



## Regulatory & Appeals Committee

Date: 2 November 2015  
Time: 7.00 pm  
Venue: Committee Room 1  
District Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe Bucks

### Membership

Chairman: Councillor J A Savage  
Vice Chairman: Councillor Mrs L M Clarke OBE

Councillors: K Ahmed, M C Appleyard, Ms A Baughan, S Broadbent,  
A D Collingwood, C Etholen, R Gaffney, M Hussain JP, D Knights and  
B E Pearce

### Standing Deputies

Councillors Miss S Brown, R Farmer, A R Green, G C Hall, I L McEnnis, R Raja  
and Ms J D Wassell

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## Agenda

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| 1. <b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b><br>To receive any apologies for absence.  |      |
| 2. <b>MINUTES</b><br>To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2015<br>(previously circulated)   |      |
| 3. <b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b><br>To receive any disclosure of disclosable pecuniary interests by<br>Members relating to items on the agenda. If any Member is<br>uncertain as to whether an interest should be disclosed, he or she is<br>asked if possible to contact the District Solicitor prior to the meeting.<br><br>Members are reminded that if they are declaring an interest, they<br>should state the nature of that interest whether or not they are<br>required to withdraw from the meeting. |      |

<b>Item</b>	<b>Page</b>
4. <b>MEMBERS` ALLOWANCES REVIEW</b>	1 - 20
5. <b>SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS (IF ANY)</b>	
6. <b>URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)</b>	

**For further information, please contact Iram Malik 01494 421204,  
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# Agenda Item 4.

## **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES REVIEW**

Officer contact: Ian Hunt, Democratic Services Manager

DDI: 01494 421208

Wards affected: None directly

### **PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:**

*That*

- a) *The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on Members' Allowances be noted.*
- b) *The Panel be thanked for its work.*
- c) *The recommendations from the IRP, as set out at paragraph 8 of the report, be considered and determined accordingly.*
- d) *the Democratic Services Manager be authorised to amend the Scheme accordingly to reflect any agreed amendments.*

### **Corporate Implications**

The Council is required under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to look at councillors' allowances and report its views on the terms and conditions of the Members' Allowances Scheme to the Council. No changes may be made to a scheme by the Council unless the IRP has first considered the matter, and the Council is required to consider the findings of the IRP.

### **Executive Summary**

1. Before agreeing any amendments to the Scheme of Members' Allowances, the Council is required to consider the report of an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) appointed to review those allowances and make recommendations to the Council. The Panel met in July and September this year to consider the scheme of allowances and considered several issues associated with the scheme. The IRP's report is attached to this report as appendix 1.
2. In accordance with the Regulations, notice of receipt of the IRP report has been published in a local newspaper and also on the Council's web site. A copy of the IRP report has also been made available to all Members of the Council.

### **Background**

3. The IRP first met in 2000 to consider and make recommendations concerning basic and special responsibility allowances. The Council's current Scheme of Allowances was introduced following the meeting of the IRP in December 2006 and was updated as a result of the Panel's recommendations made at their previous reviews in 2008, 2010 and 2013. The recommendations arising from

the last review were considered by this Committee in June 2013, and by full Council in July 2013. The updated scheme was then duly implemented.

4. Full details of the IRP's deliberations in this current review are contained within their detailed report at appendix 1.

**The Current Review**

5. It is good practice for an Authority's Members' Allowances Scheme to be reviewed every 2 years, and this review was undertaken two years since the previous review, and immediately after the District Council Elections in May 2015. The present scheme was taken as the starting position for the review.
6. The full report from the IRP at appendix A sets out in detail the methodology of the current review, the process that the IRP adopted, together with the documentation and data that the IRP considered throughout the review. This included detailed benchmarking data and analysis from other District and Borough Councils across the country of their Schemes, and the current Members Allowances Scheme for the Council.
7. All Members of the Council were also invited to submit any representations to the IRP, together with indicating whether they also wished to make any representations in person. The IRP's report, attached as appendix 1, documents the representations that were received and also provides details of the discussions held in person with Councillors.

**Summary of Recommendations Arising From The Review**

8. The report from the IRP at appendix 1 provides a full detailed summary of the issues considered throughout the review. The following table summarises these issues considered by the Panel and the recommendations currently being made to the Council:

No.	Issue	Recommendation & Comments
1	The level of the Chairman's allowance.	The IRP recommend that the allowance for the Chairman of the Council should be the same as for the Leader of the Council and should not be more.

