

At a meeting of the Independent Panel for Councillors Allowances held in Top Floor, Allerdale House, Workington on Thursday 16 December 2021 at 1.00 pm

## **Members**

Mr Richard Askew  
Mr Phil Robinson

Mr Chris Nattress

Apologies for absence were received from Rev. Keith Teasdale

## **Staff Present**

G Roach and A Seekings

### **6. Election of a Chair**

Chris Nattress was elected Chair for the ensuing meeting.

### **7. Minutes**

An error was highlighted under minute number 2 Minutes: the date of the meeting should have read 13 January 2020 and not 2021.

### **Agreed**

That the minutes of the meeting be signed as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

### **8. Declaration of Interests**

None declared.

### **9. Member Representations**

The following written representation was provided to the panel from Councillor M Heaslip;

'I think the chairing of Development Panel is grossly underpaid given the workload and the catastrophe factor, compared with some executive portfolios'.

The Chair thanked the member for contacting the Panel and noted that it would be considered as part of the deliberations in the next item when setting the 2022/23 Scheme of Allowances.

### **10. Members Allowance Scheme 2022/23**

The Independent Panel for Councillors Allowances was presented with a report that sought a review of the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme and recommendations for Council on a new scheme for 2022/23.

To assist the Panel with its review the report contained the following information:

- 2021/22 Members Allowances Scheme
- Comparisons between the Members Allowance Scheme of Councils using the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Nearest Neighbours Model
- Comparisons between the Members Allowances Schemes of the Cumbrian District Councils
- Summary of the comparisons between Local Councils and Nearest Neighbours (CIPFA)
- A summary of Executive Portfolio responsibilities
- Details on the current opposition groups within Allerdale and comparative figures
- Representations from current members of Allerdale Borough Council.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) provided a short verbal update to the Panel members on the past twelve months since the last meeting including the political makeup of the Council, the Committee structure and works.

The Independent Panel has previously reviewed the scheme of allowances and recommended an increase to the basic allowance of £100.

The recommendation was not endorsed, and members forwent an increase to the basic allowances for both 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The current Members Allowances Scheme 2021/22 was approved with allowances frozen at existing levels and came into effect on 01 April 2021.

For the 2022/23 review members considered first the level of **Basic Allowance** payable to all Council Members.

The Panel acknowledged that their recommendation of a £100 increase to the Basic allowance for 2021/22 had been rejected by full Council and very much so appreciated the reasons for it doing so.

The basic allowance is to provide some recompense for personal time and expense whilst carrying out the role and duties as an elected councillor.

At its review of the Allowances Scheme on 11 January 2016, (for the 2016/17 scheme) the Panel had recommended that the allowance be increased by £100 and that the allowance be reviewed annually with a view to increasing the allowance by a further £100 each year over the next four-year period until 2020/21. The Panel made the same recommendation for years 2017/18,

2018/19 and 2019/20 and was agreed by Council, however the recommendations were rejected for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The increase of the Basic Allowance by £100 over the preceding five years was to align the Basic Allowance with other comparative authorities.

As the increase of £100 was rejected for the last two years, the Panel propose that this increase be made for 2022/23, acting at the final '£100 increment'.

The Panel reviewed the Basic Allowances of Cumbrian Authorities and neighbouring authorities (CIPFA), noting that the Basic Allowance for Allerdale members is low in comparison.

The Panel stated that the political principles of not increasing allowances are not for them to decide, the Panel are to review the allowances based on the work of elected members, including accountability and responsibilities.

The panel recommended that the Basic Allowance be increased from £3,366.65 to £3,466.65.

Next, the Panel reviewed the level of allowances payable to the **Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council**.

The Panel noted that the Leader of the Council allowance was high in comparison to Cumbrian and neighbouring authorities but acknowledged that this role was akin to a full-time job. The Panel however did not feel that there was any requirement to amend the allowance, accepting that the level of allowance was acceptable.

The panel recommended that the allowance payable to the Leader of the Council remains set at £21,000.00

The Panel noted that the level of the Deputy Leader allowance to the Leader's allowance was comparable and that it should remain the same.

The panel recommended that the allowance payable to the Deputy Leader of the Council remains set at £9,972.87.

The panel then reviewed the level of allowance payable to **Executive** members. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) explained that although subtle portfolio changes were made the responsibility of Executive functions remained the same.

The Panel felt that the allowance paid at Allerdale was slightly lower in comparison and recommended a small increase in line with others in comparison.

