

REVIEW OF MEMBERS'
ALLOWANCES

Supplementary Recommendations, May 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 Cabinet Members x 7	26,000 (x2) 24,000 (x7)	52,000 168,000	Deputy Mayors - 39,946 Cabinet Members – 37,946
Chairs of Scrutiny x 4*	6,465	25,860	Chairs of Scrutiny Commissions x 4 Chair of the Health Sub Committee of the People Scrutiny Commission Task Group/Inquiry Day Chairs	6,465 6,465 2000	25,860 6,465 Variable	20,411 20,411 £15,946
Co-optees and Independent Members	577 per annum	Variable	Co-optees - 577 per annum, plus travel expenses Independent Members of the Audit Committee - 1,536, plus travel expenses Chair of the Values and Ethics Sub Committee	577 1536	Variable 3072	Not applicable Not applicable

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

*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.