2	The Chairman's allowance not to include travel expenses	The IRP recommend that the allowance should be for the role of Chairman and any travelling expenses incurred should be claimed in the normal way as for any member incurring expenses in their roles.
3	Establishment of a separate budget code 'Chairman's Office expenses' and a portion of the Chairman's allowance no longer be held back for expenses incurred during the year.	The IRP recommend this. This would result in greater transparency for the allowance - the Chairman would then receive all the published amount. The separate code will ensure no further ambiguity arises and that the costs incurred during the year are met from a specific code with nothing owed back to the Chairman at the end of the year
4	The temporary levels implemented by the Leader of the Council (appendix 'A' to the enclosed IRP report).	The IRP recommends that these levels be made permanent and the multipliers as set out within the Scheme be amended accordingly to reflect this.
5	No change to be made to the Basic Allowance.	<p>The IRP recommends that the current level remains unchanged at £4660.</p> <p>The IRP also recommends that at the next meeting of the IRP, it should be asked to review this allowance bearing in mind, particularly, any submissions from Councillors showing a breakdown of their main councillor activities and associated time demands for say, two separate months during the intervening period</p>
6	Link to Officer pay	That the current position be retained.

7	Payment of no more than 1 Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)	Maintain the current provision of paying 1 SRA (the highest) only.
8	Number of SRA payments to Members	The IRP recommend that no more than 40% of Members should receive an SRA payment. (The Panel are mindful of the existing number of Members who receive SRA payments and the comments set out in the HMRC guidance document on members' allowances referred to in the attached IRP report)
9	SRA payment for being a member of the Planning Committee	The IRP recommend that this be withdrawn from the Scheme and be replaced by number 10 below
10	SRA Payment of £50 per site visit attendance for members of the Planning Committee	The IRP recommend that this provision be introduced to the Scheme and replace the existing SRA payment to Planning Committee members to encourage attendance at site visits for planning applications.
11	SRA Payment of £50 per meeting attendance for Licensing Panel members	The IRP recommend that this provision be introduced to the Scheme, in light of the Panel meetings being in office hours and their length.
12	Carer's allowance	The level of the allowance be maintained at no less than the minimum wage, as it is from time to time.

## **Next Steps**

9. Subject to the views of the Committee, the proposed recommendations from the IRP will proceed to full Council at their next meeting on 14 December 2015. Any amendments agreed to the Scheme would then be implemented with immediate effect.

## **Background Papers**

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003;  
Relevant papers from the review held in Democratic Services;

# Agenda Item 4. appendix 1

## Appendix 1

### THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

#### WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

#### REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2015

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, all local authorities are required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to look at councillors' allowances and report its views on the terms and conditions of the Members' Allowances Scheme to the Council.
- 1.2 The IRP had last met to review the scheme in March/April 2013, making recommendations to the Council's Regulatory and Appeals Committee, and full Council. Prior to this, previous reviews had also been undertaken in 2010, 2008 and 2004.
- 1.3 The Council is required to publish details of the IRP's recommendations, together with the Council's determination of the Scheme. This includes placing an advertisement in at least one newspaper in the area setting out that a report had been received from the IRP, publishing the report on the web site, where copies of the report are available for inspection, and describing the main features of the IRP's recommendations including the amounts of allowances the IRP has recommended should be payable to elected Members.
- 1.4 Once the Council has determined the Scheme, it is also required to publish, again in at least one newspaper in the area, that a scheme has been adopted, where this can be inspected, the main features of the scheme, and that in determining the Scheme the Council had regard to the IRP's recommendations.

## **2. MEMBERSHIP**

- 2.1 The Regulations require that an IRP should have at least three Members although a local authority may appoint a larger size Panel.
- 2.2 At the commencement of the current review, there were four Members of the IRP as follows:  
  
Mr B Long (Chairman)  
Mr J Donald  
Mrs V Stattersfield  
Dr B Reid
- 2.3 Mr Long, Mr Donald and Mrs Stattersfield had previously served on the IRP during the last reviews. Dr Reid had been recruited to serve on the IRP since the last review.
- 2.4 The Panel was supported throughout the review by Ian Hunt, Democratic Services Manager and Peter Druce, Senior Democratic Services Officer.



### **3. PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY**

3.1 The IRP met on two occasions during the current review. The first meeting was held on 23 July 2015, and the second meeting took place on 7 September 2015.

#### 23 July 2015

3.2 The Council had agreed at the last review that prior to commencing a review, the IRP should initially meet with the Leader of the Council to discuss the forthcoming review and to invite the Leader to outline any proposals or changes that he/she would like to be considered.

3.3 In accordance with this decision, the IRP met with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Katrina Wood, on 23 July 2015. The Leader confirmed that she had been elected to the role at the Annual Council meeting on 26 May 2015. Upon commencing her role, she had made her various Cabinet appointments, increasing the total numbers on the Cabinet from 8 to 10. She explained that she realised this would result in two additional special responsibility allowance (SRA) payments therefore being made, and she wished to implement these two additional appointments at no extra cost.

