny arrangements within Bristol, and thought both of those factors could lead to changes in working practices that would make the situation clearer. In view of this the Panel agreed that a further review of all Scrutiny Chair SRAs should take place later in the 19/20 Municipal year, when hopefully the working arrangements were more consistent. The Panel may consider recommending retrospective payments to Task Group Chairs at that point.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Scrutiny

1. That the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be increased to £8,000 following the elections in May 2020;
2. That the SRA for the Chairs of the Scrutiny Commissions remain at £6,465, with the Chairs of the Task Groups unremunerated. These arrangements would be reviewed before the start of the 20/21 Municipal Year.

Regulatory Committee Chairs

48. The present Scheme of Allowances provides an SRA for the Chairs of 4 x Regulatory Committees at £6,465 (Development Control Committee A, Development Control Committee B, Licensing Committee and the Public Safety and Protection Committee).
49. The Panel recognised that regulatory matters stood outside of the executive arrangements and consequently the Mayor is not responsible for decision making other than on setting overall strategic policy.
50. It follows therefore that those Members involved with regulatory matters carry a significant responsibility for the integrity of the decision making process and accordingly for the management of risk to the Council on such sensitive matters. Most decisions made by regulatory Committees can be challenged through relevant appeals processes external to the Council. Cases of maladministration can be referred to the Ombudsman. These regulatory matters also generate significant public interest and pressure, and those items that come to Members for decision (rather than being dealt with by officer delegation) are by their nature the most controversial.
51. The Panel noted that 85% of respondents to the survey were of the view that the SRAs currently paid to Regulatory Chairs were sufficient. They noted that the Chair of the Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee was currently unremunerated

and agreed that due to infrequent business with minimal meetings the arrangement should continue.

52. The Panel also heard evidence about the role of the Licensing Committee and Licensing Sub Committee. The Panel noted that the full Licensing Committee met very infrequently, and that the bulk of work was conducted by Licensing Sub Committees consisting of three Members, one of whom would be elected to Chair the meeting. The Panel was informed that there was a statutory limit of 15 on the number of Councillors who could serve on Licensing Committees at any one time, yet the workload could be onerous with hearings sometimes lasting most of the day and taking place as often as weekly. The Panel was advised that not all Members of the Licensing Committee sat regularly, which created additional pressures. In view of these circumstances it was therefore agreed that the SRA for the Licensing Chair be removed and that a set fee for attending Licensing Sub Committee hearings be provided in its place, with an appropriate system for calculating payment to be devised by the Council. The Panel thought this should mirror the existing arrangements for payments made to Members sitting on employee appeals (e.g. a sliding scale from £150 for 2 sessions up to £550 for a maximum of 10 sessions).

RECOMMENDATION 7: Regulatory Committees

1. That the SRA for the Chairs of the Development Control Committees and Public Safety and Protection Committee remain at £6,465;
2. That the Chair of the Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee remain unremunerated;
3. That, following the elections in May 2020, the Licensing Committee Chair no longer receive an SRA with the total of £6,465 being shared out between all those Members who sat on Licensing Sub Committee hearings (the Council is to design an appropriate payment model, based on that used for employee appeal hearings).

Party Group Leaders

53. The role is recognised in the present Scheme of Allowances at £12,929.
54. The Panel received information, written and verbal, setting out the duties of Party Group Leaders and agreed that the position was pivotal to the smooth operation of the Council in terms of effective cross party working.
55. Consideration was given to the SRA paid to Party Group Leaders and the Panel concluded this was reasonable for the duties undertaken. The exception to this, however, was that there was currently no Leader role within the Labour Group since the position was in effect held by the DEM. The Panel recommended that the situation be rectified by a Party Group Leader SRA being introduced for whichever party also held the position of DEM. The rationale for this was that the DEM must be free to focus on running the city and therefore couldn't reasonably be expected to also perform all of the roles of a Party Group Leader.
56. The Panel heard evidence about the role of the Deputy Leader, which was relatively minor with only occasional deputising involved. The Panel therefore agreed that no SRA was warranted for Deputy Leaders at the current time.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Party Group Leaders

1. That the Party Group Leaders' SRAs remain unchanged at £12,929 but that an additional SRA be permitted for the Party Group Leader of whichever party also held the post of Directly Elected Mayor (currently the Labour party), to take effect from May 2020.
2. That, in line with existing arrangements, no SRA be paid to the Deputy Party Group Leaders.

Party Whips

57. The Whips were currently remunerated at £6465. Having reviewed example job descriptions of the Whips and talked to post holders, the Panel was of the view that clarification was needed around the important role fulfilled by the Whips in supporting the Party Group Leaders and providing a broad range of support to fellow Councillors, which included pastoral care, assisting with managing workloads, identifying development needs and so on. The Panel agreed that the SRA currently paid did not reflect the range of responsibilities for this important role and concluded that it should be increased to £8000 per annum following the 2020 elections.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Whips

That the SRA for the Whips be increased to £8000 following the elections in May 2020.

Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor

58. The Panel heard evidence from the current Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor. They also had an understanding of the significant number of engagements conducted by the office of Lord Mayor via diary extracts.
59. Whilst the duties undertaken by the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor were significant in terms of time, the Panel concluded that as these were largely ceremonial the roles did not carry significant levels of responsibility or accountability. The Panel therefore recommend that the SRAs for both positions remain unchanged.
60. The Panel noted that there were additional budgets attached to the role of the Lord Mayor and suggested that they be made more transparent.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Lord Mayor/Deputy Lord Mayor

That the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor's SRAs remain unchanged at £21,550 and £6,465 respectively.