The panel recommended that the allowance payable to the Executive Members of the Council be increased by £300 from £5,441.42 to £5,741.42.

The Panel then discussed the allowance payable for each chair of the Council committees.

On review of the **Chair of Development Panel** allowance the Panel considered the member representation that they had received in relation to the Chair of Development Panel detailed in the previous item.

The allowance for the Chair of the Development Panel was increased in 2016/17 and 2017/18 and on reflection the Panel did not see a reason to further change the allowance payable. Those increases were introduced to compensate for the high level of workload and responsibility afforded to this position.

The Panel noted that the role and the overall workload has remained the same, they therefore felt that the allowance was set at the right place.

The panel recommended that the allowance payable to the Chair of the Development Panel remains set at £4,500.00

The Panel noted that following representations received, a detailed review of the Overview and Scrutiny Chair took place in January 2020 for the 2020/21 members allowance scheme. From the previous twelve months the Panel did not see any significant changes in workload for each co-chair, nor that in the coming months.

The Panel recommended that the allowance payable to the **Chair of Overview and Scrutiny** remains set at £2,720.71 (50% payable to each co-chair)

The Panel recommended that the allowance payable to the **Chair of Licensing Committee** remains set at £2,992.78

The Panel recommended that the allowance payable to the **Chair of Standards Committee** remains set at £2,720.71

The Panel recommended that the allowance payable to the **Chair of Audit Committee** remains set at £2,720.71

The Panel then reviewed the level of allowance payable to the **Leader of the Opposition**.

The Panel noted the allowance payable to the Leader of the Opposition varied significantly from Cumbrian and CIPFA neighbouring authorities. This is due to political composition and group membership in each authority; some authorities pay an amount per party member of the opposition party and/or pay an allowance to both the leader of the opposition and leaders of secondary opposition groups.

At their last meeting the Panel agreed to carry out a thorough review of this allowance for 2022/23.

Members noted that currently Allerdale pays this allowance to the Leader of the largest party in opposition and that the member receiving this allowance has changed on several occasions due to changes within political groups.

The current political make-up of the Council was as follows;

Allerdale Conservatives – 18 members

Allerdale Independents – 15 members

Labour – 14 members

Moorclose Independent – 1 member

St Michaels Independent – 1 member

There are therefore currently two main opposition groups with a difference of only one member and under the current Allowances Scheme only the Leader of the Allerdale Independents receives an allowance.

The Panel members felt that the simplest and fairest way to address the imbalance was to introduce a sliding scale according to group membership numbers. This would also assist for any future changes in group numbers.

Therefore the panel recommended that the allowance payable to the Leader(s) of the Opposition Groups be set as follows:

- 15 or more group members £2,750
- 10-14 members £2,250
- 5-9 members £1,750
- below 5 members - no allowance

Sections 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act 1972 allow the Council to pay the **Mayor and Deputy Mayor** an allowance as the Council thinks reasonable. The Panel included the allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council in its review.

The Panel noted that due to the pandemic the ceremonial duties of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had reduced through no fault of their own and that events and activities were starting to increase again.

The Panel was satisfied with the allowances and recommended that the allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council remain set at £7,071.00 and £507.00 respectively.

The panel then reviewed the **co-optee allowance**, an overview was provided of the role of the Independent Person for Standards.

The Panel undertook a benchmarking exercise and concluded that each appointed Independent Person should receive some allowance to compensate for their time spent in assessing Standards complaints and attending meetings of the Standards Committee.

The recommendation of the Panel was that each Independent Person should receive a £25.00 allowance for each 2 hour session attended.

A session is defined as an individual assessment meeting, whether that be in person or via Teams or as attendance at a meeting of the Standards Committee.

The Panel reviewed the levels of travel allowance payable to Councillors and co-opted members of the authority. The levels of allowance were brought in line with the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) approved rates for business travel mileage for employees' own vehicles following the Panel's review on 11 January 2016. It was noted that the same rates applied to the Council's employees.