3.4 The IRP noted that the Leader had decided to reduce some of the SRA payments to her members in order to keep the cost within the overall allowance budget. In summary, the SRA payment to the Leader, the Deputy Leader, Cabinet Members, and Deputy Members were reduced. Members of the IRP were presented with a summary of the revised levels.

3.5 It was noted that the Members' Allowances Scheme provided for temporary changes to SRA payments provided these were within the overall total budget.

3.6 Appendix 'A' to this report sets out the temporary changes made by the Leader of the Council. Appendix 'B' shows the SRA levels set out in the Scheme.

3.7 Following the meeting with the Leader of the Council, the IRP retired to have a separate meeting to consider the overall allowances review. In advance of the meeting, IRP members had been provided with the following documentation:

- The existing Members Allowances Scheme.
- Report of the allowances review by the IRP in 2013, together with the covering report presented to the Regulatory & Appeals Committee.
- Minutes of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee meeting at which the IRP report was considered.
- Minutes of the Full Council meeting that considered the recommendation from the Regulatory & Appeals Committee

3.8 Upon reviewing the documentation and discussing the forthcoming review, the IRP agreed that it would be extremely helpful to have a detailed data analysis of Members Allowances and SRA payments operated by other District, County and Unitary authorities. The IRP also agreed that all Members of the Council should be informed of the review, and be invited to either submit written representations or speak to the Panel in person on any matter relating to the Members Allowances scheme.

- 3.9 The IRP agreed that a whole day should be set aside to allow for meetings with Members in a morning session, with the afternoon session set aside for reviewing all the documentation in detail, and the formulation of recommendations. It was agreed that this should take place on Monday 7 September 2015, commencing at 10.30am.
- 3.10 It was noted that the final report and associated recommendations of the IRP would be presented to the Council's Regulatory & Appeals Committee at their next meeting. The IRP agreed to invite the Chairman of the Council's Regulatory & Appeals Committee to meet them as part of the review.
- 3.11 The Committee would then consider the report, onwardly then making recommendations to Full Council.
- 3.12 Attached as appendix 'C' to this report is the email (and reminder email) that was circulated to all Members of the Council about the review.

#### 7 September 2015

- 3.13 In advance of the meeting held on 7 September, the IRP was supplied with the additional documentation that had been requested, as referred to in paragraph 3.8 above.

#### Representations from Councillors

- 3.14 Following the email (and further reminder email) sent to Members about the review, 4 District Council Members had indicated that they wished to speak with the IRP, and 2 Councillors had submitted written representations to the IRP. The Chairman of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee had also agreed to meet with the Panel.

#### Verbal Submissions

- 3.15 The IRP first heard from Councillor Mrs Lesley Clarke OBE and Councillor Ian McEnnis. Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE had been Chairman of the Council for the municipal year, May 2014 to May 2015, and Councillor McEnnis had been appointed the new Chairman of Council in May 2015. He had also been Chairman of the Council on two previous occasions. Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE had prepared a brief report for the IRP, setting out her comments in advance, which had been circulated to Panel Members.
- 3.16 The IRP noted that from the current Chairman's allowance, £3,700 was withheld at the start of a chairman's year to meet costs that are incurred by the Chairman during the course of the year. A meeting is held between the Chairman, Accountancy, and the Democratic Services Manager at which the detail of this is outlined. This has been an historic arrangement over the years. At the end of the Chairman's year, if there are any monies left from the balance withheld, this is repaid to the outgoing Chairman.
- 3.17 Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE submitted to the IRP that it was never fully explained to her what the £3,700 were being held back for. She commented that her initial thought was that it was to pay for the Chairman's Reception, but had subsequently discovered that this was already funded elsewhere. Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE outlined to the Panel that the allowance for the Chairman is published but nowhere does it state that £3,700 is

withheld for costs associated with undertaking the role. She commented that this gave a false impression of how much the Chairman was receiving directly as an allowance.