Audit Committee Chair

61. The Panel considered the role of the Chair of the Audit Committee. They noted that minimal evidence had been received regarding the nature of this position and therefore concluded that the SRA should remain at the current level of £6,465.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Audit Committee

That the Audit Committee Chair SRA remain unchanged at £6,465.

Human Resources Committee Chair

62. Evidence was provided to the Panel to suggest that the responsibilities of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee had recently increased both in terms of remit but also frequency and profile of meetings. In view of this the Panel concluded that the responsibilities now warranted an SRA and agreed that this should be set at £6,465 per annum.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Human Resources Committee

That the Chair of the Human Resources Committee receive an SRA of £6,465 with effect from May 2020.

Impact of recommendations

63. The following table shows how the present and scheme compares to the recommendations to be implemented from May 2020;

Present Scheme			Proposed Scheme			
Role	SRA - £	Collective Total	Role	SRA - £	Collective Total	Individual Total inc. Basic Allowance
Executive Mayor (no basic allowance)	70,605	70,605	Executive Mayor (with basic allowance)	65,512	65,522	79,468
Deputy Mayors x2 and Cabinet Members x 7	21,550	193,950	Deputy Mayors x2 and Cabinet Members x7	21,550	193,950	35,496
Party Group Leaders x 3	12,929	38,787	Party Group Leaders x 4	12,929	51,716	26,885
Political Group Whips x 4	6,465	25,860	Political Group Whips x 4	8,000	32,000	21,956
Chairs of Scrutiny x 5	6,465	32,325	Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board	8,000	8,000	21,956
			Chairs of Scrutiny Commissions x 4	6,465	25,860	20,411

Chairs of Regulatory Committees x 4 (including Licensing Committee)	6,465	25,860	Chairs of Regulatory Committees x 3 (for Licensing Committee see below)	6,465	19,395	20,411
Lord Mayor	21,550	21,550	Lord Mayor	21,550	21,550	35,496
Deputy Lord Mayor	6,465	6,465	Deputy Lord Mayor	6,465	6,465	20,411
Licensing Sub Committee Members	0	0	Licensing Sub Committee Members	Total amount of £6,465 to be shared (see para 51)	6,465	Variable
Audit Committee Chair	6,465	6,465	Audit Committee Chair	6,465	6,465	20,411
HR Committee Chair	0	0	HR Committee Chair	6,465	6,465	20,411
Basic Allowance x 70	12,261	858,270	Basic Allowance x 70 (note – the Mayor will also receive a Basic Allowance, please see first row)	13,946	976,220	N/A
TOTALS		1,280,137			1,420,073	

Co-opted Members' Allowance

64. The present Scheme provides an allowance of £577 per annum for co-optees and the Panel agreed that this should remain at that level at the current time. They also noted that the Audit Committee appointed two Independent Advisors and agreed that at their next review they needed to gain a better understanding of the positions to ensure the allowance was sufficient in view of the skills and experience needed to perform the role.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Co-optees' Allowance

That the co-optees' allowance of £577 per annum remain unchanged, although this would be reviewed before the end of the 20/21 Municipal Year.

Travel and Subsistence

65. The Panel are able to recommend that allowances are made available in respect of travel and subsistence. During the interviews evidence was collected about the travel and subsistence scheme which led the Panel to review the current arrangements both in terms of travel within Bristol but also nationally and internationally.
66. The Panel recognised that travel could be a contentious issue, but they were also mindful that any scheme they put forward might be different to the scheme applying to officers. In principle the Panel believes that the same rules should apply to both Councillors and officers, but also that no one be out of pocket when undertaking 'approved duties' on behalf of the Council. A list of approved duties for the purposes of claiming travel expenses can be found at Appendix D. This relates to travel to and from Council meetings only and does not include trips around a Councillor's ward.
67. The Panel noted that the current scheme had been designed to include a notional figure for travel and subsistence within the City on approved business within the Basic Allowance. It is not clear what this notional figure is, and the only benchmarking figures from other Councils that provided clarification were from Leicester City Council which paid a sum of £1,205 per annum to each Member intended to cover travel and subsistence costs for all activities within the City boundary.
68. Including a figure in the Basic Allowance or having an annual sum paid means there is an element of unfairness in the system because Councillors have different travel needs. However, including travel expenses in the Basic Allowance avoids officers authorising 71 potential claims a month. The Panel conducted a review of the travel expenses arrangements in the Core Cities and found that 6 Councils operated an expenses claim system, whilst the other 3 incorporated travel into the Basic Allowance.
69. Councillors are also eligible for a free parking permit which again brings an element of unfairness for those dependent on public transport who receive no similar subsidy. The Panel recognised that it was important to support Councillors in undertaking their role, which often may be on business late in the evening or need to fit in with employment or caring responsibilities, so the ability to park could be important. However, by providing additional support to car travel rather than other means of transport runs counterintuitively to the 'green' commitments of the Council. In view of this the Panel recommend that Councillors be offered a free bus pass to encourage use of sustainable travel. At the next review, the Panel suggest that the issues around provision of parking permits be fully assessed.
70. The Panel were mindful of the potential impact on officers of processing multiple expenses claims each month but were informed that the Council's electronic expenses system could be used, which would minimise the administrative burden. Furthermore, the Panel also agreed that Elected Members should be trusted to submit honest claims in line with the Nolan principles, therefore they should only be checked by officers by exception.

71. The Panel reviewed the arrangements in relation to travel provision for Councillors with access needs and agreed that the current policy was equitable and should remain unchanged.

