

# NOTICE OF MEETING

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, 3rd February, 2026, 7.00 pm - George Meehan House, 294 High Road, N22 8JZ (watch the [live meeting](#) or watch the recording [here](#))**

**Councillors:** Barbara Blake, Erdal Dogan, Ibrahim Ali (Chair), Scott Emery and Simmons-Safo

**Quorum:** 3

### 1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

Please note this meeting may be filmed or recorded by the Council for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site or by anyone attending the meeting using any communication method. Members of the public participating in the meeting (e.g. making deputations, asking questions, making oral protests) should be aware that they are likely to be filmed, recorded or reported on. By entering the 'meeting room', you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings.

The Chair of the meeting has the discretion to terminate or suspend filming or recording, if in his or her opinion continuation of the filming, recording or reporting would disrupt or prejudice the proceedings, infringe the rights of any individual, or may lead to the breach of a legal obligation by the Council.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

### 3. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair will consider the admission of any late items of Urgent Business. (Late items will be considered under the agenda item where they appear. New items will be dealt with under item 9 below and new urgent exempt items under item 13).

### 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a prejudicial interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered:

(i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, and

(ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must withdraw from the meeting room.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Register of Members' Interests or the subject of a pending notification must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal interests and prejudicial interests are defined at Paragraphs 5-7 and Appendix A of the Members' Code of Conduct.

**5. MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 4)**

To confirm and sign the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 13 November 2025.

**6. NO FURTHER ACTION CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS - MONITORING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT (PAGES 5 - 8)**

Report of the Monitoring Officer.

**7. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME FOR 2026-2027 (PAGES 9 - 48)**

Report of the Monitoring Officer.

**8. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (PAGES 49 - 50)**

This paper seeks to identify topics that will come to the attention of the Standards Committee and seeks members' input.

**9. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

As per item 3

**10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To note the dates of future meetings:

9 March 2026

**11. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Items 12-13 are likely to be subject to a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as they contain exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985); paras 1 & 2; namely, information relating to any individual and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

**12. EXEMPT: NO FURTHER ACTION CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS - MONITORING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT (PAGES 51 - 54)**

Relating to item 8

**13. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS**

As per item 3

Richard Plummer, Committees Manager  
Tel – 020 8489 4319  
Email: richard.plummer@haringey.gov.uk

Fiona Alderman  
Director of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)  
George Meehan House, 294 High Road, Wood Green, N22 8JZ

Monday, 26 January 2026

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 13TH NOVEMBER, 2025, 7.00 - 7.26 PM****PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Barbara Blake, Erdal Dogan, Ibrahim Ali (Chair), Scott Emery and Simmons-Safo**

**60. FILMING AT MEETINGS****RESOLVED:**

The filming at meetings notice was noted

**61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

**62. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

**63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**64. MINUTES**

The Committee discussed the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on the 30 June 2025 as a correct record.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on the 30 June 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

**65. CHANGES TO THE PLANNING PROTOCOL**

The Director of Planning & Building Standard introduced the report.

It was explained that the proposed changes to the Planning Protocol were to ensure good practice was followed when Members determine planning applications, that processes would be transparent and would assist resident involvement in those determinations. It was noted that general changes to the Planning Protocol were outlined, which included a removal of duplications, clarified the Committee running order, stressed that decisions were not to be made on a party political basis, rename

the Development Management Forum to the Planning Forum for clarity, and other administrative changes.

Members noted that they welcomed the proposed changes outlined in the report, which would support the planning process in the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee:

1. Considered the proposed changes to the Planning Protocol shown in track changes in Appendix 2 and recommended adoption of those changes by Full Council on 24 November 2025.

**66. CHANGES TO THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS.**

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources (S151) introduced the report.

It was explained that the Financial Regulations within the Council's Constitution were overdue for review, noting that the changes proposed would bring additional financial rigour.

It was explained that the Council would look to undertake extensive engagement with budget holders to ensure that they align with the proposed new finance regulations and requirements within the Constitution.

It was stressed that there was a requirement within the proposals to strengthen the accountability for budget managers, including a requirement for budget holders to remain within budget and for Corporate Directors to notify the Section 151 Officer of all underspends, over-recovery of income or windfall benefits arising within revenue and capital budgets.

It was noted there were also some administrative changes which were included within the report.

Members welcomed the additional financial controls that were contained within the report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Standards Committee:

1. Endorsed the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations set out at Appendix 1 to Full Council in November 2025.

**67. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS**

The Chief Procurement Officer introduced the report.

It was explained that the proposed amendments to the Contract Standing Orders (CSO's) were intended to address some minor omissions following the revised CSO's introduced in March 2025 and some audit recommendations.

It was noted that the prosed changes would allow Directors to be able to vary or extend a contract, where the aggregated value of the award, variation or extension is less than £500,000. This would be consistent with Delegated powers afforded to Directors elsewhere in the Constitution.

It was also noted that the provisions would tighten rules around contract Letters of Intent and that the Chief Procurement Officer is advised of all contract novation's.

Members welcomed the changes outlined in the report

**RESOLVED:**

That the Standards Committee:

1. Recommended that the Council adopt the proposed revised Part Four of the Constitution, Section J Contract Standing Orders.
2. The Standards Committee noted and recommend that Council approve the following key amendments:
  - a. Directors may approve extensions and variations of contracts with an aggregated value of less than £500,000;
  - b. Letters of Intent would be restricted to 50% of the contract value, where the contract value is £100,000 or less.
  - c. Directors would record decisions to novate contracts and notify the Chief Procurement Officer of such decisions.

**68. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

*Cllr Simmons-Safo joined the meeting at 7.12pm*

It was outlined by officers that that Central Government had published its response to Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England consultation. It was explained that this could have future implications on Standards Committees, that the Committee agreed to receive a future report.

It was suggested that the Committee undertake a review of the Member-Officer Protocol to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Committee noted the work programme and agreed to undertake a future review of the Member-Officer Protocol and the Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England consultation.

**69. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

**70. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:**

The dates of future meetings were noted.

**71. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no exempt items.

**72. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

CHAIR: Councillor Ibrahim Ali

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....

**Report for:** Standards Committee, 3rd February 2026

**Title:** No Further Action Code of Conduct Complaints - Monitoring Officer Annual Report

**Report authorised by:** Fiona Alderman – Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer

**Lead Officer:** Haydee Nunes De Souza – Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

**Report for Key/**

**Non Key Decision:** Non key

#### **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

1.1 This is an annual report on the code of conduct complaints considered by the Monitoring Officer and determined not to merit any further action.

#### **Cabinet Member Introduction**

N/A

#### **2. Recommendations**

2.1. The Committee is asked to note the report

#### **3. Reasons for decision**

3.1 The Protocol for Complaints Against Members requires the Monitoring Officer to report annually to the Standards Committee on complaints dealt with by the Monitoring Officer and determined not to merit any further action.

#### **4. Alternative options considered**

4.1. There are no alternative options to be considered.

#### **5. Background information**

5.1 The Protocol for Complaints Against Members requires the Monitoring Officer to review every allegation of breach of the code of conduct received and to decide on whether it merits reference to the Assessment Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee. The Monitoring Officer must consult with the Independent Person before making her decision. The Protocol (which was updated following

amendments by full council in November 2025) sets out the criteria by which the Monitoring Officer may make the decision, and which are as follows:

5.3 ...The Monitoring Officer may determine that an allegation does not merit any further action, where:

- (a) The allegation does not demonstrate a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct; for example it relates to a member's private life to which the Code does not apply or it is about dissatisfaction with a Council decision or service, or
- (b) It is about someone who is no longer a member or a co-opted member of the Council, or
- (c) There is insufficient evidence upon which to investigate and/or the person making the allegation has failed to co-operate with the Monitoring Officer to specify the allegation sufficiently, or
- (d) The same or a similar allegation has been investigated and determined, or
- (e) It is an anonymous allegation which does not include sufficient documentary evidence to indicate a significant breach of the Member's Code of Conduct, or
- (f) The Monitoring Officer facilitates an informal resolution without the need for a formal investigation. This may involve the member accepting that his/her conduct was unacceptable and offering an apology or other remedial action by the Council. If the Monitoring Officer considers an offer of informal resolution is reasonable but the person making the allegation is not willing to accept it, the allegation will be referred to the Standards Committee for determination, or
- (g) the complaint is considered to be frivolous or vexatious, or
- (h) The matters to which the allegation refers took place longer than three months before the date of receipt of the allegation and there are no exceptional circumstances which merit the investigation of matters outside that timescale, nor is it otherwise appropriate to investigate the allegation.
  - (i) If the complaint is or appears to be malicious, politically motivated, tit-for-tat or otherwise submitted with an improper motive and the complaint is not considered to disclose sufficiently serious potential breaches of the Code to merit further consideration; or
  - (j) If the member against whom the allegation has been made has remedied or made reasonable endeavours to remedy the matter and the complaint does not disclose sufficiently serious potential breaches of the Code to merit further consideration. (j) If the member against whom the allegation has been made has remedied or made reasonable endeavours to remedy the matter and the

complaint does not disclose sufficiently serious potential breaches of the Code to merit further consideration.