- 3.18 Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE informed the IRP that the expenses that were being paid out of the £3,700 included the costs of security for road closures for the Battle of Britain, wreaths for Battle of Britain, velvet collar for Chairman's chain, Christmas cards, sundry catering costs for events that are part of the Council's calendar (i.e. Battle of Britain, Commonwealth Flag Raising, Armed Forces Day, etc), High Sheriff's visit to Wycombe, picture framing for the Chairman, parking charges for various attendees to Chairman's functions, and flowers decorations for various occasions. She commented that these were Chairman Office's expenses and not directly incurred by the Chairman.
- 3.19 Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE then outlined that her own personal expenditure as Chairman had been a total of £35 (a donation to Amersham Town Council and a ticket for her husband to attend the Scouting Dinner with her). She therefore felt the sum of £3,665 should have been repaid to her. Members of the IRP noted that, following a meeting she had held with the Democratic Services Manager, she had accepted a lesser sum as it had not been possible to fund the full amount due to the lack of budgetary provision.
- 3.20 In summary, Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE commented that the Scheme was not transparent as it did not currently show that the sum of £3,700 was withheld from the Chairman to pay for costs. In addition, she felt that it was not truthful in not revealing this, and recommended that a separate budget code should be set up within the Council for the costs for 'the Chairman's Office' where such costs could be met. The full allowance identified within the Scheme would then be paid to the Chairman. Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE commented that this would be much more transparent, open and truthful, and that the Chairman would not then be paying for Chairman's Office costs from his/her allowance.
- 3.21 Councillor McEnnis was in attendance as Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE had expected to be unavailable and he was going to attend on her behalf. However, in the event she was able to attend. Councillor McEnnis commented that he also didn't realise some of these costs were paid from the withheld amount. He also stated that he had never claimed for travelling expenses during his current or previous service as Chairman. Councillor McEnnis also commented on the Christmas cards and stated that the chairman's office traditionally pays for a portion of these (i.e. it currently came out of the withheld amount), together with the Leader and Chief Executive, but that the portions from the Leader and Chief Executive are met from Council funds.
- 3.22 The IRP thanked Councillors Mrs Clarke OBE and McEnnis for their attendance and their submission. The Panel commented that they were supportive of a separate budget code being established for 'Chairman's Office' to meet costs associated with the role of Chairman, and making this more transparent and operationally, more efficient. They questioned both Councillors on how much time and personal commitment the role of Chairman demanded, and noted that this would often result in telephone calls at any time, a large number of emails, more detailed cases often being referred to the Chairman which can result in a large amount of time being allocated, and the attendance at a number of events.
- 3.23 The IRP then heard from two newly elected Councillors. Councillor Tony Lee and Councillor Graham Peart had been elected to the Council at the District Council

elections held in May 2015.

- 3.24 Councillor Lee informed the IRP that he had worked in Westminster and his son was an MP. Upon being elected to the Council in May, he been appointed to the Planning Committee and the Audit Committee. He commented that he had no background in planning, and emphasised the importance of seeing the sites in question ahead of making decisions on planning applications. Councillor Lee also stated that he had not claimed a penny of travelling expenses since being elected as he felt this would cost more to process it.
- 3.25 The IRP asked Councillor Lee, as a new member to the Council, how much time he spent on council duties. He responded that this was 1 – 1 and a half hours per day on average, and he often attended 2 meetings a week. This did not include attending planning site visits, which he commented tended to be held once a month. The IRP also asked about constituency work, and Councillor Lee stated that he was still a relatively new member so had not received much work. The IRP asked if, as a new member, he would be willing to keep a log of his councillor activities and the time spent on them, to assist the Panel in determining whether the basic allowance was at the correct level. Councillor Lee stated that it appeared that some councillors appeared to be more active than others, and perhaps should be rewarded for that, but accepted this would be difficult to implement within an allowances scheme.
- 3.26 Councillor Peart outlined that he was slightly confused by the allowances scheme and felt the current basic allowance level of £4,660 was not going to attract anyone to the role. He particularly referred to attracting younger people to the role, and commented that it may be better not to have any allowance at all.
- 3.27 The IRP also asked Councillor Peart how much time he spent on council duties, and he responded by indicating that he spent on average, a couple of hours a day. He also felt that some councillors appeared to be more active than others. The IRP asked if he would be willing to keep a log of activities and time spent on doing them, and Councillor Peart stated that he would be willing to do this if asked. He also confirmed he had been appointed to the role of Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance, and was also on the Audit Committee. In summarising his views to the IRP, he felt that the role should be undertaken voluntary, with out of pocket expenses met.
- 3.28 The IRP also heard from Councillor Tony Green, who had been on the Council since 1999, and who was currently Chairman of the High Wycombe Town Committee. Councillor Green had prepared a written submission for the IRP, which he circulated in the meeting at the commencement of his comments. The submission outlined that there was no nationally agreed level of allowances for councillors, resulting in allowances varying between different authorities. Councillor Green also commented that councillors within the same authority but with different workloads or commitments receive the same allowance. He also submitted that some Committees have higher workloads than others, such as Planning Committee which met on a monthly basis and whose members are also expected to attend site visits during the day. In addition, Councillor Green referred to the role of a member serving on a Licensing Panel, meetings for which are held during office hours and which can last for several hours. Councillor Green also stated that as there is no requirement for a councillor to be a member of any Committees, some councillors can attend less than one meeting a month but receive the same allowance as a member who is on a number of Committees and attending several meetings a month.