RECOMMENDATION 14: Travel and Subsistence

1. The Panel believes that a fairer approach is to separate travel and subsistence from the Councillors' Basic Allowance and introduce direct invoicing for expenses claims for mileage (including cycling) and other travel costs. As per current arrangements, a car parking pass will be offered but a bus pass could be provided as an alternative (aside from car parking permits which will still be available, and bus passes which also would be provided).
2. For travel outside of the city, within England, the Panel recommends no change to the current scheme.
3. In line with Bristol City Council's policy for officers, it is recommended that no subsistence expenses be paid for trips within the UK.

Overseas Travel

72. There was no specific provision for overseas travel within the current scheme and there was evidence from the interviews that it would be helpful for the Panel to consider this area. The Panel noted that the Overseas Travel Policy for officers had recently been revised and agreed it should be reviewed to incorporate Members by applying the same principles.

RECOMMENDATION 15: Overseas Travel

That the overseas policy for elected Members be the same as that for officers.

Carers' Allowance

73. As set out above the Panel was mindful of the need to support those with caring responsibilities, especially in view of the findings of the Fawcett report as set out in paragraph 11. The Panel noted the current provision for the payment of Dependant Carers' Allowance within the present Scheme and did not identify a need for fundamental change. They did think it important, however, that the availability of support for carers should be made clearer in trying to attract, and retain, Councillors from the broad spectrum of the community. The Panel recommends providing more clarity about eligibility as outlined below:

Carers Allowance

A claim can be made:

(a) When a carer has been engaged to enable a councillor to carry out an approved duty;

(i) where charges are levied on an hourly basis, Members may claim actual and necessary costs incurred for the period of the approved duty (including time travelling, time taken by a Member to 'drop-off' or 'pick-up' a dependant, or by a carer engaged by a member to look after a dependant in the member's home – this would normally not exceed 1 hour before and 1 hour after) for each dependant;

or

(ii) where charges are levied by a provider for a fixed period or session, Members may claim the cost of any such fixed period/session or periods/sessions incurred for the period of the approved duty (including time travelling time taken by a Member to 'drop-off' or 'pick-up' a dependant) for each dependant;

(b) A carer will be any responsible adult who does not normally live with the member as part of his/her family;

(c) An allowance will be payable if the dependant being cared for:

(i) is a child under the age of 14; or

(ii) is an elderly person; or

(ii) has a recognised physical or mental disability who normally lives with the Member as part of that Member's family and should not be left unsupervised.

RECOMMENDATION 16: Dependant Carers' Scheme

That the Dependant Carers' Scheme details be clarified and promoted (particularly to those considering standing for election) but the current provisions of the Scheme in relation to the Dependant Carers' Allowance (including the list of approved duties to which it applies – see Appendix D) remains unchanged.

Future Work Priorities

74. During the course of their review the Panel identified a number of areas that needed to be looked at in more detail before recommendations could be made. These are set out below.

RECOMMENDATION 17; Future Work Priorities

The Panel recommend that the following SRAs be reviewed as part of a second tranche of work to commence late 2019;

- Scrutiny Chairs, including Task Group Chairs and the Vice Chair of OSMB
- Deputy Mayors and Cabinet
- Co-optees' Allowances

Appendices;

Appendix A – Advisory Observations

Appendix B – Councillors Offering Evidence to the Panel

Appendix C – List of Regulatory and Scrutiny Bodies

Appendix D – List of Approved Duties

APPENDIX A

ADVISORY OBSERVATIONS

During the course of the review, the Panel came across a number of areas that were of interest, yet were not strictly within their remit. Their observations regarding these matters are detailed below, which are offered to the Council in an advisory capacity. The Panel intend to keep these observations under review and would appreciate a response from the Council to the points raised in due course

Member Performance and Development

- The Panel believes that it is very important not only to recognise and support the work of Councillors through the Allowances Scheme but also think it's vital to provide support for Councillors to develop their skills and expertise thereby enabling them to perform to a high level when serving the community.
- The Panel understands that work is in hand to create more structure around the Member development 'offer' to Councillors and that an enhanced programme in line with best practice will be introduced for the cohort of Councillors following the 2020 elections. The Panel support this and would encourage the Council to consider adopting the principles and approach of *The Charter for Member Development*. The Charter has been developed in partnership between the Local Government Association and the nine Regional Employers Organisations including South West Councils. Bristol achieved Charter status in 2009 but the accreditation has since lapsed. As a member organisation of SW Councils free support could be offered to Bristol in seeking to work to achieve Charter standard and in being assessed. There are a number of Charter and Charter Plus authorities in the South West who would also help with the sharing of best practice. The national LGA encourages Councils to consider adopting the Charter principles:

I would strongly encourage local areas to adopt the Member Development Charter and Charter Plus as a guide and a benchmark as part of your improvement journey. Every profession has continuing professional development at the heart of their improvement and so should we. The Member Development Charter and Charter Plus supports this continuing professional development for councillors by being a contract between the council and its councillors that commits to invest in councillors' growth and development.

Lord Gary Porter
LGA Chairman

The Panel hopes that this more structured approach to supporting the development of Members will enable the community to be even better served. Related to the support for Member development the Panel would also encourage the introduction of a more formal approach to performance management of elected Members. The Panel envisages this as a role for the party Group Leader and, given the increased allowance being recommended for the role, the Whip.