(k) The matters to which the allegation refers took place longer than three months before the date of receipt of the allegation and there are no exceptional circumstances which merit the investigation of matters outside that timescale, nor is it otherwise appropriate to investigate the allegation.

5.2 In the period 1 May 2024 –1 October 2025, the Monitoring Officer determined that 6 complaints of alleged breach of the code of conduct by councillors did not merit any further action. The rational for the Monitoring Officer decisions were mostly that the conduct complained about did not demonstrate a breach of the code. The Independent Person was consulted in making these decisions and agreed with the Monitoring Officer's conclusion. A table of the complaints is attached in the Exempt Report.

## **6. Contribution to strategic outcomes**

6.1. The report supports the governance of the Council and its decision-making, thereby assisting the Council to meet its strategic outcomes.

## **7. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Head of Legal and Governance , Equalities)**

### **Finance**

7.1. None

### **Procurement**

7.2. None.

### **Legal**

7.3. By virtue of section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members and to adopt a Code of Conduct. The Council's Constitution includes the Code of Conduct and the Protocol for Complaints Against Members. The annual report is in keeping with the requirements of the Protocol and serves to inform the Committee of the exercise of the Monitoring Officer's discretion in managing the members complaint process.

### **Equality**

7.4. None

**8. Use of Appendices**

8.1. None

**9. Background information Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

**Report for:** Standards Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2026

**Title:** Members Allowances Scheme for 2026-2027

**Report authorised by :** Director of Legal and Governance Fiona Alderman

**Lead Officer:** Ayshe Simsek - Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

**Report for Key/Non-Key Decision:** Non key decision

**1. Describe the issue under consideration.**

1.1 Each year before 31<sup>st</sup> March, full Council is required by the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to adopt a Members Allowances Scheme for the following financial year.

**2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

N/A

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 To consider the current Member's Allowance Scheme and key findings of the remuneration of Councillors in London 2023 attached at Appendix 1 and put forward any comments on recommended changes for consideration at the March meeting of Standards Committee.

**4. Reasons for decision**

4.1 The Council has a legal duty to approve a Members Allowances Scheme before the end of each year to cover the following year. The Council can amend a scheme any time during the year but can only revoke a scheme with effect from the beginning of the year. The scheme must make provision for basic allowances and, if they are to be paid, special responsibility, dependents' carers, travelling and subsistence and co-optees allowances.

**5. Alternative options considered.**

5.1 No alternative options were considered as there is a duty to adopt a members' allowance scheme annually.

## 6. Background information

- 6.1 This report asks Standards Committee to consider the scheme proposed for 2026/27 municipal year and recommend the final scheme for approval by full Council on the 16 of March 2026, in accordance with Article 14.03 of the Council's Constitution.
- 6.2 Before it can adopt a Members Allowances Scheme the Council has a duty to consider the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the payment of Members Allowances. As of the 20 of January 2026, there had been no further update to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and the 2023 report continues to be appended for consideration.
- 6.3 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 allow London Boroughs to use an Independent Remuneration Panel set up for the purpose of making recommendations across London. London Councils set up a panel for this purpose in 2001, and its most recent report was published on 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 following a detailed review, with recommendations on the remuneration of Councillors in London.
- 6.4 The 2023 report was considered by the Standards Committee most recently in January 2025 and they noted that it highlighted the increasing challenges and complex role of councillors and how in London this is becoming more seismic with inclusion of national and international changes are directly impacting communities. The report reiterated the wide-ranging responsibilities of local councillors, the time commitment needed and ensuring that the role remained attractive to local residents that have skills, knowledge of the communities and who also reflected the demographics of the borough. The report made some strong recommendations for changes to the basic allowance of councillors, and to the SRA for the Leader and Mayors of Councils. The report recommendations were supported by research, which has been compiled from canvassing members and holding focus groups with the public to provide Councils with some assurance that the recommendations have been tested and to limit the anxiety around reputational risk.
- 6.5 The report argued strongly that the salaries for councillors were considerably lower than those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and workers in London. The Panel recommended that the basic allowance should be **£15,960** and the approach and calculations are listed at paragraph 7.9 of the attached report. The Panel had included comments from their research and focus groups to help to provide assurance on how this may not be negatively perceived. They noted that Member allowances make up a small percentage of around 0.4- 0.5% of the Council's general fund net budget.
- 6.6 With regards to Leader, Cabinet Members the report details how these are in reality full time positions. There is further information in section 9 of the attached report on the Leader SRA and the responsibility of the role in comparison to other public roles and other roles with financial responsibilities.

6.7 The report addressed the issue of councillor retention and reflected on the removal of the right of councillors to access the local government pension scheme which has had an impact on recruitment of councillors. The rationale for this decision in 2014 was not clear. England was at odds with the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland where councillors still access the local government pension scheme.

6.8 Although the IRP 2023 makes recommendations, it is for each individual Council to decide the level of remuneration and for which roles. As a reminder in March 2025, the Standards Committee considered the 2023 report and did not put forward recommended changes to the SRA's.

6.9 The independent review of Members Allowance commissioned by the Standards Committee in 2019/20 indicated that the Members Basic Allowance percentage increase be index linked to the local government officer pay percentage increase, capped at 2% to be reduced if a lesser percentage is agreed. In March 2025, there had been a local government officer pay percentage increase award and the Standards Committee noted that neighbouring boroughs had all implemented a 2.5% increase in their basic allowance. The Standards Committee noted that by not making incremental increases to the basic allowance could mean larger increases in the future. They noted that the allowance was not a salary payment and the need to consider the support the allowance provides with the day-to-day activities of a ward Councillor and with attending evening meetings. The proposed basic allowance of £11,994 would still be well below the recommended basic allowance of £15, 960. Following the Standards Committee Report, Full Council in March 2025 continued to approve the 2.5% increase in the Basic Allowance.

6.10 In November 2025, there was a local government pay award of an increase of 3.2% for local government officers. If members were minded increasing their basic allowance by 2% the cost would be as follows:

$\text{£11,994/100} \times 2 = \text{£239.88}$  (rounded to £240.00) with new basic Allowance as £12,234.00.

£240x57=£13,680 additional budget cost.

6.11 Neighbouring Boroughs have also been contacted to obtain an understanding on current intentions for their Member Allowance Scheme to help inform the Committee.

## 7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

7.1 Members of the Council are directly responsible for the setting and oversight of all strategic priorities.

**8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

**8.1 Finance**

The cost of the scheme unchanged is managed within the budget envelope for Democratic services. The £13,680 cost of increasing the basic allowance is a budget pressure that, in the absence of specific funding in the MTFS, would similarly need to be met from within the wider Service budget.

**8.2 Director of Legal and Governance**

The proposed Members' Allowance Scheme complies with the relevant provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003; the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 2000.

In addition, there are separate provisions, namely sections 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the payment of allowances to the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor.

**8.3 Equality**

The decision to approve allowances to members does not have a direct impact on the equality duty of the council, other than that the scheme includes provision for payment for parent/carers allowances to facilitate the attendance of parents and carers at meetings and in relation to carrying out the general responsibilities of councillors.

**9. Use of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Members Allowances Scheme 2025/26

Appendix 2: The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2023– report of the Independent Panel

**10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

Haringey Review of Member Allowances 2019/20

## **Part 6**

# **Members' Allowances Scheme**

### **1. SCHEME FOR THE PAYMENT OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

1.01 Made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and in force for the municipal year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026).