- 3.29 Councillor Green also commented on the level of the basic allowance, stating that having compared the allowances paid in Wycombe with those of neighbouring district councils, he believed that the Wycombe allowances were, in the main, below those of its neighbours, especially when the population of the districts were taken into account. Within his written submission, he presented a brief table showing the level of basic allowance and population for Wycombe and other district councils.
- 3.30 Councillor Green also provided within his submission an estimation of the number of hours that he spent attending council related meetings and their associated work. He had also estimated the time spent dealing with emails and other correspondence. The IRP thanked Councillor Green for his summary.
- 3.31 His written submission also referred to an authority that paid the Chairmen of their Licensing Committee and Standards Committee an allowance for each meeting they attended. Councillor Green informed the IRP that he believed that payment for members of the Planning Committee and Licensing Panels would help compensate Councillors for the time they spent doing this work.
- 3.32 In conclusion, Councillor Green believed that the basic allowance should be around £5,000 and that the allowance for Committee Chairmen should be around £3,000. He also informed the Panel that he believed that a payment of £50 per meeting should be paid to members of the Planning Committee who attend both the meeting and the associated site visit, and £50 per meeting to members who sit on a Licensing Panel.
- 3.33 The IRP thanked Councillor Green for his attendance and for his written submission.
- 3.34 The Panel also met with Councillor John Savage, the Chairman of the Regulatory and Appeals Committee. The IRP thanked Councillor Savage for meeting with them and asked how their report was normally handled at the Committee meeting. Councillor Savage explained that Members of the Committee discussed and debated the report and recommendations, before submitting their comments with recommendations on to the Full Council. The Panel then referred to their previous discussions with Members earlier in the day, and their feeling was that some members did more than others when undertaking their role. The IRP had asked if Members would be prepared to log their activities and the time spent undertaking them, and also asked Councillor Savage whether he would also be prepared to do this. He responded that inevitably some members would have larger workloads than others, and that, personally, the keeping of a spreadsheet to log activities was not something he would undertake. The IRP commented that without a breakdown of hours and activities, this made an informed evaluation of the basic allowance harder to undertake, and Councillor Savage commented that he fully noted this, but that he would not personally undertake it.
- 3.35 The IRP also asked Councillor Savage about SRAs, commenting it was their feeling that 40 members currently received such an allowance, and asked if he felt this was too many. Councillor Savage commented that he was surprised it was that many who did receive an SRA, acknowledging that he received one as Chairman of the Regulatory and Appeals Committee. He did question if Deputy Cabinet Members should receive a payment but fully supported the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members receiving one. He commented he had also previously been Chairman of the Council and that he would have undertaken that no matter what the level of allowance.

- 3.36 The IRP thanked Councillor Savage for his attendance and co-operation.

#### Written Representations

- 3.37 The Panel had received 2 written submissions from Councillors. Councillor Chris Whitehead had submitted that he had incurred travelling expenses attending Parish Council meetings within his ward and expenses associated with hiring a table in the local monthly covered market. He had commented that both of his claims for payment had been rejected as they fell outside of the approved duties for payment within the current Scheme. In addition, Councillor Whitehead had also submitted why wasn't payment of the allowances tax free, commenting that either it was a salary and therefore taxable, or an expenses allowance, in which case he felt this should not be.
- 3.38 In considering Councillor Whitehead's submission, the IRP noted the approved duties summary within the Allowances Scheme which did not include the attendance at Parish Council meetings. In relation to the comments about tax, the Panel noted that the HMRC view was that the allowances are remuneration for the position held and hence as such is fully taxable.
- 3.39 The Panel had also received a written submission from Councillor Alex Collingwood, who commented that the workload and responsibility for all councillors had increased substantially since the cabinet system was introduced. He also submitted that all allowances including special responsibility should increase by inflation annually. In addition, Councillor Collingwood's submission outlined that the basic allowance should increase to £6,000 per annum with effect from May 2016, or alternatively, the basic allowance be kept as it was, and all councillors receive a £100 allowance per meeting for committee meetings including task and finish group meetings. His submission also asked the IRP to review the special responsibility allowances and compared to neighbouring authorities, with a view to bringing them into line based on the size of the Council and budget. In conclusion, Councillor Collingwood's submission also commented that he was keen to get more younger people involved and being councillors, and that a large number of existing councillors worked full time.
- 3.40 The IRP were grateful for Councillor Collingwood's submission. The Panel had obtained comparative data for other authorities covering every allowance within the Scheme, including special responsibility allowances and felt that Wycombe's allowances compared favourably, although did feel that the level of the Chairman's allowance was high compared to other authorities. With regard to the level of the basic allowance, the IRP agreed that the existing level for Wycombe again compared favourably, although did comment that they required more detailed data from Councillors on the time spent when undertaking Council duties to be able to properly evaluate whether any increase in the basic allowance should take place.

