

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES) TO GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL

JULY, 2024

PROPOSAL FOR NEW MEMBER ROLE

Introduction

1. The Panel met on 5th June, 2024 to consider a proposal to create a new member role and whether a special responsibility allowance should apply to that role.
2. In attendance was Graham Russell (Chair) and John Morris, a member of the Panel. The Leader of the Council and the Policy and Governance Manager were also present to explain the role and its context and to answer questions.
3. Absent members of the Panel – Ms Kim Hawkins and Chris Markley have been consulted on the proposal and have endorsed this report and its recommendations.

The Proposal

4. The Panel was informed of the Leader's wish to create a member level support role principally for the Leader and the Deputy Leader.
5. The Panel was informed that the role would have a particular remit to support the maximisation of commercial income opportunities and to work on a diverse range of special projects under the direction of, and accountable to, the Leader. This is likely to involve attendance at high level meetings within the authority and externally with stakeholder interests. There will be internal feedback and liaison meetings as required with Officers, the Leader and other Cabinet Members. The time commitment cannot be fully quantified at this time but is likely to be significant.
6. After robust questioning, the Panel was satisfied that this role would have no decision making powers and therefore would not be directly accountable to the Council nor would it be subjected to portfolio scrutiny in the same way as might apply to a Cabinet Member. It would be an advisory role to decision makers.

7. The Panel was strongly of the view that, in the context of good governance, any member holding this position should not be permitted to serve on the overview and scrutiny committee. This legal provision already applies to executive members. This new role is likely to be perceived as an executive role and as such we believe it is appropriate to treat it in a similar way. This is of course a matter for the Council and its advisors.
8. The Panel feels that consideration should be given to the title of the role, and might suggest "Portfolio Advisory Member".
9. The scope of the role however is considerable and robust and the Panel is satisfied that the time and effort required is likely to be commensurate with that of a Committee Chair.
10. The Panel notes that similar roles exist in a wide range of Councils, including District, County and Unitary authorities.
11. In order to ensure clarity across the Council, the Panel would strongly urge that a role description for this role be drawn up, in the same way that Gloucester City Council has done for other key member roles.
12. The Panel appreciates that this role is untested in the City Council. It therefore intends to review the position after a reasonable period of operational experience, noting that the role commenced on 20th May, 2024.
13. **RECOMMENDATION 1: That a special responsibility allowance of £5,172.14 (equal to that of Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny and Planning Committees) be approved for this role (title to be agreed), backdated with effect from 20th May, 2024;**
14. **RECOMMENDATION 2: That the views of the Panel at para 7 regarding membership of overview and scrutiny be noted;**
15. **RECOMMENDATION 3: That the Council instructs that a role description be prepared for this role; and**
16. **RECOMMENDATION 4: That the Panel be given an opportunity to review this role after a reasonable period of operation.**

Graham Russell
Chair of Panel