### **2. BASIC ALLOWANCE**

2.01 Each Councillor will be entitled to receive the sum of £11,994 by way of Basic Allowance.

2.02 If a Councillor does not serve as such for the whole 12-month period or becomes suspended or partially suspended, he/she will only be entitled to receive pro-rata payment for the period(s) during which he/she actually was a serving Councillor. This principle also applies to education representatives on scrutiny bodies and employee and employer representatives on the Combined Pensions Committee and Board (co-optees).

### **3. INCLUDED EXPENSES**

3.01 Travel Expenses.

The Basic Allowance includes all travel within the M25. Councillors are not entitled to any form of concession or special permit as Councillors for parking in the Borough.

### **4. MAYORAL ALLOWANCES**

4.01 The additional allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are:

- (a) The Mayor is entitled to an additional allowance of £16,965.
- (b) The Deputy Mayor is entitled to an additional allowance of £4,238.

### **5. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES**

5.01 For the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, Haringey Council will allocate Special Responsibility Allowances in six bands, to Councillors who take on certain additional roles, in accordance with Table A below. If a Councillor does not serve as such for the whole period or becomes suspended or partially suspended, he/she will only be entitled to receive pro-rata payment for the period(s) during which he/she actually was a serving Councillor and had the special responsibilities.

**Table A**

Band	Position	Special Allowance	Total Allowance (including Basic Allowance)
Band 4	•Leader	£33,926	£45, 920
Band 3B	9 or fewer x Cabinet Members	£25,443	£37,437
Band 3A	• Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£23,134	£35,128
Band 2B	•Chief Whip •Chair of Strategic Planning and Planning Sub Committee •Chair of Alexandra Palace and Park Board •Leader of the Principal Opposition	£16, 965	£28,959
Band 2A	4 x Councillors serving on Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£15, 421	£27,415
Band 1B	•Chair of Combined Pensions Committee and Board •Chair of General Purposes Committee •Chair of Standards Committee • Chair of Audit Committee •Chair of Licensing Committee and Licensing Sub Committee • Deputy Leader of the Principal Opposition	£8, 482	£20,476

	• Chief Whip of the Principal Opposition		

*(To note that the Chair of General Purposes Committee is also and Vice Chair of Appointments Panel and the Vice Chair of Disciplinary, Grievance and Dismissal Panel)*

## 6. MULTIPLE RESPONSIBILITIES

6.01 Where a Councillor holds more than one post of special responsibility, he/she may only receive one Special Responsibility Allowance. Where a Councillor holds more than one post of special responsibility and the posts have Special Responsibility Allowances of different monetary values, the Councillor would receive the higher one. For the purposes of this paragraph, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor count as posts of special responsibility.

## 7. CO-OPTEES' ALLOWANCES

7.01 Each education representative on scrutiny bodies, and each employee and employer representative on the Combined Pensions Committee and Board, is entitled to an allowance of £154 per meeting attended, to a maximum of £616. No allowances are payable to others who are not elected Councillors.

## 8. BABYSITTING AND DEPENDANTS ALLOWANCE

8.01 Councillors and non-elected members can claim this allowance based on the following:

(a) That reimbursement be made at the London Living Wage. The period of payment should include the time of the meeting, together with reasonable

travelling time of the member, plus any necessary travelling expenses of the carer to and from their home.

(b) Children over the age of 16 must not be claimed for, unless suffering from an illness or disability making constant care essential.

## **9. TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE**

9.01 Councillors can claim this allowance for attending approved meetings, training and conferences etc. only to the extent that it involves travel outside the M25. Claims must be based on the following:

(a) The mileage rate for travel by private car is 34.6 pence per mile. An extra 3 pence per mile is payable for each passenger for whom a travelling allowance would otherwise be payable. The cost of tolls, ferries and parking charges can be claimed.

(b) The mileage rate for travel by solo motor cycle is :

Not exceeding	150 cc	8.5 pence per mile
Over	150 cc but not over 500 cc	12.3 pence per mile
Over	500 cc	16.5 pence per mile

(c) On public transport only the ordinary or cheaper fare can be claimed where more than one class is available.

(d) The cost of a taxi, including a reasonable tip, can be claimed only in case of urgency or where public transport is not practicable or reasonably available.

(e) The maximum rates for subsistence allowance on approved duties are as follows:

For an absence of more than 4 hours before 11.00 £4.92

For an absence of more than 4 hours including lunchtime between 12.00 and 14.00 £6.77

For an absence of more than 4 hours including the period 15.00 to 18.00 £2.67

For an absence of more than 4 hours ending after 19.00 £8.38

## **10. CLAIMS AND PAYMENTS**

10.01 Where a Councillor is also a Councillor of another authority, that Councillor may not receive allowances from more than one authority in respect of the same duties.

10.02 The Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances will be paid in equal monthly instalments.

10.03 The Co-optees' Allowance must be claimed by, and will be paid at, the end of the municipal year, subject to paragraphs 2.02 above and 10.05 below.

10.04 All claims for Travelling and Subsistence Allowance and Babysitting and Dependents Allowance must be made within two months of the relevant meeting or the costs being incurred by the Councillor or non-elected member, subject to paragraph 10.05 below.

10.05 If any Allowance under paragraphs 10.03 or 10.04 is not claimed within the prescribed time limit, the Democratic Services Manager shall have a discretion to make the payment nonetheless.

10.06 Any Councillor or non-elected member may elect to forego his/her entitlement to all or part of any allowance by giving written notice at any time to the Democratic Services Manager.

## **11 MATERNITY, ADOPTION, SHARED PARENTAL, PATERNITY AND SICKNESS PAY**

11.01 Subject to this paragraph 11, all Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full in the case of maternity, adoption, shared parental, paternity and sickness leave, as long as they remain a Councillor. This includes Members becoming parents through surrogacy arrangements.

11.02 Members entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full in the case of maternity, adoption, shared parental, paternity and sickness leave for a six month period. Extension of this period of leave will require prior 2 months' written notice to be given to the Political Leader of the respective political group. If the extended leave is agreed by that Political Leader, a report will be compiled to seek executive approval from before the point of the 6 months' leave expiry, for the extension of this leave. The Council (or Leader in case of Cabinet Members) may, depending on the circumstances, appoint a replacement to cover the period of absence who will be entitled to the SRA pro rata for the period of the temporary appointment.

11.03 The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Manager will write to the Member to confirm the continuation of allowances and until what date they will continue.

11.04 Leave arrangements are unaffected by the number of children born from a single pregnancy or placed as part of a single adoption.

### **Maternity Leave**

11.05 A Member is entitled to take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave starting no earlier than the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth, except following a premature birth, and no later than the day following the actual date of birth.

11.06 The Member must notify the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager of their intention to take maternity leave in writing no later than 4 weeks before the date they wish the period of maternity leave to start and:

- i) Confirm the expected week of childbirth; ii) Provide a copy of the MATB1 (available from a doctor or midwife); iii) Confirm the date on which the Member intends her maternity leave to start.

### **Adoption Leave**

11.07 A Member is entitled to take up to 52 weeks of adoption leave starting no earlier than 14 days before the child is expected to be placed and no later than the expected placement date, or if the child is adopted from overseas, no later than 28 days after the date on which the child enters Great Britain,

11.08 The Member must notify the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager in the case of a UK adoption of their intention to take adoption leave in writing no more than seven days after the date on which the Member is notified of having been matched with the child for adoption or, where that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter. In the case of an overseas adoption, the Member must notify the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager of their intention to take adoption leave in writing, no more than 28 days after s/he received the official notification and:

- i) Confirm the date the child is expected to be placed with him/her for adoption (UK Adoption) or the date on which the Member received an official notification and the date on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain (overseas adoption); ii) Provide a copy of the matching certificate/official notification. The matching certificate must be issued by the adoption agency that matched the Member to the child and must contain the name and address of the agency, the date on which the Member was notified that s/he had been matched to the child, and the date on which the agency expects to place the child with the Member.; (iii) in the case of an overseas adoption, the date of entry of the child into Great

Britain iv) Confirm the date which the Member has chosen his/her adoption leave to start.

