REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
IN RESPECT OF ALLOWANCES PAID TO
MEMBERS OF CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL
2020-21

THE PANEL

The Panel, which is appointed to make recommendations to the Council in respect of the allowances paid to Councillors, comprises the following members:

Patrick Cleere
Sumeet Dhul
Paul Smith

REMIT

The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require, amongst other things, that the Council should have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Panel in agreeing allowances paid to Councillors.

Those Regulations require the Panel to produce a report making recommendations as to:

- The amount of basic allowance;
- Whether special responsibility allowances should be paid, and if so, the duties to which they should apply and the amounts of those allowances;
- Whether an allowance relating to the expense of arranging for the care of children or dependents should be available (carers’ allowance) and, if so, the amount of that allowance;
- Whether travelling and subsistence allowances should be paid, and, if so, the duties for which they should be payable and the amounts of those allowances;
- Whether a basic allowance should be paid to co-opted members, and, if so, the amount of that allowance.
REPORT

This is the Independent Panel’s report of its review of Members’ Allowances for 2020/21. This report has been compiled and agreed by members of the Panel following meetings and consideration of the relevant issues between September 2019 and January 2020. The Head of Strategic Support attended the meetings to assist the Panel in consideration of these matters.

Link to Officer Pay Awards

As overall changes are now linked to officer pay awards, the Panel did not consider any general uplift.

Special Responsibility Allowances for the Scrutiny Committee Structure

All councillors were asked if there were any issues they wished the Panel to consider, and a suggestion was made that the special responsibility allowances for the Chairs and Vice-chairs of the three directorate scrutiny committees were too high, and should be reviewed in light of them only meeting four times a year and having relatively low workloads in comparison to the Scrutiny Commission, which meets on a monthly basis.

All Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs were consulted about this suggestion, and whilst one supported a potential decrease in the relevant allowances, another disagreed and referred to the amount of work being done outside the formal committee meetings in terms of scrutiny panel work and research.

The Group Leaders were also consulted, and they both expressed opinions that the new scrutiny structure had only been in place since May 2019 and therefore was still ‘bedding-in’, and that the workload of the committees may increase as they increased their knowledge and began to request further reports for their agendas.

Having taken into account the comments received, and being aware that the allowances in question are responsibility allowances rather than attendance allowances, the Panel decided to recommend that there should be no change for 2020/21, although they would review the situation again next year.

Loughborough Area Committee

The Panel had previously decided that they would review the issue of special responsibility allowances for the Loughborough Area Committee once it had been in operation for a while, and so they now asked the Chair and Vice-chair for their views.
Having considered the submissions made by the Chair and Vice-chair, and also having consulted the Group Leaders, the Panel concluded that as the Committee was not a decision making body and had a purely consultative role, that no special responsibility allowances should be recommended.

They agreed that if circumstances changed in the future, then they would consider the matter again.

**Mileage Claims for IT Support Visits and for Attending Meetings as an Observer**

The Panel considered issues relating to councillors claiming mileage expenses for visiting the Council’s offices for IT support issues and for attending committee meetings as observers, rather than as a member of the body or having been formally requested to attend to assist with agenda items.

The Panel were of the view that in both such instances, if councillors wished to claim mileage then they should do so under the ‘duty day’ provisions rather than as an ‘approved duty’, and they therefore recommend that Schedule 5 of the Scheme of Allowances should be amended accordingly.

**THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME OF MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES FOR 2020/21**

The Panel has reviewed the Council’s Scheme of Members’ Allowances and have incorporated the recommendations contained within this report.

A copy is attached to this report for approval.