The LGA Peer Challenge

The LGA Peer Challenge report makes it clear that the Council is seeking to engage with local communities in difficult conversations about future plans and the role of the Council going forward. It also points to;

- The need for better arrangements for advance notification of the Executive's work plans (a point offered to the Panel in evidence);
- The Executive being more transparent and open with information shared in good time;
- The public's lack of clarity around the Mayoral Executive model of governance;
- The limited impact of scrutiny in Bristol (see below).

The Panel are interested in noting the Council's progress against these actions as part of their further reviews.

Scrutiny

The Panel noted that it was for the Council to determine the nature of its scrutiny arrangements and that the function had been under recent review and would likely continue to be so in view of the findings of the LGA Peer Challenge. They did, however, wish to make the following suggestions;

- That the Council considers re-naming/re-designating the Budget Task and Finish Group as its operational arrangements differ from other Task groups and it appears to have a more permanent review role relating to budget matters;
- That, following much evidence to the Panel expressing concern about how local people might engage more in local government, consideration be given to including a review of this within an early Scrutiny Work Programme item;
- Similarly, the Scrutiny Work programme should be used to assist the Council in developing the conversation with local communities about the future role of the Council.

Protected Characteristics

The Panel were of the view that elected Members should be fully representative of the communities that they served. In view of this they suggest that the Council gathers data on protected characteristics from Members.

RECOMMENDATION 18: Advisory Observations

To note the Panel's Advisory observations at Appendix A, and respond to these in due course.

APPENDIX B

Councillors offering evidence to the Panel

In addition to the Executive Mayor, the Panel has received a wide variety of evidence from

Group Leaders
Group Whips
Front-line Councillors
Cabinet Members
The Lord Mayor
Scrutiny Commission Chairs
Regulatory Chairs

Comparator statistics have been viewed in respect of allowances awarded in English Core Cities, other Mayoral Councils and generally in the South West but with particular emphasis placed on those from the Core Cities since they were the most comparable to Bristol.

APPENDIX C

The Regulatory Committees

Development Control A

Development Control B

Licensing

Public Rights of Way and Greens (no allowance paid)

Public Safety and Protection

Audit Committee (part regulatory and part scrutiny)

The Overview and Scrutiny Bodies

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Resources Scrutiny Commission

Communities Scrutiny Commission

Adults, Children and Education Scrutiny Commission

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission

APPENDIX D

Approved Duties for the purposes of Dependant Carers' Allowances

Claims can be made for these allowances in respect of the following (*extract from the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003*):

(a) the attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or of any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body;

(b) the attendance at any other meeting, the holding of which is authorised by the authority, or a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and at least one other local authority within the meaning of section 270(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee, provided that:

(i) where the authority is divided into two or more political groups it is a meeting to which members of at least two groups have been invited;

or

(ii) if the authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two members of the authority have been invited;

(c) the attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the authority is a member;

(d) the attendance at a meeting of the executive or a meeting of any of its committees, where the authority is operating executive arrangements;

(e) the performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened;

(f) the performance of any duty in connections with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;

(g) the performance of any duty in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at any school approved for the purposes of section 342 of the Education Act 1996 (approval of non-maintained special schools); and

(h) the carrying out of any other duty approved by the authority, or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees or sub-committees.

REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
ALLOWANCES
Supplementary Recommendations, March 2020

Independent
Remuneration Panel

Ronnie Alexander
Graham Russell
Canon Doctor John Savage
Wendy Stephenson

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL: INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

REPORT ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2019/20 – SUPPLEMENTARY RECOMMENDATIONS

This report complements the comprehensive review of recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) that were accepted by Full Council on 10th September 19 (see Appendix B).

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: Timetable for Changes

That the role of elected Members should be valued and rewarded accordingly, but the Panel acknowledge the difficulty of Councillors voting directly for their own remuneration. In view of this the Panel recommend adopting the principle that all key pay decisions be made prior to an election, for implementation directly after, thereby setting some distance from existing Councillors (whilst recognising some would be re-elected). For the recommendations within this report, the changes would be voted on in March 2020 but implemented following the next election in May 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Deputy Mayors/Cabinet Members

1. That the role of the Deputy Mayor(s) carries additional responsibilities deputising for the Directly Elected Mayor (DEM) that should be remunerated accordingly. The Panel recommend that up to two Deputy Mayors be awarded an allowance of £26,000 from May 2020.
2. That Cabinet Members who are not Deputy Mayors receive an SRA of £24,000 with effect from May 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Scrutiny

1. That the SRA for the Chairs of the Scrutiny Commissions remain at £6,465, with an additional SRA of the same amount payable to the Chair of the Health Sub Committee of the People Scrutiny Commission (or whichever standalone body has responsibility for Health Scrutiny).
2. That a new SRA of £2000 for Chairs of the Task and Finish Groups or Inquiry Days be awarded upon submission of the relevant report of recommendations to Cabinet, from May 2020 onwards. This payment can only be made once for each piece of work and for joint chairing arrangements it should be shared.
3. That the Vice Chair of OSMB remains unremunerated at the current time subject to future review.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Co-optees and Independent Members

1. That the Co-optees' allowance of £577 per annum be unchanged, but that travel expenses be awarded from May 2020, in line with the policy for Members.
2. That, from May 2020, the two Independent Members of the Audit Committee receive payment of £1536 per annum, plus travel expenses as set out in the policy for elected Members.

3. That the Chair of the Values and Ethics Sub Committee of the Audit Committee, who must be one of the aforementioned Independent Members, receive an additional £1024 per annum from May 2020.

