

Gloucester City Council

COMMITTEE	: COUNCIL
DATE	: 23 MAY 2011
SUBJECT	: REVIEW OF ALLOWANCES 2011
DECISION TYPE	: NON- KEY
WARD	: ALL
REPORT BY	: CHAIR OF THE INDEPENDENT MEMBER' ALLOWANCES PANEL
NO. OF APPENDICES	: One – Allowance Scheme
REFERENCE NO.	:

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the recommendations of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That no change be made to the current scheme and the 2011/12 scheme, as attached at appendix 1 of this report, be approved.

2.2 That the 2011/12 review examines the issue of appointments to Outside Bodies.

2.3 That the Council note the panel's comments regarding the impact of the localism agenda.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The allowance scheme at the Council is based on a multiplier system. The special responsibility allowances (SRAs) are a multiple of the basic allowance and only one SRA is paid. The format of the scheme was adopted in 2006 with the aim of ensuring that the Council had in place a simple and transparent scheme that was easily understood by Councillors and members of the public. It is also in line with best practice and government guidance.

3.2 The panel noted that at its meeting on 25 November 2010 the Council had considered the structure of the independent panel and resolved that the panel membership continue to be 5 members and that members would be appointed for a period of 4 years.

3.3 The panel completed its last four yearly review in 2010 and recommended its report to Council on 25 March 2010. The primary focus of the 2010 review was the SRA allowances. At the Council meeting on 24 March 2010, the Council resolved that:

“RESOLVED

1. That the allowance scheme proposed by the Independent Panel as outlined in appendix 1 of this report, as amended, be approved.

2. That the Council introduce role profiles for Members.
3. That a maximum limit be agreed for internet service provider charges and that a maximum limit of £10 per month be set for Councillors who do not accept the Council's provided broadband service.
4. That the final scheme adopted by the Council be posted on the Council's website to increase transparency."

3.3 The panel had also recommended that Members be given access to the Local Government Pension Scheme but Council resolved not to accept this recommendation.

3.4 Following the appointments made at Annual Council in May 2010, the actual cost of the allowance scheme is estimated to be £284,310. This cost does not include any travel or subsistence costs.

4.0 PROGRESS

4.1 In order to complete the 2010/11 review of allowances, the panel wanted to ensure that Members were consulted on the present scheme in place at the Council. As a result all Members of the Council were written to regarding the review and asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the allowance scheme. 12 Members completed the questionnaire and the panel considered the completed questionnaires and the responses and comments received.

4.2 In addition to the questionnaire process, the panel also undertook interviews with the Group Leaders to help to ensure that Members were engaged with the process. As part of the review process, the panel also considered information from other sources like the 2009/10 allowances survey conducted by the South West Councils.

5.0 FUTURE WORK

5.1 In completing its review, the panel felt that the current scheme was working well and it considered that there was not a requirement to alter or amend the current scheme. It noted that the 2009/10 review had been comprehensive and that there had not been any major constitutional changes at the Council in terms of political structure. The panel did note the new executive arrangements in place at the Council but at this point they did not consider that these would have a significant impact.

5.2 The panel noted that the actual cost of the scheme in 2011/12 was estimated to be £284, 310. The panel was aware that this could be subject to variation in light of the appointments made at Annual Council in May 2011. The panel noted that a request had been made by the Trade Unions that Members consider a reduction in allowances should staff be required to take a reduction in pay.

5.3 The panel noted that two Members had raised the issue of Councillors appointed to Outside Bodies and the additional responsibilities that this resulted in. The Panel noted that Members could claim travel and subsistence for attendance at Outside Bodies and considered that this was an issue that they would examine as part of the 2011/12 annual review.