#### Review of Documentation

- 3.41 The Panel reviewed in detail all the documentation with which it had been presented, together with the submissions received from Councillors.
- 3.42 As stated above, the Panel felt that in order to properly evaluate whether there was a case to increase the level of the basic allowance, details relating to the amount of time that Members spent on their Council duties was required. The Panel commented that this was why they had asked Members when speaking with them about how long they

spent on their Council duties, as they felt they did not currently have sufficient data or any indication as to how much time was spent, or the nature of the duties undertaken. The IRP encourage Members to submit such information to future reviews to assist them.

- 3.43 In addition, a member of the Panel had obtained the HMRC guidance document relating to members allowances. With regard to the basic allowance at paragraphs 67 and 68 of the document, it stated that “having established what local Councillors do, and the hours which are devoted to these tasks the local authorities will need to take a view on the rate at which, and the number of hours for which, councillors ought to be remunerated. It is important that some element of the work of members continues to be voluntary – that some hours are not remunerated.”
- 3.44 The IRP also felt that, when comparing the level of allowances with other local authorities, there was currently no case for increasing the basic allowance at the current time.
- 3.45 The Panel was grateful for the written submissions from Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE and Councillor Green.
- 3.46 With regard to the submission from Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE, the IRP supported the additional transparency for the allowance for the Chairman of the Council, and the setting up of a separate budget code for expenditure associated with the Chairman during his/her year. The Panel, having compared the level of the allowance with other authorities, also felt that the level for the Chairman’s allowance should not exceed that of the Leader of the Council.
- 3.47 With regard to the submission from Councillor Green, the IRP did not feel that the basic allowance should be increased, and were also satisfied that, upon reviewing the comparative data with other local authorities in detail regarding the special responsibility allowances, including Committee Chairmen, the level of allowance for Committee Chairmen should remain unchanged. However, the Panel did note with interest the proposal relating to attending planning site visits and serving on a Licensing Panel. They also took into account the views of Councillor Lee in his verbal submission. To this end, the IRP felt that the existing special responsibility payment for being a member of the Planning Committee should be withdrawn and that a new special responsibility allowance payment of £50 per attendance at a site visit should be introduced to encourage attendance at site visits. In addition, the IRP wished to recommend that a new special responsibility allowance payment of £50 per meeting should be introduced for serving on a Licensing Panel, due to the meeting being held in office hours and the length of the meetings.
- 3.48 The IRP also considered, with interest, the revised temporary levels that the Leader of the Council had introduced (attached as appendix ‘A’ to the report), and agreed that these revised levels should be adopted as the new permanent levels.
- 3.49 The Panel also further reviewed the HMRC guidance document on members’ allowances and noted comments relating to special responsibility allowances. Paragraph 71 stated that “the Regulations do not limit the number of special responsibility allowances which may be paid, nor so the regulations prohibit the payment of more than one special responsibility allowance to any one member”. Paragraph 72 went on to state that “however, these are important considerations for local authorities. If the majority of

members of a council receive a special responsibility allowance, the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified”.

3.50 The IRP felt that at least 40 members of Wycombe District Council were currently in receipt of a special responsibility allowance. In light of the HMRC guidance outlined in the above paragraph, the Panel wished to recommend that no more than 40% of Members of the Council should receive this allowance. The IRP did wish to maintain the current arrangement that only one special responsibility allowance should be paid (the highest) where a member may qualify for more than one.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The IRP noted the relevant statutory regulations and legislative framework, when considering its recommendations arising from the current review of allowances. In addition, all documentation submitted, together with the verbal and written submissions received from Councillors were also taken into full account and considered in great detail. The IRP also noted that its recommendations were advisory.

4.2 The Panel wished to make clear that some of the recommendations made are as a result of representations made to them by Councillors.

4.3 The Panel’s conclusions and recommendations were as follows:

No.	Issue	Recommendation & Comments
1	The level of the Chairman’s allowance.	The IRP recommend that the allowance for the Chairman of the Council should be the same as for the Leader of the Council and should not be more.
2	The Chairman’s allowance not to include travel expenses	The IRP recommend that the allowance should be for the role of Chairman and any travelling expenses incurred should be claimed in the normal way as for any member incurring expenses in their roles.
3	Establishment of a separate budget code ‘Chairman’s Office expenses’ and a portion of the Chairman’s allowance no longer be held back for expenses incurred during the year.	The IRP recommend this. This would result in greater transparency for the allowance - the Chairman would then receive all the published amount. The separate code will ensure no further ambiguity arises and that the costs incurred during the year are met from a specific code with nothing owed back to the Chairman at the end of the year.
4	The temporary levels implemented by the Leader of the Council (appendix ‘A’ to this report).	The IRP recommends that these levels be made permanent and the multipliers as set out within the Scheme be amended accordingly to reflect this.