Introduction

1. The Panel conducted a major review of Members' Allowances in 2019 but agreed to revisit the following areas before the end of the 19/20 Municipal Year;
 - Scrutiny Chairs, including Task Group Chairs and the Vice Chair of OSMB
 - Deputy Mayors and Cabinet Members
 - Co-optees' Allowances

It was subsequently agreed that allowances for the Independent Members of the Audit Committee and Chair of the Health Sub Committee of the People Scrutiny Commission be included.

2. The initial report of findings, which includes comprehensive details of membership of the Panel; legislative framework; principles of the review; and sources of evidence can be found at Appendix B and is a key background paper for this report.

The Panel Members are:

Ronnie Alexander
Graham Russell
Canon Doctor John Savage
Wendy Stephenson

3. The Panel meetings were chaired by both Wendy Stephenson and Ronnie Alexander, and were supported by Bryony Houlden, Chief Executive of South West Councils as an independent adviser and Lucy Fleming, Head of Democratic Engagement at Bristol City Council. In particular, the Panel acknowledges the timely technical support given at our meetings by Lucy. This made our discussions much easier and enabled us to complete our work within the timetable requested.
4. The recommendations set out in this report will increase the overall spend on Members' allowances by (an additional) £36,611 (excluding Task Group/Inquiry Day Chairs and Co-optees' allowances as these are variable) as detailed in paragraph 17. The Panel continued to be mindful of the financial pressures affecting local government but, as set out in its earlier report, felt that elected representatives must be remunerated reasonably for the duties undertaken.
5. The Panel noted the guidance of the Government that no more than 50% of Councillors in an authority should receive an SRA and the recommendations set out both in this report and the original recommendations at Appendix B fall below these guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Timetable for Changes

That the role of elected Members should be valued and rewarded accordingly, but the Panel acknowledge the difficulty of Councillors voting directly for their own remuneration. In view of this the Panel recommend adopting the principle that all key pay decisions be made prior to an election, for implementation directly after, thereby setting some distance from existing Councillors (whilst recognising some

would be re-elected). For the recommendations within this report, the changes would be voted on in March 2020 but implemented following the next election in May 2020.

Deputy Mayors and Cabinet Members

6. During the first review, the Panel gave much consideration to the role of the Cabinet Members and Deputy Mayors. They ascertained that the Directly Elected Mayor (DEM) could appoint up to nine Cabinet Members and that their portfolios and the level of responsibility delegated to each was set out in the Mayor's Scheme of Delegation¹.
7. The key questions for the Panel were around the level of responsibility carried by Cabinet Members and also whether the Deputy Mayor(s) held sufficient additional responsibilities to warrant additional payment. The Panel had already interviewed a range of Members and the DEM, and reviewed role descriptions for Cabinet Members and Deputy Mayors as part of its earlier review. They supplemented this information with benchmarking from each of the Core Cities, although given the disparity of SRAs the value of this data was limited.
8. It was apparent to the Panel that the Cabinet Members had varied roles and responsibilities. In view of this they had previously suggested the option of recommending variable rates of SRAs according to portfolio size. However, after further careful consideration they were of the view that without appropriate guidelines, protocols and comprehensive and meaningful role descriptions being in place, this system would lack transparency and should be avoided at the current time.
9. The Panel agreed that they had received sufficient evidence to suggest that Cabinet Members played an important role in the leadership of the Council and opted to increase their SRAs to £24,000 per annum.
10. Regarding the Deputy Mayors, the Panel heard that under the current arrangements two of the existing Cabinet Members performed additional deputising functions which included attending events and meetings on behalf of the DEM. The Panel understood that the DEM must appoint one person to act on their behalf (in the case of absence)², but was satisfied that in a large city two may be more appropriate. The Panel agreed that the Deputy Mayors should receive additional remuneration over and above that paid to the other Cabinet Members and agreed that £26,000 per annum was the appropriate sum.
11. When setting the revised SRAs for both Cabinet Members and Deputy Mayors, the Panel used the percentage increases previously applied to the Basic Allowance (paid to all Councillors) and DEM as a point of reference.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Deputy Mayors/Cabinet Members

1. That the role of the Deputy Mayor(s) carries additional responsibilities deputising for the Directly Elected Mayor (DEM) that should be remunerated accordingly.

¹ [Mayor's Executive Scheme of Delegations](#)

² Paragraph 1 of Schedule A1 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as inserted by the Localism Act 2011)

The Panel recommend that up to two Deputy Mayors be awarded an allowance of £26,000 from May 2020.