5.4 The panel noted the evolving localism agenda and noted that this could have an impact on the way local authorities operated in the future. It also noted that was likely to impact on the role of elected Members and that in turn this could require the allowance scheme to be reviewed. A further issue highlighted during the process was that the City Council had requested that a boundary review be carried out at the conclusion of the ongoing County Council boundary review

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The panel recognised the strength of the current scheme and considered that it had increased transparency since its introduction. It is also considered that it was good practice to review member allowances on annual basis.

6.2 The panel requests that steps be taken to continue to publicise the scheme and that the scheme continue to be published on the Council's website.

6.3 The panel acknowledged the support provided by the Councillors who participated in the 2010/11 review. The panel considered that the 2011/12 review would be enhanced if more Members responded and participated in the review process.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 These are contained within the report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The City Council is required to maintain an independent panel which makes recommendations to Council on the matter of member allowances. It is good practice to conduct an annual review.

9.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The risks to the Council are minimised by maintaining an independent panel and undertaking annual and four yearly reviews.

10.0 PREDICTIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EQUALITIES) AND COMMUNITY COHESION

10.1 None

10. OTHER CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Environmental - None.

10.2 Trade Union – None

Background Papers : None

Published Papers : Council's Allowance Scheme/Constitution/South West Allowance Councils Allowance Survey

Person to Contact : Adam Chalmers, Tel: 396125, E-mail: adam.chalmers@gloucester.gov.uk

Members' Scheme of Allowances

In force 1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012

(Approved by the City Council – 23 May 2011)

Gloucester City Council adopted this Members' Scheme of Allowances in May 2011 based on recommendations by an independent "Members' Remuneration" panel. The allowances shown come into effect on 1 April 2011 and have been increased annually in line with the Local Government's staff pay award unless the panel sits again.

(N.B.)

- (i) The basic and special responsibility allowances shown below will be increased by the Local Government's staff pay award until next reviewed in 2011/12. Annual increases are normally effective from 1 April each year.
- (ii) On 23 March 2010, the Council did not agree to implement the Panel's recommendation that Members should be given access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.)

Proposed Members' Scheme of Allowances 2011/12

	Allowances	Rate
1.	<p>Basic Allowance</p> <p>All Councillors are entitled to this general allowance which is paid automatically on a monthly basis (unless written notice to the contrary is given).</p>	£5,250 p.a. per Councillor
2.	<p>Special Responsibility Allowances</p> <p>These are special allowances paid to Councillors who hold positions with significant responsibilities over and above the general duties of a Councillor. This additional entitlement is paid automatically (unless written notice to the contrary is given) to the relevant Councillors on a monthly basis. (N.B. Members are restricted to one special responsibility allowance only.)</p> <p>The affected position and the sums payable are as follows:</p> <p>Leader of the Council (3.25 x basic allowance) £17,063 p.a. Deputy Leader of the Council (2.25 x basic allowance) £11,813 p.a.</p> <p>Cabinet Members (1.75 x basic allowance) £9,188 p.a.</p> <p>Regeneration and Culture £9,188 p.a. Environment £9,188 p.a. Housing and Health £9,188 p.a. Performance and Resources £9,188 p.a. Heritage and Leisure £9,188 p.a. Communities & Neighbourhoods..... £9,188 p.a.</p> <p>Chairs (0.6 x basic allowance) £3,150 p.a.</p> <p>Planning Committee £3,150 p.a. Licensing and Enforcement Committee £3,150 p.a. Overview and Scrutiny Management Group £3,150 p.a. Scrutiny Committees £3,150 p.a. Audit Committee n/a Standards Committee (no special responsibility allowance)</p>	