### **Shared Parental Leave**

11.09 A Member is entitled to Shared Parental Leave if they are :-

- (i) the mother, or expectant mother, of a child, or the father of the child, or at the date of the child's birth the spouse, civil partner or partner of the mother/expectant mother, and at the date of birth the mother and the father/spouse/civil partner/partner share the main caring responsibility for the child; or
- (ii) the adopter of a child, or at the date that the child is placed for adoption the person who is the spouse, civil partner or partner of the adopter, and at the date of the placement of the child for adoption the adopter and the spouse/civil partner/partner share the main caring responsibility for the child. Where two people have been matched jointly, the adopter is whoever has elected to be the child's adopter.

11.10 A Member may share up to 50 weeks' leave if the mother/ adopter curtails their maternity/adoption leave before using their full entitlement of 52 weeks. The number of weeks available as Shared Parental Leave will be reduced by the number of weeks maternity or adoption leave that has already been taken by the mother or adopter.

11.11 Shared Parental Leave can be taken as one continuous block or in multiples of complete weeks, but must end no later than one year after the birth/placement for adoption of the child.

11.12 The Member must notify the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager of their intention to take shared parental leave in writing no later than 8 weeks before the date they wish the period of shared parental leave to start, and must in writing provide the following information

(i) in the case of the birth of a child:-

- the names of the mother and of the father/spouse/civil partner/partner,
- the start and end dates of any period of maternity leave to be taken by the Member,
- the total amount of Shared Parental Leave available,
- the expected week of birth
- the date of birth (where the child is not yet born, this information must be provided as soon as reasonably practicable after the birth and, in any event, before the first period of Shared Parental Leave to be taken by the Member)
- how much Shared Parental Leave the mother and the father/spouse/civil partner/partner each intend to take
- an indication as to when the Member intends to take Shared Parental Leave. Including the start and end dates for each period of leave.

(ii) in the case of the adoption of a child:-

- the names of the adopter and of the spouse/civil partner/partner,
- the date that the adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child
- the date that the child is expected to be placed for adoption
- the date of the placement ( where the child has yet to be placed for adoption, this information must be provided as soon as reasonably practicable after the placement and, in any event, before the first period of Shared Parental Leave to be taken by the Member)
- the start and end dates of any period of adoption leave to be taken by the adopter,
- the total amount of Shared Parental Leave available,
- how much Shared Parental Leave the adopter and the spouse/civil partner/partner each intend to take
- an indication as to when the Member intends to take Shared Parental Leave. Including the start and end dates for each period of leave.

### **Paternity Leave**

11.13 A Member is entitled to take up to two weeks' paternity leave to help care for the child, or to support the child's mother/adopter, if they are either: the father of the child (whether or not they are the biological father); the spouse, civil partner or partner of the mother/adopter.

11.14 The Member may take one week or two consecutive weeks of paternity leave, but not single days or less than a week's duration. Paternity leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth or adoption.

11.15 The Member must notify the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager of their intention to take paternity leave in writing no later than 4 weeks before they wish the period of paternity leave to start (childbirth) or no more than seven days after the date on which the adopter is notified of having been matched with the child or, where that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as is reasonably practicable; and:

- i) Confirm the expected week of childbirth; or the dates on which the adopter was notified that s/he had been matched with the child and on which the child is expected to be placed for adoption with the adopter(UK Adoption); or the dates on which the adopter received official notification and on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain (Overseas Adoption);
- ii) or matching certificate/official notification;
- iii) Confirm the length of the absence and the date on which the Member has chosen to begin his/her leave

11.16 If the Member wishes to change the start date of a period of leave, they should write to the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager no later than 4 weeks before either the original start date 'or' the new start date

(whichever is earlier). The Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager will ensure that HR Services are informed within 2 working days of receipt of the details.

- 11.17 If the Member wishes to change the end date of a period of leave they should write to the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager at least 4 weeks before either the original end date or the new end date (whichever is earlier). The Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager will ensure that HR Services are informed within 2 working days of receipt of the details.
- 11.18 HR Services will provide confirmation that the information on revised dates has been received and that relevant re-instatement or adjustment of any SRA has taken place, with a copy to Democratic Services, within 10 working days.

### **Sickness Leave**

- 11.19 A Member who is sick will continue to receive the basic allowance as long as they remain a Councillor. They will also continue to receive any SRA for a six month period. Extension of this period of leave will require prior 2 months' written notice to be given to the Political Leader of the respective political group. If the extended leave is agreed by that Political Leader, a report will be compiled to seek *executive* approval before the point of the 6 months' leave expiry, for the extension of this leave. This is in accordance with section 85 of the 1972 Local Government Act.
- 11.20 If a Member decides not to return to office following either during or on their expiry of maternity, adoption, shared parental, paternity or sickness leave, the Chief Executive must be notified. HR Services must then be informed within two working days of receiving notification. Allowances will cease from the effective resignation date.
- 11.21 If an election is held during the Member's maternity, adoption, shared parental, paternity or sickness leave and they are not re-elected, or decide not to stand for re-election, their basic allowance and SRA, if appropriate will cease from the Monday after the election date when they would technically leave office.

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# The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2023

Report of the Independent Panel



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## Remuneration of councillors in London 2023

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Independent Panel on Members' Remuneration last published a report on member allowances in early 2022. In that report the Panel did not recommend substantial changes to Member allowances, it noted that the challenges facing councils and councillors appeared to be increasing and becoming more complex. Therefore, the Panel also recommended that it undertake a more detailed review in 2023.
- 1.2 For the 2023 review, the Panel has undertaken a detailed review of member allowances with the aim of providing up to date advice on appropriate levels of reward for the work of elected members in London over the next four years. The intention was to seek a wider consultation than previously, using qualitative and quantitative research to underpin its findings and recommendations. The Panel canvassed members and officers in all London boroughs through surveys, focus groups and interviews, in order to consider whether and how the role of councillors has changed in recent years and what the main issues that may have an effect on the recruitment and retention of councillors are currently. It also carried out a considerable benchmarking exercise of allowances paid in other parts of England as well as in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and undertook an in-depth review of the methodology used by Independent Remuneration Panels across the UK.
- 1.3 The research showed that basic allowances per annum in London are significantly lower than those paid in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The assessment of members' allowances in the home nations is carried out by independent bodies whereas in England, the level of allowances is determined by the local authority members themselves. It has also become clear that allowances in many boroughs are considerably lower than remuneration received by workers in London with comparative levels of responsibilities and skills. This comparative contrast in remuneration is juxtaposed against increased workloads, time pressures, accountability, and financial pressures that councillors are presently having to manage. The Panel takes the view that it is important that there is a system of support in place that recognises the vital role that elected representatives play in local government and the full scale of their responsibilities. This support includes appropriate remuneration levels.

### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 Local authorities are required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003<sup>1</sup> to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel to make recommendations on the level of the basic and special responsibility allowances. In London the regulations authorise the establishment of an independent panel (the Panel) by the Association of London Government (now London Councils)

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<sup>1</sup> [The Local Authorities \(Members' Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

panel to make recommendations in respect of the members' allowances payable by London boroughs. The Regulations require a review of the scheme every four years as a minimum. Whilst the Panel makes recommendations, each council determines its own remuneration scheme for its own councillors, having regard to the Panel's recommendations.

2.2 The Independent Panel for London Councils currently comprises Mike Cooke (Chair), Sir Rodney Brooke CBE DL and Anne Watts CBE. It reported in 2022 and at that time recommended very few changes on the basis that more time was needed for a more detailed review during 2023, given that the Panel had received feedback that the work of councillors and the demands upon them had increased significantly.

### **3.0 Research**

3.1 This review has provided the Panel with an opportunity to consider the roles undertaken by councillors in London, and to examine more deeply how the demands, responsibilities and scope of duties of councillors have evolved in recent years. This review also provided the Panel with an opportunity to review the methodology used by other Independent Remuneration Panels and to carry out benchmarking with other local authorities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

3.2 The Panel has expanded on the approaches used in previous reviews. In addition to carrying out a survey of London borough Leaders to gauge their views on the operation of the existing remuneration scheme, the Panel has held a series of feedback meetings with groups of elected councillors, conducted a survey of the London branch of the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO), and held meetings with officers from the London Borough Legal Alliance (LBLA), and the South London Legal Partnership (SLLP), in order to get a more complete picture of the challenges facing London's councillors today. The Panel also commissioned Ipsos to carry out a small number of focus groups to gauge the public perception of councillors' roles, responsibilities and levels of allowances.