2. That Cabinet Members who are not Deputy Mayors receive an SRA of £24,000 with effect from May 2020.

Overview and Scrutiny

12. The Panel had previously given much consideration to the history and structure of Scrutiny in Bristol, noting that a range of models had been explored over recent years including both formal Scrutiny Commissions and 'Task and Finish' activities such as Task Groups and Inquiry Days. During its full review from 2019 the Panel received conflicting views and evidence about the roles and responsibilities of each of the aforementioned bodies. It was clear to the Panel that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, which had overall responsibility for delivering the Scrutiny function, should be awarded additional remuneration (from £6465 to £8000 per annum – recognising the Chair's role as functional leader). All other decisions about Scrutiny SRAs were deferred to be considered as part of the second tranche of recommendations before May 2020.
13. Upon reconvening, the Panel considered the evidence that had previously been provided about Scrutiny roles and responsibilities, which included benchmarking data from other local authorities and information gained from a variety of interviews with Members. It also received an update on the current model of Scrutiny, and understood that for 19/20 it included five formal Scrutiny Commissions, three Inquiry Days and one Task Group.
14. The Panel considered the differing roles and responsibilities conducted by the Chairs of each of the aforementioned bodies, concluding that the Chairs of Scrutiny Commissions should remain at the current amount of £6465 per annum. They noted that a Health Sub Committee of the People Scrutiny Commission had recently been established, which had been set up to undertake scrutiny of local health service provision in line with the statutory provisions³. The Panel were of the view that the accountability of the Chair of the Sub Committee was significant and it was therefore appropriate to award an SRA of £6465 in line with the Scrutiny Commissions.
15. Consideration was given to the role of Task Group and Inquiry Days Chairs. The Panel noted that successful task based activities required a good degree of leadership and engagement from the Chairs, particularly in the case of the Budget Task Group. It concluded that a sum of £2,000 should be awarded once the report of outcomes from the Task Group or Inquiry Day had been reported to Cabinet.
16. The Panel discussed the role of the Vice Chair of OSMB but did not have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the position holder undertook additional duties that warranted an allowance at the current time.
17. In concluding their findings around Scrutiny, the Panel noted that the structure (i.e. the balance between Scrutiny Commissions and Task Group activities) varied from year to year, and agreed that should there be a significant shift in the arrangements for 20/21 or beyond, a further review of allowances would be undertaken.

³ Section 7 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.

RECOMMENDATION 3

1. That the SRA for the Chairs of the Scrutiny Commissions remain at £6,465, with an additional SRA of the same amount payable to the Chair of the Health Sub Committee of the People Scrutiny Commission (or whichever standalone body had responsibility for Health Scrutiny).
2. That a new SRA of £2000 for Chairs of the Task and Finish Groups or Inquiry Days be awarded upon submission of the relevant report of recommendations to Cabinet, from May 2020 onwards. This payment can only be made once for each piece of work and for joint chairing arrangements it should be shared.
3. That the Vice Chair of OSMB remains unremunerated at the current time subject to future review.

Co-optees

18. The Panel wished to gain a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Co-optees and understood that there were two statutory positions relating to education but both were vacant despite attempts to fill them. There was one co-option (non-voting) made to a Scrutiny Commission, which required the post holder to attend around four meetings a year. In view of this the Panel concluded there were no compelling reasons to change the current remuneration of £577 per annum for Co-optees.

Independent Members of the Audit Committee

19. Regarding the Independent Members of the Audit Committee, the Panel was advised that there were two positions in place and appointments had been made following a recruitment exercise to identify suitable candidates based on a particular range of skills and experience. The Independent Members had to attend around six meetings a year and had voting rights regarding decisions that were made. In view of this, the Panel felt that the Independent Members' remuneration should be increased to better reflect the importance of the role. The Panel considered the amounts paid for similar posts elsewhere, taking particular note of the 'day rate' paid to Independent Members sitting on the West of England Combined Authority, and concluded that £1536 per annum should be awarded. They also agreed that travel expenses should be refunded, in line with the current policy for Members.
20. The Panel went on to consider the requirement for one of the Independent Members of the Audit Committee to also Chair the Values and Ethics Sub Committee, noting this required attendance at four meetings a year. In view of these additional responsibilities a further payment of £1024 per annum (over and above the £1,536 referred to above) would be payable to that post holder.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

1. That the Co-optees' allowance of £577 per annum be unchanged, but that travel expenses be awarded from May 2020, in line with the policy for Members
2. That, from May 2020, the two Independent Members of the Audit Committee receive payment of £1536 per annum, plus travel expenses as set out in the policy for elected Members.

3. That the Chair of the Values and Ethics Sub Committee of the Audit Committee, who must be one of the aforementioned Independent Members, receive an additional £1024 per annum from May 2020.

Impact of Recommendations

21. The following table shows how the present scheme compares to the recommendations to be implemented from May 2020. It should be read in conjunction with the Panel's first set of recommendations, which can be found in Appendix B;

Present Scheme			Proposed Scheme			
Role	SRA/ Allowance - £	Collective Total - £	Role	SRA - £	Collective Total - £	Individual Total inc. Basic Allowance (of £13,946) - £
Deputy Mayors x2 and Cabinet Members x 7	21,550	193,950	Deputy Mayors x 2	26,000 (x2)	52,000	Deputy Mayors - 39,946
			Cabinet Members x 7	24,000 (x7)	168,000	Cabinet Members – 37,946
Chairs of Scrutiny x 4*	6,465	25,860	Chairs of Scrutiny Commissions x 4	6,465	25,860	20,411
			Chair of the Health Sub Committee of the People Scrutiny Commission	6,465	6,465	20,411
			Task Group/Inquiry Day Chairs	2000	Variable	£15,946
Co-optees and Independent Members	577 per annum	Variable	Co-optees - 577 per annum, plus travel expenses	577	Variable	Not applicable
			Independent Members of the Audit Committee - 1,536, plus travel expenses	1536	3072	Not applicable
			Chair of the Values and Ethics Sub Committee			

			(must be an Independent Member of the Audit Committee)	1024	1024	Not applicable
TOTALS		219,810 Excluding Co-optees			256,421 Excluding Co-optees and Task Group/ Inquiry Day Chairs	

**Note – the SRA for the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has previously been set at £8,000 per annum.*

22. With this report the Panel has concluded its findings for the 19/20 Municipal Year. However, it is mindful that the Council has elections in May 2020 and will reconvene shortly after to review the impact of its recommendations and other relevant matters should that be appropriate.

Appendix A – Advisory Observations

Appendix B – Report from the Independent Remuneration Panel, accepted by Full Council on 19th September 19.