The Panel recommended that the levels of travel allowance payable to Councillors and co-opted members remain set at the HMRC approved rates as follows:

- Cars and vans:  
First 10,000 miles: 45p  
Above 10,000 miles: 25p
- Motorcycles:  
First 10,000 miles: 24p  
Above 10,000 miles: 24p
- Bikes:  
First 10,000 miles: 20p  
Above 10,000 miles: 20p

The Panel reviewed the levels of subsistence allowance payable to Councillors and co-opted members of the authority. The levels of subsistence allowance were increased following the Panel's review on 21 December 2016, to bring them in line with the proposals being made at the time to the levels of subsistence allowance for Council employees. The Panel recommended that the levels of subsistence allowance remain set at their current rates, being:

- Breakfast - an absence of more than 4 hours before 11.00 am:  
£6.95
- Lunch - an absence of more than 4 hours, including the period between 12 noon and 2:00 pm:  
£9.50
- Tea - an absence of more than 4 hours, including the period between 3 pm and 6 pm:  
£0.00
- Evening Meal - an absence of more than 4 hours ending after 7 pm:  
£13.15

The Panel reviewed the Dependants' Carers' Allowance, which had been included in the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme following the Panel's review on 11 January 2016. It was noted that since the introduction of the allowance there had not yet been any uptake.

The Panel still considered it important that this allowance remained included in the scheme and recommended that the Dependants' Carers' Allowance remain payable at the full receipted rate from a registered carer and limited to 8 hours per week.

### **Recommended**

That with effect from 1 April 2022:

1. the Basic Allowance be increased from £3,366.65 to £3,466.65
2. the allowance payable to the Leader of the Council remain set at £21,000.00
3. the allowance payable to the Deputy Leader of the Council remain set at £9,972.87
4. the allowance payable to members of the Executive be increased by £300 from £5,441.42 to £5,741.42
5. the allowance payable to the Chair of the Development Panel remain set at £4,500.00
6. the allowance payable to Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee remain set at £2,720.71
7. the allowance payable to the Chair of the Licensing Committee remain set at £2,992.78
8. the allowance payable to the Chair of the Audit Committee remain set at £2,720.71
9. the allowance payable to the Chair of the Standards Committee remain set at £2,720.71
10. the allowance payable to the Leader(s) of the Opposition Groups be set as follows:
  - 15 or more group members £2,750
  - 10-14 members £2,250
  - 5-9 members £1,750
  - below 5 members - no allowance
11. the allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council remain set at £7,071.00 and £507.00 respectively
12. the rates for Travel Allowance for councillors remain set as follows:

- Cars and vans:  
     First 10,000 miles: 45p  
     Above 10,000 miles: 25p
- Motorcycles:  
     First 10,000 miles: 24p  
     Above 10,000 miles: 24p
- Bikes:  
     First 10,000 miles: 20p  
     Above 10,000 miles: 20p

13. the levels of Subsistence Allowance for councillors remain set as follows:

- Breakfast - an absence of more than 4 hours before 11.00 am:  
     £6.95
- Lunch - an absence of more than 4 hours, including the period between 12 noon and 2:00 pm:  
     £9.50
- Tea - an absence of more than 4 hours, including the period between 3 pm and 6 pm:  
     £0.00
- Evening Meal - an absence of more than 4 hours ending after 7 pm:  
     £13.15

14. the rates for Travel Allowance payable to co-opted members of the Council remain set as follows:

- Cars and vans:  
     First 10,000 miles: 45p  
     Above 10,000 miles: 25p
- Motorcycles:  
     First 10,000 miles: 24p  
     Above 10,000 miles: 24p
- Bikes:  
     First 10,000 miles: 20p



Above 10,000 miles: 20p

15. the levels of Subsistence Allowance payable to co-opted members of the Council remain set as follows:

- Breakfast - an absence of more than 4 hours before 11.00 am:

£6.95

- Lunch - an absence of more than 4 hours, including the period between 12 noon and 2:00 pm:

£9.50

- Tea - an absence of more than 4 hours, including the period between 3 pm and 6 pm:

£0.00

- Evening Meal - an absence of more than 4 hours ending after 7 pm:

£13.15

16. the Dependants' Carers' Allowance remain in the Members' Allowances Scheme payable at the full receipted rate from a registered carer and limited to 8 hours per week

17. no Special Responsibility Allowances be superannuated

18. a Co-Optees' Allowance be introduced for each Independent Person to receive a £25.00 allowance for each 2 hour session attended.

A session is defined as an individual assessment meeting, whether that be in person or via Teams or as attendance at a meeting of the Standards Committee.

## **11. Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy for Members**

The Panel considered a draft policy for, if approved, inclusion with the Councillors Allowances Scheme.

The objective of the policy was to provide members with the provision to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption and to ensure appropriate arrangements in place and set out Members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances.

### **Resolved**

That Council be recommended to approve the Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy for members as part of the Members Allowances Scheme.

**The meeting closed at 3.00 pm**