3.3 The member engagement focus groups consisted of a range of participants from the three major political parties – Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat, and included a range of members from inner and outer boroughs, and with different levels of responsibility (e.g. newly elected backbench councillors, Cabinet Members and borough Leaders).

3.4 The Panel is grateful both to everyone who participated in the consultation process and thank them for their contributions as well and to London Councils for its support to the review.

#### 4.0 The crucial role of elected councillors

*The role of the councillor has fundamentally changed in recent times. There is now more reliance from the public on their local council due to challenges such as the cost of living crisis, the effects of the pandemic and the resettlement of refugees. (Borough Leader)*

- 4.1 Councillors in London oversee multi-million pound budgets and employ thousands of people; all are responsible for the delivery of a wide range of crucial services. The health and wellbeing of residents and communities are at the heart of the work of London boroughs who also at one end of the age spectrum are endeavoring to give children the best start in life, whilst at the other are helping to support older people to live as independently as possible. Local councils are at the heart of developing their boroughs and working with businesses to bring local economic benefits. The building of new homes and the improvement in the standards of existing houses are crucial to their work as is their local leadership on climate change.
- 4.2 A key aspect of the responsibility of councillors is managing the complex financial pressures involved in addressing increases in the demand for services with reductions in budgets. The scale of a London council's annual expenditure budget and other financial activities are in many instances comparable with those of large publicly quoted companies.

*“The budgets that borough Leaders are managing are huge, as is their level of responsibility when something goes wrong. A borough Leader’s role is now similar to that of a non-executive director of a large company” (Borough Leader)*

- 4.3 At the same time Councillors are integral to the effectiveness of the local democratic process. As well as representing them, they stand ready to be approached by their residents to take up matters on their behalf where appropriate. The voice of democratically elected councillors in the development of the policies and strategies of their councils is absolutely essential. Councillors also play an important role in the oversight and scrutiny of services.
- 4.4 Some Councillors have additional and burdensome responsibilities, including Leaders of Councils, Elected Mayors and council portfolio holders. Some roles have specific statutory responsibilities (e.g. in the case of elected Mayors/statutory children’s and adults cabinet members).
- 4.5 The needs of Londoners and of London’s communities are becoming arguably more complex, given the seismic national and international changes ranging from the

global energy crisis, climate change, patterns of migration and housing shortages. The national economic challenges directly affect households and communities as well as businesses and councils themselves.

## 5.0 The role of Member Allowances

- 5.1 It is important to reflect on the purpose of the allowances, payments and related arrangements for councillors.
- 5.2 The Panel draws the reader's attention to the report of the 2007 Independent Commission on the Role of Local Councillors, chaired by Dame Jane Roberts which was commissioned to consider the incentives and barriers for encouraging people who are able, qualified and representative to be candidates to serve as councillors; retaining and developing them once they are elected and enabling them to secure public interest and recognition for the work they carry out for their communities.
- 5.3 The Roberts commission considered a wide range of issues but at its heart were the key questions of: 1) how best to ensure that people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills are encouraged to serve as local councillors; and 2) how to ensure those who participate in and contribute to the democratic process should not suffer unreasonable financial disadvantage.
- 5.4 Within these broad considerations there can be no doubt that financial compensation or a system of allowances plays a crucial part in making it financially possible for local people to put themselves forward to take on the onerous responsibilities involved in being a councillor and indeed to continue to serve as one.
- 5.5 For this reason it is crucial that allowances for councillors across London are pitched at an appropriate level such that they make a major contribution in ensuring diverse and effective local representation. This 2023 review of Member allowances has aimed to take a step back and ensure that the recommended allowances are pitched such that they serve this crucial purpose.
- 5.6 We are clear that the Panel can only make recommendations and that each council must determine its own system and rates of allowances. However each council must have regard to our recommendations. We are concerned that a wide variation in the level of allowances between councils across London has evolved over the years. **Given that this year's Panel review has been a significant stocktake and that we have made clear recommendations, with a clear rationale and for the important purpose described in this section, we strongly recommend that the findings of our review and the Panel's position are adopted across London. This is at the heart of ensuring a healthy, vibrant and representative local government in the capital.**

## 6.0 Time commitment and demands on councillors

6.1 Fulfilling the responsibilities of councillors in the many and various roles within a council has, arguably, always been demanding. In 2022 the Panel received anecdotal feedback that the workload and the time involved had increased significantly and so in this review we wanted to explore this in more detail.

6.2 The feedback from elected members and officers was that in the view of almost all the people we spoke to workloads, demands and pressures had increased. There appear to be a number of contributory factors:

- A wide range of recent events had added additional work; some examples given were: the demands of the pandemic years and the post-pandemic recovery work; sometimes given was the level of work in the resettlement of refugees; and the work to support residents through the very significant economic challenges of recent years, including during the energy crisis but also linked to the impact of food inflation and increased risks of homelessness.
- There has been a noticeable increase in the expectation that leading councillors work in closer partnership with other public services. The Health and Care Act 2022 in particular brings an expectation that councils will work in formal partnership with NHS organisations including NHS providers and Integrated Health Boards.
- The feedback confirmed the views we were given in 2002 that public expectations of councillors has increased especially linked to the societal changes that social media has brought about. Although most of the councillors we spoke to welcomed the flexibility that now exists for increased levels of remote meetings, the downside appears to be that there are more meetings. The representations which have been made to the Panel also suggest a picture of councillors being expected to be almost instantly available, with heavy constituency case loads and often with ever more complex responsibilities for the running of the council and overseeing its services.

*“One resident submitted a formal complaint because they had messaged me on Friday evening and I hadn’t replied to them until the following Monday morning.”*  
*(Backbench councillor)*

As well as these issues adding complexity, they make additional time demands.

*“There are now many more meetings than pre-Covid. There are also numerous social media groups councillors are expected to be involved in, case work, and other commitments. I have worked out that on average I work 54 hours a week” (Cabinet Member)*

- 6.3 Members have told the Panel that it is increasingly difficult to maintain a full-time job alongside their role as councillors, and this is particularly true for Cabinet Members and Leaders. The implication of this would be that it is more likely that people who are already financially secure who can carry out these roles, which may prevent younger candidates, people with lower incomes or those with young families, from standing or taking on special responsibilities. Taking up a role in local government could also hinder councillors' career progression in their day job, and in most cases the special responsibility allowances do not compensate for the reduced salary people receive as a result of not being able to dedicate themselves fully to their day job. The time pressures involved in the role, particularly councillors with special responsibilities can make it difficult to combine the role with a job and caring responsibilities.
- 6.4 One borough Leader told the Panel that at the 2022 election, there were so few candidates that in some wards residents did not have a choice of councillors to vote for.
- 6.5 Councillors also expressed concern that appointments to positions carrying special responsibilities could be uncertain and not in most cases for a set term. Consequently, councillors have significant concerns about giving up full-time work to undertake more senior roles in their councils.

## **7.0 The Basic Allowance**

- 7.1 As a result of the economic climate over the last decade and ongoing financial challenges, our recent reports have made no recommendations for increasing the levels of members' allowances other than continuing provision for annual adjustments in accordance with the annual local government pay settlement for staff agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Staff.
- 7.2 As part of the research for this 2023 review, the Panel carried out benchmarking of recommendations on allowances and those paid by local authorities within the UK to see how current London allowances compare.
- 7.3 From the Panel's benchmarking research, it is evident that the previous Panel's recommendations for the basic allowance in London, lags behind Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This issue was identified in the last two Panel reports, however, the Panel reluctantly decided at the time that given the financial climate it would have been inappropriate to recommend a general increase in member allowances.

7.4 In our last report the Panel recommended that there should be a Basic Allowance paid to every councillor of £12,014. Updated for the local government staff pay awards since then, the figure is now £12,499.