Advisory Observation

The Panel has made all of its recommendations following a review of the available evidence. This has included consideration of practice from other comparable Local Authorities, interviews, a survey and examination of other documentary evidence such as role descriptions. Regarding the last point, the Panel recommends that the Council consider developing more comprehensive guidance setting out the expectations of Members serving in all key roles.

MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2020

Introduction

1. Members' and co-optees' allowances are governed by legislation -*The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003*. This can be accessed on the City Council's web site.
2. Local authorities can only adopt Allowance Schemes after considering recommendations made by an independent panel. This current scheme will take effect from 8 November 2020, after consideration of the reports of the Independent Remuneration Panels on 10th September 2019 and 17th March 2020. Copies of all the Panel's reports (and the decisions taken by the Full Council) can be accessed on the Council's website at www.bristol.gov.uk.
3. The previous Scheme was adopted by the Full Council in May 2014.
4. The Allowances Scheme covers:
 - basic allowance (paid to all Councillors);
 - special responsibility allowances (paid to some councillors);
 - travel allowances and travel policy;
 - dependant carers allowances;
 - pensions (for Councillors);
 - co-optees allowances.
5. The principles (as appropriate) of the officers [Expenses, Benefits and Travel Policy](#) apply to councillors and co-optees.
6. In accordance with the regulations, at the end of a financial year, details of all allowances paid and claimed (travel and dependant carers) by Councillors and co-optees, for the preceding year, will be published at www.bristol.gov.uk.

Basic Allowance

7. The Basic Allowance is the allowance that every Councillor in Bristol is entitled to. It is intended to realistically remunerate Councillors for time spent on Council business including attending meetings/briefings and conducting ward work i.e. all duties the public would expect a Councillor to carry out. The Basic Allowance also covers incidental costs (such as the use of their homes) and all subsistence when travelling within the UK.

Co-Optees' and Independent Member's Allowance

8. An allowance is payable to persons appointed to serve as co-optees, including statutory appointments and Independent Members of the Audit Committee (one of whom also chairs the Values and Ethics Sub Committee). The allowance recognises the time

devoted by such persons, for example, in preparing for and attending/chairing meetings they are appointed to.

Special Responsibility Allowances

9. These are discretionary payments intended to recognise the responsibility, accountability, time and effort required from those Members of the Council who perform duties significantly over and above what might reasonably be expected of them through the Basic Allowance.

Payment of Allowances

10. All allowances will be paid automatically on the last working day of each month, apart from payments for attendance at Appeal Committees and Licensing Sub Committee hearings, which will be paid as set out in the schedule at Appendix B.
11. Allowances are treated as income and therefore subject to any tax, National Insurance deductions and/or benefits relative to earnings. Detailed information regarding taxation etc. can be found in the officers [Expenses, Benefits and Travel Policy](#).
12. A Councillor or co-optee may, by notice in writing to the Monitoring Officer, forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance.
13. Co-optees will be paid (pro-rata) following the return of the correct paperwork. Details of payments to Councillors (including those with a Special Responsibility Allowance) can be found in the schedule at Appendix B.
14. Claims for expenses (over and above the basic and special responsibility allowance) must be made by completing the *Councillor Expenses Claim Form*. Copies of the forms can be obtained from Democratic Services or the Members Support Officer.

Travelling Allowances and Travel Policy

15. Travelling allowances are payable for approved duties only (see Appendix D) both within the city and outside of Bristol according to the rates set out in Appendix A. A car parking permit for College Street car park will be issued or alternatively Members can be reimbursed for a bus pass. All other travel arrangements are subject to the [Expenses, Benefits and Travel Policy](#).

Reasonable Adjustments - Use of Taxis within Bristol

16. Councillors / co-optees are entitled to use taxis for the purposes of carrying out their approved duties where this has been agreed as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. Requests for approval should be made to the Head of Democratic Engagement.

International travel policy

17. The International Travel Policy for Members can be found at Appendix E.

Member Development - Conferences

18. Training courses and conferences can be booked through the Member Development Officer.

Subsistence (Food and Drink)

19. In line with Bristol City Council's policy for officers, no subsistence expenses will be paid for trips within the UK.

Out of pocket expenses

20. In line with Bristol City Council's policy for officers, claims for the cost of reasonable out of pocket expenses can be made when travelling outside of Bristol on Council business and subject to the Monitoring Officer's approval. Examples of expenses that will be reimbursed include public transport, parking fees (but not fines) and taxi fares. For travel within the United Kingdom, Councillors may not claim for food and drink.

Dependant Carers' Allowance

21. Any Councillor or co-optee who is responsible for the care of any dependant person¹ is eligible to be paid an additional allowance per dependant, per hour in respect of the performance of any approved duty (see Appendix D). The Dependant Carer's Allowance is also payable for travel time, not exceeding 1 hour before and 1 hour after, the performance of the approved duty. The payment is not payable to a member of the claimant's household and payment of this allowance will be subject to provision of receipts to evidence payments made. The maximum rates of such allowances are set out in Appendix A and are subject to the Member observing the protocol on the claims procedure, eligibility criteria etc. as set out in Appendix C.

Pensions

22. Councillors must make their own pension provision.

Income Tax

23. Income Tax is payable on all allowances (basic, special responsibility, co-optees, attendance and carers). There is no tax liability on mileage rates as rates are paid in accordance with Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs Limits.

24. Councillors are reminded to keep their own records of expenses claims and reimbursements for income tax purposes.

¹ A dependant could be a spouse, partner, child, grandchild, parent, or someone who depends on you for care.