	Allowances	Rate
	Vice Chairs: (0.2 x basic allowance)	
	Planning Committee	£1,050 p.a.
	Licensing and Enforcement Committee	£1,050 p.a.
	Overview and Scrutiny Management Group	£1,050 p.a.
	Scrutiny Committees	£1,050 p.a.
	Audit Committee	£1,050 p.a.
	Standards Committee (no special responsibility allowance)	n/a
	Minority Group Leaders (1 x basic allowance)	£5,250 p.a.
	Deputy Group Leader (0.5 x basic allowance)	£2,625 p.a.
	Mayor * (0.6 x basic allowance)	£3,150 p.a.
	Sheriff and Deputy Mayor * (0.2 x basic allowance)	£1,050 p.a.
3.	Carer's Allowance All Councillors are entitled to a Childcare and Dependant Carer's Allowance when they are responsible for meeting the costs of the care of dependant children or relatives whilst undertaking approved duties as defined at the end of this scheme. The payment of basic, special responsibility and other allowances will be suspended for the duration of any suspension from duties in connection with Standards matters.	£7.64 per hour (based on Scale Point 11 of the Local Government pay spine)
4.	Travel and Subsistence Allowances Travel and subsistence allowances are paid in respect of approved duties as defined at the end of this scheme. Travel allowances are based on the Inland Revenue approved rate of 45p per mile (with a rate of 24p per mile for motorcycles and 20p per mile for bicycles)	Subsistence allowances are based on the latest approved scheme for Officers.
5.	Internet Service Provider Charges A maximum payment of up to £10 per calendar month may be claimed by Councillors who do not accept the broadband service provided by the Council.	£10 p.c.m

* The Mayor and the Sheriff also receive allowances separate from the Allowances Scheme to meet costs associated with the holding of their respective offices (Mayor £5,337) (Sheriff £3,200).

1. **Approved Duties for Payment of Allowances**

Allowances can be paid in respect of the following duties which are specified in legislation:

- (a) a meeting of the Authority, or a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Authority;
- (b) a meeting of some other body to which the Authority makes appointments or nominations, or a Committee or Sub-Committee of the body;
- (c) 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 a Joint Committee and to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited or to which two or more Councillors have been invited (if the Authority is not divided into political groups);
- (d) a meeting of a Local Authority Association of which the Authority is a member;
- (e) duties undertaken on behalf of the Authority in pursuance of any Standing Order requiring a Member or Members to be present while Tender documents are opened;

- (f) duties undertaken on behalf of the Authority in connection with a discharge of any function of the Authority conferred by or under any enactment empowering or requiring the Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.

2. **The following is a list of approved duties accepted by the Council for payment of travel, subsistence and carer's allowances:**

- (a) attendance at meetings of the Council;
- (b) attendance at other formal meetings (e.g. Groups, Boards, Committees, Panels, etc.);
- (c) attendance at meetings at the outside bodies referred to in the list incorporated in Schedule 1 provided that attendance is for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of a function of the Council;
- (d) attendance (under the Open Door Protocol) at County Council meetings (sanctioned by the Chief Executive) on matters of importance to the District or of Local (Ward) interest;
- (e) attendance at Quedgeley Parish Council meetings in a Members' Ward when they are not a Member of that Parish Council;
- (f) attendance at meetings of other bodies including courses, seminars and conferences provided that there is a Council or, where appropriate a meeting resolution authorising attendance on the basis that the attendance is for the purpose of, or in connection with the discharge of a function of the Council (the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors are authorised, in consultation with the Council or appropriate Cabinet Member, to sanction attendance provided adequate financial provision is available);
- (g) elections and other duties undertaken on behalf and at the express request of the Council and other meeting.

3. **It should be noted that allowances are not paid to non-Members of meetings who attend meetings except in the following circumstances:**

- (a) the Mayor and the Leader of the Council and Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (and their Vice-Chair in their absence) where they are ex-officio Members (with no vote) of a Group of which they are not a Member (does not apply to Boards, Panels, Sub-Committees and Working Parties);
- (b) when Members attend a meeting to explain a motion (of which they have given notice at Council) which has been referred to that meeting by the Council;
- (c) when Members attend a meeting to speak on an item they have requested to be placed on the agenda;
- (d) when the local Ward Members attend site visit meetings of any meeting of which they are not a Member;
- (e) when Members are expressly invited to attend meetings.