7.5 This allowance continues to be substantially lower than the allowance paid by all local authorities in Scotland which is presently £20,099<sup>2</sup> and similarly in Wales<sup>3</sup> where the government-appointed commission has set the basic allowance at £17,600 for members of local authorities with populations which are generally substantially lower than those of London boroughs. Furthermore, the basic allowance in Northern Ireland from 1 April 2023 is £16,394<sup>4</sup> per annum. The Panel's research has established that there are some parts of England that have similar basic allowances to those currently recommended for London boroughs. However, there are other English local authorities, where the roles and responsibilities of councillors are broadly the same to those of councillors serving in London boroughs, that pay significantly more. For example, in Birmingham<sup>5</sup>, in 2022-23 the basic allowance was £18,876, and in Manchester<sup>6</sup> it was £18,841.

7.6 The Panel is of the view that when taking everything into account that the rate of the basic allowance should now be addressed.

7.7 As part of the 2023 review, the Panel has reviewed the methodologies used by other Panels and has identified that Independent Panels across the UK use a variety of approaches for determining how to set the member allowances. The Panel has also re-examined the methodology used in calculating allowances in the original London panel report and updated it to reflect current circumstances. The original calculation in the Panel's first report in 2001 was based on a proportion of the average 'white collar worker' wage in London.

7.8 Although making the comparisons with Scotland, Wales, NI and other UK cities was useful in terms of gaining a comparative perspective, the Panel has reached the view that it needed to both determine a method for London and recommend a level of allowance that was achievable, bearing in mind the historic challenges for some councils in agreeing to previous recommended allowances.

7.9 Having looked at various options, the Panel has concluded that the most appropriate approach is to determine the basic allowance as a proportion to the remuneration of the people councillors represent and has used the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) data, published by the Office for National Statistics as a basis of its calculation. The Panel has used the median wage for all London workers for this purpose. In 2022-23, this is £38,936.73 per annum. Based on a 37 hour week, and taking into account a 30% public service discount, (as has been the custom and practice) **the Panel has determined that the recommended basic allowance should be £15,960.**

<sup>2</sup> [The Local Governance \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(Remuneration\) Amendment Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> [Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: annual report 2022 to 2023 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-lg-0323-consolidated-councillor-allowances>

<sup>5</sup> [Independent Remuneration Panel Reports | Birmingham City Council](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk)

<sup>6</sup> [Microsoft Word - MCC IRP Final Report \(manchester.gov.uk\)](https://www.manchester.gov.uk)

7.10 The Panel considers that this allowance better reflects the high cost of living in London, than the previous recommendations.

7.11 It is the Panel's view that it is pressing that boroughs should implement these changes in 2024, as part of the contribution to recruiting and retaining a diverse range of good quality candidates to stand for office in London.

## **8.0 Special Responsibility Allowances**

8.1 The reasons for payment of special responsibility allowances, additional to the basic allowance, should be clearly set out in local allowances schemes. Special allowances should come into play only in positions where there are significant differences in the time requirements and levels of responsibility from those generally expected of a councillor.

8.2 Categories of special allowances:

The regulations specify the following categories of responsibility for which special responsibility allowances may be paid:

- Members of the executive where the authority is operating "executive arrangements"
- Acting as leader or deputy leader of a political group within the authority
- Presiding at meetings of a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee
- Representing the authority at meetings of, or arranged by, any other body
- Membership of a committee or sub-committee of the authority which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods
- Acting as spokesperson of a political group on a committee or sub-committee of the authority
- Membership of an adoption panel
- Membership of a licensing or regulatory committee
- Such other activities in relation to the discharge of the authority's functions as require of the member an amount of time and effort equal to or greater than would be required of him by any one of the activities mentioned above, whether or not that activity is specified in the scheme.

8.3 The Panel's research shows that the categories of SRAs recommended by the London Panel are comparable with those recommended by Independent Panels in other cities in the UK and in Scotland and Wales.

8.4 However, the Panel's previous recommendations have not consistently been adopted within London, and the resulting situation is that whilst there is some convergence

across London boroughs on the basic allowance, there remain substantial differences in the amounts of SRAs for similar roles in boroughs.

- 8.5 Given the extent of the responsibilities of Leaders of London boroughs, the Panel's first report in 2001 recommended that their remuneration should equate to that of a Member of Parliament. Our recommendations for other special responsibility allowances were historically determined as a sliding scale (pro-rata) proportion of the remuneration package for a council Leader. Since then, the increase in the remuneration of Members of Parliament has substantially exceeded the annual local government pay increase which was tied to the special responsibility allowance for the leader of a London borough, and the current MP salary is now £86,584
- 8.6 The Panel has taken the opportunity to review this historic link, and following feedback, we sense strong support for our own view that an MP's salary is no longer an appropriate comparator to set the Leader's allowance, as the roles are substantially different and indeed almost impossible to compare.
- 8.7 We received feedback that some members believe that the Leaders of London boroughs warrant a higher remuneration than an MP, because they have greater financial responsibility and legal burdens, and especially given the differential pension arrangements. Indeed, some respondent authorities suggested that the direct responsibilities of a Leader should command the salary of a junior minister.

*"An MP does not undertake an executive role (strategic leadership, management & accountability of a complex public service operationally managed by highly paid officials) and so not a comparator to a Leader or elected Mayor"*

*(Borough Leader)*

## **9.0 Leader's SRA**

- 9.1 This is often a full-time role, involving a high level of responsibility. It is right that it should be remunerated on a basis which compares with roles with similar levels of responsibility, while still retaining a reflection of the voluntary character of public service.
- 9.2 For the Leader's SRA, the Panel has decided that a more appropriate comparator would be the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) data for Corporate Managers and Directors as the level of responsibilities most closely align to those of a borough Leader. For 2022-23, the average gross annual salary for full time workers in London within this category was £108,242. After applying a 30% public service discount (as has been the custom and practice) this would provide for a Leader's total

package of £75,773. The 2022 Panel report recommended that the Leader's SRA should be £62,090. Taking into account this figure, when combined with the new recommended basic allowance, the total package for a Leader would be £78,050. As this figure is greater than that based on the ASHE calculation, the Panel is not recommending any changes to the existing Leader's SRA at this time.

## **10.0 Other SRAs**

10.1 The Panel has previously determined that all other SRAs are calculated as a proportion of the Leader's SRA. Since its inception, the Panel has recommended using bands rather than fixed amounts, in order to allow flexibility and recognise local variations on how the roles are performed. The Panel has decided to continue using this methodology. However, as part of the review, the Panel has benchmarked the sliding scale recommended by other Panels and used by local authorities and has adjusted the percentages historically used in order to more closely align with the average used by other local authorities outside of London. **The recommended bands and levels of allowance are attached as Annex A.**

## **11.0 Bridging the Gap and public perception**

11.1 When considering a members' allowances scheme, boroughs are obliged to have to a report by an independent panel, but it is a matter for boroughs themselves to decide whether to adopt its recommendations.

11.2 However, in view of the evidence obtained over the past 18 months, the Panel strongly recommends that all authorities implement the recommendations in their boroughs in the next year. On average, the total annual budget for members allowances in a London Borough is between 0.4-0.5% of the council's general fund net budget. Notwithstanding this, the Panel acknowledges the challenges that increasing allowances may present to boroughs, both financially and reputationally; however, the Panel is concerned that if member allowances do not keep up with its recommendations, there is a risk that they will fall significantly further behind their comparators and that councils will consequently face even greater challenges in recruiting and retaining a good calibre of councillors in the future.

11.3 The Panel perceived that there was some concern from councillors about the public acceptability of increasing allowances. As a result the Panel sought to test the public view and therefore commissioned Ipsos to undertake qualitative research, through a number of focus groups, on the public's perception on councillors remuneration. The Ipsos research was small scale but provides indicative evidence of public views.

11.4 Ipsos held three discussion groups with a representative sample of the general public in June 2023 using a deliberative approach to enable participants to reach an informed perspective. The stimulus material included pen portraits of councillors based on information received from London Councils' members on their working hours and

levels of responsibility. The information given to participants also included typical allowances received in London, in Essex, and in Wales for councillors receiving a basic allowance and average SRAs paid to Cabinet Members, and council Leaders.

11.5 The research found that the Londoners in focus groups felt that allowances in London needed to increase to provide a more accurate reflection of councillors' responsibilities and hours.