5	No change to be made to the Basic Allowance.	The IRP recommends that the current level remains unchanged at £4660  The IRP also recommends that at the next meeting of the IRP, it should be asked to review this allowance bearing in mind, particularly, any submissions from Councillors showing a breakdown of their main councillor activities and associated time demands for say, two separate months during the intervening period.
6	Link to Officer pay	That the current position be retained.
7	Payment of no more than 1 SRA	Maintain the current provision of paying 1 SRA (the highest) only.
8	Number of SRA payments to Members	The IRP recommend that no more than 40% of Members should receive an SRA payment. (The Panel are mindful of the existing number of Members who receive SRA payments and the comments set out in the HMRC guidance document on members' allowances)
9	SRA payment for being a member of the Planning Committee	The IRP recommend that this be withdrawn from the Scheme and be replaced by number 10 below
10	SRA Payment of £50 per site visit attendance for members of the Planning Committee	The IRP recommend that this provision be introduced to the Scheme and replace the existing SRA payment to Planning Committee members to encourage attendance at site visits for planning applications.
11	SRA Payment of £50 per meeting attendance for Licensing Panel members	The IRP recommend that this provision be introduced to the Scheme, in light of the Panel meetings being in office hours and their length.
12	Carer's allowance	The level of the allowance be maintained at no less than the minimum wage, as it is from time to time.

## 5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The comments and recommendations of the Panel will be referred to the next meeting of the Regulatory and Appeals Committee on 2 November 2015, with a view to a recommendation from that Committee being taken to full Council on 14 December 2015.

## Schedule 1

(NB: This is a working copy for the current IRP review and not the formal Scheme. It shows the temporary amounts put in place by the Leader and includes updated figures for the other Group Leaders).

1. The following are specified as the posts in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable, and the amounts of those allowances:

	<b>£</b>
Chairman of the Council (plus £3,600 for costs associated with undertaking the role)	15,483
Vice-Chairman of the Council	2,580
Leader of the Council	14,200
Leader of the Labour Group*	1,631
Leader of East Wycombe Independent Party*	815
Leader of the Independent Group*	544
Deputy Leader of the Council	9,550
Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration	7,500
Cabinet Member for Community	7,500
Cabinet Member for Environment	7,500
Cabinet Member for Finance &	7,500
Cabinet Member for HR, ICT and Shared Services Support	7,500
Cabinet Member for Planning	7,500
Cabinet Member for Housing	7,500
Cabinet Member for Youth	7,500
Chairman of Improvement and Review Commission	3,495
Chairman of Planning Committee	4,660
Chairman of Regulatory and Appeals Committee	1,165
Chairman of Standards Committee	1,165
Chairman of Audit Committee	1,165
Chairman of Joint Staff Committee	1,165
Chairman of High Wycombe Town Committee	1,165
Chairman of Licensing Committee	1,165
Chairman of Personnel and Development Committee	1,165
Vice-Chairman of Improvement and Review Commission	1,165
Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee	1,165

Vice-Chairman of Regulatory and Appeals Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of Standards Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of Audit Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of High Wycombe Town Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of Licensing Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of Personnel and Development Committee	291
Member of Planning Committee (excluding Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Standing Deputies)	291
Deputy Cabinet Member	903
Members of Independent Remuneration Panel	27.87 per session + expenses
Independent Members – Standards Committee	£204.36

(\* - subject to the number of Members in the Group and in accordance with the formula set out in the Scheme)

Leader of the Labour Group:	$(\text{No in group} \div \text{total no of Cllrs}) \times (\text{Basic Allowance} \times 3.5)$
Leader of the East Wycombe Independent Party	$(\text{No in group} \div \text{total no of Cllrs}) \times (\text{Basic Allowance} \times 3.5)$
Leader of the Independent Group:	$(\text{No in group} \div \text{total no of Cllrs}) \times (\text{Basic Allowance} \times 3.5)$

## APPENDIX B

### Schedule 1

2. The following are specified as the posts in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable, and the amounts of those allowances:

	£
Chairman of the Council	19,100
Vice-Chairman of the Council	2,580
Leader of the Council	16,309
Leader of the Labour Group*	1,631
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group*	2,446
Leader of the Independent Group*	544
Deputy Leader of the Council	11,649
Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration	9,319
Cabinet Member for Community	9,319
Cabinet Member for Environment	9,319
Cabinet Member for Finance	9,319
Cabinet Member for HR, ICT and Shared Services Support	9,319
Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainability	9,319
Chairman of Improvement and Review Commission	3,495
Chairman of Planning Committee	4,660
Chairman of Regulatory and Appeals Committee	1,165
Chairman of Standards Committee	1,165
Chairman of Audit Committee	1,165
Chairman of Joint Staff Committee	1,165
Chairman of High Wycombe Town Committee	1,165
Chairman of Licensing Committee	1,165
Chairman of Personnel and Development Committee	1,165
Vice-Chairman of Improvement and Review Commission	1,165
Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee	1,165
Vice-Chairman of Regulatory and Appeals Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of Standards Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of Audit Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of High Wycombe Town Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of Licensing Committee	291
Vice-Chairman of Personnel and Development Committee	291
Member of Planning Committee (excluding Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Standing Deputies)	291
Deputy Cabinet Member	1,032

## APPENDIX C

### Ian Hunt

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**From:** Ian Hunt  
**Sent:** 14 August 2015 11:21  
**To:** Full Members List  
**Cc:** CommitteeServices; Charles Meakings  
**Subject:** FW: Members Allowances - Review

Dear Councillor,

Just a quick reminder to my initial email below of 24<sup>th</sup> July, that if you would like to meet in person with the Panel or wish to make any written representations, please do let us know here in Committee Services ([Committeeservices@Wycombe.gov.uk](mailto:Committeeservices@Wycombe.gov.uk)) by no later than Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August.

Thank you to those Members who have let us know.

Many thanks  
Ian

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**From:** Ian Hunt  
**Sent:** 24 July 2015 13:55  
**To:** Full Members List  
**Cc:** CommitteeServices; Karen Satterford; Charles Meakings; Ian Westgate; Julie Openshaw  
**Subject:** Members Allowances - Review

Dear Councillor,

#### Members Allowances – Background

As you will be aware, the Council has a Members Allowance Scheme, which sets out all the allowances paid to Members. Each member receives the same basic allowance, can claim travelling expenses, and the scheme also provides for the payment of special responsibility allowances for positions held such as Chairman of Council, Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet member, Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman etc.

Members Allowances Schemes for all local authorities are governed by The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. These regulations set out the allowances that can be made – e.g. that the basic allowance shall be the same for every Member, etc.

The Regulations also state that every local authority shall have an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) who should undertake periodic reviews of the allowances. At least one review should take place every 4 years and it is good practice to undertake one every two years.

The last review here at WDC was in the summer of 2013, and it was agreed by Full Council at that time, that the next review should be held in the summer of 2015, after the District Council Elections.

To this end, I write to inform you that the next review is about to commence.

#### Process For A Review

Following a review, the IRP produce a report, which sets out how they undertook their review, who they spoke to, the documents they considered and any other issues they took into consideration. The report will then set out recommendations to the Council to consider.

The Council's Constitution provides for the IRP's recommendations to be considered by the Regulatory & Appeals Committee. The Committee, in turn, consider the IRP's recommendations and refer their views on to Full Council (it is Full Council who have the ultimate power to amend the Members Allowances Scheme).

The IRP is an independent, advisory body and can only make recommendations. The Council is not duty bound to accept these recommendations, but it must take note of them and respond to them – it can accept, reject or amend any recommendations presented to it.

### The Current Review

In accordance with previous reviews, the IRP has given notice that it wishes to invite any Member to make **representations to** them on the allowances and their levels, etc – the IRP will be meeting on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September and wish to invite any Member to come in person to speak with them about any views or representations they wish to make on the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> September (from 10.30am). The IRP is also willing to accept any written representations.

The IRP is particularly keen to hear from and meet with newly elected Members for their views.

If you would like to meet in person with the Panel or wish to make any written representations, please do let us know here in Committee Services ([Committeeservices@Wycombe.gov.uk](mailto:Committeeservices@Wycombe.gov.uk)) by no later than Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August.

At this stage, it is proposed that any recommendations from the IRP's review will be presented to the Regulatory & Appeals Committee at their meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

For your information, a copy of the existing Members Allowances Scheme is available on the Council's web site.

<https://councillors.wycombe.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Part%204%20-%20Members%20Allowances%20Scheme&ID=207&RPID=30408763&sch=doc&cat=12933&path=12933>

Please do not hesitate to contact me and colleagues in Committee Services if you have questions or queries.

Many thanks  
Ian

Ian Hunt  
Democratic Services Manager  
Wycombe District Council  
Queen Victoria Road  
High Wycombe  
HP11 1BB

[www.wycombe.gov.uk](http://www.wycombe.gov.uk)