25. Councillors are advised to seek their own independent tax and financial advice as necessary.

National Insurance

26. National Insurance contributions are payable on all allowances (basic, special responsibility, co-optees, attendance and carers). As with employees, a 12% Contribution is paid on all earnings over £792 per month and 2% for earnings over £4167 per month. Employees over State Pension Age do not pay National Insurance.
27. There is an annual maximum for contribution liability for people with more than one job and, in some instances, Members in this position may be entitled to a refund of contributions; alternatively they may apply to defer payment of contributions in their capacity as a Councillor. See Guidance Notes for the Deferment of National Insurance below.
28. Guidance Notes for the Deferment of National Insurance can be found at the link below:

[CA72A Notes - Guidance notes for form CA72A for 6 April 2019 to 5 April 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/434822/ca72a-notes-guidance-notes-for-form-ca72a-for-6-april-2019-to-5-april-2020.pdf)

Benefits

29. The contributions paid by Members count towards the full range of contributory benefits.

ICT Equipment and Telephony

30. Members will be provided with necessary ICT equipment and telephony to enable them to fulfil their duties. Whilst Members are required to work remotely, this may include the provision of additional devices. A Broadband allowance of £15 per month can be paid to each Member.
31. International calls on Council business can only be made by exception.

Future Changes

The basic councillors, special responsibility and co-optees allowances will be automatically increased in line with any officer pay increases.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Rates of Pay
- Appendix B: Special responsibility Allowances
- Appendix C: Dependant Carers Allowances Scheme
- Appendix D: Approved Duties
- Appendix E: International Travel Policy for Members

APPENDIX A: Rates of Pay – 2021-2022

The maximum rates that can be reimbursed are currently as follows:

Basic Councillor's Allowance

(£14,580 per annum) £ 1,215 per month

Co-optee's Allowance:

(£626 per annum) £52.17 per month

Travelling Allowances

Outside of Bristol and under 120 miles

Car 45 pence per mile

Bicycle 20 pence per mile

Refer to the [Expenses, Benefits and Travel Policy](#) for travel within Bristol or in excess of 120 miles

Dependant Carers' Allowance

Paid as per the Living Wage Foundation on submitted receipts.

The basic and Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) rates will increase on 1 April in line with officer pay increases where applicable.

APPENDIX B: Schedule of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) 2021 - 2022

All Councillors are entitled to the basic allowance of **£14,580**

SRAs are paid over and above the basic allowance.

The co-optees allowance is **£626 per annum** paid pro-rata from the date of their appointment, with the exception of the Independent Members of the Audit Committee who receive **£1606 per annum** plus travel expenses

SRA £ (in addition to the basic)	SRA RECIPIENT	No of SRAs
68502	Elected Mayor	1
27183	Deputy Mayors	2
25092	Cabinet Members	7
22981	Lord Mayor	1
13788	Political Group Leaders	4
8364	Group Whips	4
	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Chair	1
6895	Deputy Lord Mayor	1
	Chairs of Scrutiny Commissions: Communities Growth and Regeneration People Resources Health Sub Committee of the People Scrutiny Commission	5
	Chairs of Regulatory Committees: Development Control A Development Control B Public Safety and Protection	3
	Audit Committee Chair	1
	Human Resources Committee Chair	1
	Total SRAs payable	31

Additional payments:

- (i) Chairs of Scrutiny Task Groups - £2000 upon submission of the Group's report of recommendations to Cabinet
- (ii) Licensing - £150 for 2 sessions up to £550 for a maximum of 10 sessions
- (iii) Appeals - £150 for 2 sessions up to £550 for a maximum of 10 sessions

Appendix C : Dependant Carers' Allowance Scheme

A claim can be made:

(a) When a carer has been engaged to enable a Councillor to carry out an approved duty;

(i) where charges are levied on an hourly basis, Members may claim actual and necessary costs incurred for the period of the approved duty (including time travelling, time taken by a Member to 'drop-off' or 'pick-up' a dependant, or by a carer engaged by a member to look after a dependant in the member's home – this would normally not exceed 1 hour before and 1 hour after) for each dependant;

or

(ii) where charges are levied by a provider for a fixed period or session, Members may claim the cost of any such fixed period/session or periods/sessions incurred for the period of the approved duty (including time travelling time taken by a Member to 'drop-off' or 'pick-up' a dependant) for each dependant;

(b) A carer will be any responsible adult who does not normally live with the member as part of his/her family;

(c) An allowance will be payable if the dependant being cared for:

(i) is a child under the age of 14; or

(ii) is an elderly person; or

(iii) has a recognised physical or mental disability who normally lives with the Member as part of that Member's family and should not be left unsupervised.

APPENDIX D: Approved Duties

Claims can be made for these allowances in respect of the following (extract from the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003):

- (a) the attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or sub- committee of the authority, or of any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body;
- (b) the attendance at any other meeting, the holding of which is authorised by the authority, or a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and at least one other local authority within the meaning of section 270(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee, provided that:
 - (i) where the authority is divided into two or more political groups it is a meeting to which members of at least two groups have been invited;
 - or
 - (ii) if the authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two members of the authority have been invited;
- (c) the attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the authority is a member;
- (d) the attendance at a meeting of the executive or a meeting of any of its committees, where the authority is operating executive arrangements;
- (e) the performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened;
- (f) the performance of any duty in connections with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
- (g) the performance of any duty in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at any school approved for the purposes of section 342 of the Education Act 1996 (approval of non- maintained special schools); and
- (h) the carrying out of any other duty approved by the authority , or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees or sub-committees.