***"I thought at least [the Council Leader's remuneration] would be about a £100,000 plus for the amount of work that she does because she's taken on casework as well... and that's time-consuming."***

When exposed to allowance comparisons in different parts of the country, participants thought the current allowances did not reflect the fact that the cost of living in London was higher than elsewhere in the country.

***"Councillors' pay should take into account that living in London is more expensive, so they should immediately just be paid more in general."***

In addition, they recognised that the level of allowances can have a detrimental effect on the diversity of councillors and would deter those from a lower income background from becoming councillors.

***"It feels like [we're] paying them so little, it feels like there are some people who can't afford to be a councillor. And that has consequences on the democratic process"***

11.6 Participants also suggested changes to remuneration for councillors: raising the basic allowance and increasing allowances to better reflect responsibilities and hours; and additional allowances provided to support councillors with childcare costs and saving for a pension.

11.7 Participants expressed surprise at the range of allowances paid across London, particularly at the cabinet member and council leader level and supported greater consistency in such remuneration levels across councils in London.

11.8 Although the sample of Londoners was only small, it indicates that with due briefing and deliberation there is likely to be support for the increase in allowances.

11.9 During the consultation process, a significant number of councillors told the Panel that they do not think that councillors should be responsible for setting their own allowances, and that this is perhaps one of the reasons why the basic allowance in London lags behind Scotland and Wales, where allowances are set by outside bodies and it is mandatory for local authorities to adopt the recommendations. The Panel is supportive of this view, but recognizes that this would need a change in legislation. The Panel intends to raise this issue with the Secretary of State.

## 12.0 Training and support

- 12.1 The responsibilities of councillors are substantial, extensive and complex, particularly since the Pandemic and its aftermath, which has seen a rapid increase of using digital technology, and flexible ways of working. The training and development of councillors is beyond the remit of this Panel. However, the feedback we received was that councillors require the logistical and clerical support and appropriate IT equipment which will help them carry out their roles efficiently. The Panel supports this view and recommends that boroughs undertake their own stock takes to ensure appropriate support is in place to enable members to fulfil their responsibilities.
- 12.2 Furthermore, we have heard from boroughs that councillors are experiencing increased levels of abuse on social media, and so we recommend that training in navigating the increasingly challenging world of social media is also provided.

## 13.0 Care Costs

- 13.1 It is important that obstacles to becoming a councillor should be removed wherever possible. Care costs could be a significant deterrent to service as a councillor. Our strong view is that in appropriate cases when they undertake their council duties, councillors should be entitled to claim an allowance for care of dependents. The dependents' carers' allowance should at least be set at the London living wage but payment should be made at a higher rate when specialist nursing skills are required or to reflect higher costs during non-standard working hours. We have had representation that the carers allowance should be payable to family members on the basis that it is preferable for family members to look after a dependent, especially in the evening but that the frequency is often such that it is unreasonable for this to be expected to be with no financial allowance.

*The level of dependent carers allowance does not recognise the fact that babysitters tend to charge more for evening and weekend work. In addition, the carers allowance should be able to be claimed even if a family member was looking after the councillors' dependents" (Newly-elected Backbench Councillor)*

- 13.2 The Panel recognises that allowance payments for family carers who are not members of a councillor's household would need to be designed with some careful consideration but is very sympathetic to this need and recommend that councils review their schemes to make this possible.
- 13.3 It's view is also that members' allowances schemes should allow the continuance of Special Responsibility Allowances in the case of sickness, maternity and paternity leave in the same terms that the council's employees enjoy such benefits (that is to say, they follow the same policies). To this end, London boroughs are recommended to adopt a related parental leave and sickness policy as an appendix to their allowances scheme.

13.4 The Panel has received feedback that there is a need to reform the legislation governing membership of the Cabinet/Executive and how this impacts Councillors who wish to take parental leave. Councils have a strict statutory limit of ten members of the cabinet/executive – including the Leader. Should one of those members wish to take parental leave for any significant period during their tenure as a cabinet member, and there is already a full complement of cabinet and leader up to the statutory limit they are faced with what is an entirely unfair dilemma. They either resign from the post so another councillor can be appointed or they leave their colleagues with an additional workload for their period of absence. While some Councils have sought to appoint deputy cabinet members or the like these are not proper answers to this issue as they are not cabinet members with the appropriate legal and constitutional authority. It is very easy to compare this to the position of an employee where a replacement can be appointed for the duration without prejudice to the individuals' rights to return. While self-evidently Councillors are not employees there should not be any additional hurdles to participation for any section of the population.

13.5 The Panel support the view that the legislation needs reviewing.

#### **14.0 Travel and Subsistence allowances**

14.1 The Basic Allowance should cover basic out-of-pocket expenses incurred by councillors, including intra-borough travel costs and expenses. The members' allowances scheme should, however, provide for special circumstances, such as travel after late meetings or travel by councillors with disabilities. The scheme should enable councillors to claim travel expenses when their duties take them out of their home borough, including a bicycle allowance.

#### **15.0 Allowances for Civic Mayor or Civic Head**

15.1 Many councils include the allowances for the mayor (or civic head) and deputy in their members' allowance scheme. However, these allowances do serve a rather different purpose from the 'ordinary' members' allowances, since they are intended to enable the civic heads to perform a ceremonial role. There are separate statutory provisions (ss 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act 1972) for such allowances and councils may find it convenient to use those provisions rather than to include the allowances in the members' allowance scheme.

#### **16.0 Allowances that fall outside this scheme**

16.1 Within the context of this review, the Panel has not looked at remuneration that councillors may receive for their roles on outside bodies, wholly owned companies or joint venture partnerships. However, in the interests of transparency, the Panel requests that councils consider how information on all members remuneration within their borough is made easily available to the public in the same place. The Panel recommends that where local authorities have set up companies which remunerate councillors who act as directors these allowance should be set out in the members allowances scheme.

## **17.0 Local discretion**

- 17.1 It is for each borough to decide how to allocate their councillors between the different bands, having regard to our recommendations and how to set the specific remuneration within the band. The Panel believes these should have the merits of being easy to apply, easy to adapt, easy to explain and understand, and easy to administer.
- 17.2 The scheme should be able to be applied to different types of governance arrangements and interpreted flexibly. The Panel has received legal advice that suggests that in boroughs which operate through the Committee System, where a Committee Chair has identified responsibilities in a role profile for particular services, then in practice the duties and responsibilities of a Committee Chair are equivalent to the role of a Cabinet Member and that a similar system of allowances should be used. For example, in some boroughs which use a committee system, the Statutory Lead Member for Children's Services is the Chair of the Children and Community Services Committee. In this case, it would be reasonable to suggest that this Committee Chair should receive the SRA equivalent to that of a Cabinet Member. The Panel must emphasise that these decisions are dependent on the arrangements adopted by the authority in question and should be decided on a case by case basis.

## **18.0 Pensions**

- 18.1 There is a widespread view amongst the councillors we spoke to in 2022 and this year that a disincentive to the recruitment and retention of councillors has been the Government's decision in 2014 to remove the right of councillors to join the local government pension scheme. This was keenly felt by those councillors the Panel heard from. The Panel notes that the rationale behind that decision was unclear and that councillors in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland continue to be entitled to a local government pension. The Panel is of the view that this inconsistency should be addressed. Although this issue is beyond the remit of the Panel, the Panel will nevertheless write a letter to the Secretary of State asking the government to look again at this important issue,

## **19.0 Annual uplifts**

- 19.1 The Panel continues to recommend that all allowances should be updated annually in line with the percentage pay award agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services staff.
- 19.2 In some years the NJC national pay award is agreed as being in the form of a lump sum for all or the majority of staff or the rate of increase is different at different levels on the NJC pay spine. In such situations a method of deriving an appropriate increase in the Members' basic allowance (so it keeps in line with the staff pay award) is required. To achieve this the panel will have regard to any NJC guidance such as guidance on what any lump sum equates to as an average percentage pay increase, and guidance on the percentage increase to any staff allowances. The Panel will also consider the average (mean) percentage increase to the spinal column points,

but excluding any exceptional increases such as measures to rectify a low pay problem at the lowest level of the pay spine. For illustrative purposes, for April 2023 the figure was 3.88%“

**20. Review of implementation**

20.1 The Panel proposes to convene in the final quarter of 2024 to review how its recommendations have been implemented by boroughs across London and at the same time consider the most recently published ASHE data on median salaries of those working in the Greater London area, as well as any agreed NJC national pay award.

**Mike Cooke**

**Sir Rodney Brooke CBE DL**

**Anne Watts CBE**

**December 2023**

## Appendix A

### THE RECOMMENDED MEMBER ALLOWANCE SCHEME FOR LONDON

#### The Basic allowance: £15,960

#### Special responsibilities – beyond the basic allowance

##### **Calculation of special allowances**

The proposed amounts for each band are a percentage of the figure suggested for a council leader depending upon levels of responsibility of the roles undertaken and are explained below.

##### **BAND ONE**

The posts that the Panel envisages falling within band one, include:

- Vice chair of a service, regulatory or scrutiny committee
- Chair of sub-committee
- Leader of second or smaller opposition group
- Service spokesperson for first opposition group
- First opposition group whip (in respect of council business)
- Vice chair of council business
- Chairs, vice chairs, area committees and forums
- Cabinet assistant
- Acting as a member of a committee or sub-committee which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods
- Acting as a member of an adoption panel where membership requires attendance with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods
- Leadership of a specific major project.

##### **Remuneration**

The Panel proposes that band one special responsibility allowances should be on a sliding scale of between 5-15% per cent of the Leader's SRA.

This would be made up as follows:

Basic allowance: £15,960

Band One allowance: £3,105 - £9,314

**Total: £19,065 - £25,274**

## **BAND TWO**

The Panel considers that the types of office being within band two are:

- Lead member in scrutiny arrangements, such as chair of a scrutiny panel
- Representative on key outside body
- Chair of major regulatory committee e.g. planning
- Chair of council business (civic mayor)
- Leader of principal opposition group
- Majority party chief whip (in respect of council business).

### **Remuneration**

The Panel proposes that band two allowances should be on a sliding scale between 25-50 per cent, pro rata of the remuneration package for a council leader.

This is made up as follows:

Basic allowance £15,960

Band two allowances: £15,523 - £31,046

**Total: £31,483 - £47,006**

### **BAND THREE**

The Panel sees this band as appropriate to the following posts:

- Cabinet member
- Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Chair of the main overview or scrutiny committee
- Deputy leader of the council

#### **Remuneration:**

The Panel proposes that band three allowances should be between 60-75 per cent pro rata of the remuneration package for a council leader.

This is made up as follows:

Basic allowance: £15,960

Band three allowance: £37,255 - £46,569

**Total: £53,215 - £62,529**

### **BAND FOUR**

Leader of the Council

This is often a full-time role, involving a high level of responsibility. It is right that it should be remunerated on a basis which compares with roles with similar levels of responsibility, while still retaining a reflection of the voluntary character of public service.

#### **Remuneration:**

**The Panel proposes that the remuneration package for a council leader under band four of our scheme should be £78,052.**

This is made up as follows:

Basic allowance: £15,960

Band four allowance: £62,092

**Total: £78,052**

## **BAND FIVE**

### **Directly elected mayor**

A directly elected mayor has a full-time job with a high level of responsibility and exercises executive responsibilities over a fixed electoral cycle. It is right that it should be remunerated on a basis which compares with similar positions in the public sector, while still retaining a reflection of the voluntary character of public service. However, the Panel believes that this post remains different to that of the strong leader with cabinet model. The directly elected mayor is directly elected by the electorate as a whole. The strong leader holds office at the pleasure of the council and can be removed by the council. The Panel believes that the distinction is paramount and this should be reflected in the salary level.

#### **Remuneration:**

The Panel proposes that a directly elected mayor should receive a remuneration of **£93,575**.

## Appendix B

### A Job Profile for councillors

In its previous reports, the Panel reflected on the importance of the role of elected members. The 'job profile' for councillors originally included in the Panel's 2010 report is repeated in as the Panel still considers it to be accurate and up to date.

#### On behalf of the community – a job profile for councillors

##### **Purposes:**

1. To participate constructively in the good governance of the area.
2. To contribute actively to the formation and scrutiny of the authority's policies, budget, strategies and service delivery.
3. To represent effectively the interests of the ward for which the councillor was elected, and deal with constituents' enquiries and representations.
4. To champion the causes which best relate to the interests and sustainability of the community and campaign for the improvement of the quality of life of the community in terms of equity, economy and environment.
5. To represent the council on an outside body, such as a charitable trust or neighbourhood association.

##### **Key Tasks:**

1. To fulfil the statutory and local determined requirements of an elected member of a local authority and the authority itself, including compliance with all relevant codes of conduct, and participation in those decisions and activities reserved to the full council (for example, setting budgets, overall priorities, strategy).
2. To participate effectively as a member of any committee or panel to which the councillor is appointed, including related responsibilities for the services falling within the committee's (or panel's) terms of reference, human resource issues, staff appointments, fees and charges, and liaison with other public bodies to promote better understanding and partnership working.
3. To participate in the activities of an outside body to which the councillor is appointed, providing two-way communication between the organisations. Also, for the same purpose, to develop and maintain a working knowledge of the authority's policies and practices in relation to that body and of the community's needs and aspirations in respect of that body's role and functions.
4. To participate in the scrutiny or performance review of the services of the authority, including where the authority so decides, the scrutiny of policies and budget, and their effectiveness in achieving the strategic objectives of the authority.
5. To participate, as appointed, in the area and in service-based consultative processes with the community and with other organisations.

6. To represent the authority to the community, and the community to the authority, through the various forums available.
7. To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the authority's services, management arrangements, powers/duties, and constraints, and to develop good working relationships with relevant officers of the authority.
8. To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the organisations, services, activities and other factors which impact upon the community's well-being and identity.
9. To represent effectively the interests of the ward for which the councillor was elected, and deal with constituents' enquiries and representations including, where required, acting as a liaison between the constituent and the local authority and where appropriate other public service providers.
10. To contribute constructively to open government and democratic renewal through active encouragement of the community to participate generally in the government of the area.
11. To participate in the activities of any political group of which the councillor is a member.
12. To undertake necessary training and development programmes as agreed by the authority.
13. To be accountable for his/her actions and to report regularly on them in accessible and transparent ways.

## Appendix C

The independent panel members

### **Mike Cooke**

Mike Cooke was the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Camden for seven years, where he had also been Director of Housing and Adult Social Care and HR Director. He has extensive experience of partnership working across London including as the Chief Executive Leadership Committee lead on children and chairing the London Safeguarding Children Board. Mike also has worked for seven years in financial services where he developed an expertise in remuneration.

Until November 2020 Mike had been a Non-Executive Director of the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust where he was chair of the HR Committee. Mike's current role is the Chair of the North Central London Integrated Health and Care System.

### **Sir Rodney Brooke CBE, DL**

Sir Rodney Brooke has a long career in local government, including as chief executive of West Yorkshire County Council, Westminster City Council and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

He was knighted in 2007 for his contribution to public service.

### **Dr Anne Watts CBE**

Anne Watts has an extensive career in governance, diversity and inclusion spanning commercial, public and voluntary sectors. She has held executive roles for HSBC and Business in the Community and was chair of the Appointments Commission. She has carried out reviews of Government departments and the Army. In addition she has been a member of Government Pay review bodies and Deputy Chair, University of Surrey where she chaired the Remuneration Committee and the new Vet School.

She is a non-exec of Newable (previously Greater London Enterprise) where she chairs the Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance Committee and is a non-exec of Newflex subsidiary. In addition she continues to sit on the Race and Gender Equality Leadership teams for Business in the Community.



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**Report for:** Standards Committee 3 February 2025

**Title:** Committee Work Programme

**Report authorised by:** Fiona Alderman, Assistant Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

**Lead Officer:** Richard Plummer, Committees Manager  
[richard.plummer@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:richard.plummer@haringey.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

**Report for Key/**

**Non Key Decision:** Non-Key Decision

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

1.1 Members to note current work programme and put forward any comments on suggested areas of work.

**9 March 2026**

- Changes to the Council Constitution
- Special Responsibility Allowances 2026/27

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Document is exempt

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