

# Report of Independent Remuneration Panel – August 2018

## A) Special Responsibility Allowances

### Background

With the increase in joint working with other authorities, most notably the Combined Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership, we were asked to consider an increase in the number of Special Responsibility Allowances to include six additional responsibility posts. (Ref. Minutes of Council meeting Thursday 22 February 2018 on the recommendation of the Civic Affairs Committee held on 14 February 2018).

These positions are:

Combined Authority:  
Cabinet Member (1)  
Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (2)  
Member on the Audit and Governance Committee (1)

Greater Cambridge Partnership:  
Board Member (1)  
Assembly Members (3)

Police and Crime Panel Member (1)

### Principles

The principles that guided our initial report on SRAs in 2016/7 still apply, ie that SRAs should:

- be perceived by everyone to be fair,
- be evidence based, logical and coherent
- be transparent, efficient and easy to administer,
- encourage councillors to fill the most arduous roles,
- encourage scrutiny in order to augment the effectiveness of the democratic process,
- be adaptable to future changes.

We also note the Statutory Guidance – in particular that SRAs should go to those who have 'significant additional responsibilities in relation to the discharge of the authority's functions'.

### Method

A questionnaire was sent to each of the current incumbents and those who had held the posts in the previous year. All were invited to meet the panel in person and were offered an opportunity after these meetings to give further written evidence. Of the nine Councillors approached, five sent written responses and four, including the leaders of the ruling and opposition parties, gave oral evidence. Two members did both. The Leader gave follow-up evidence.

We also researched the SRAs awarded in other Combined Authorities but could not find an appropriate comparator.

## Findings

From the oral and written evidence we have received, we conclude that each of these roles carries significant responsibilities in addition to those expected of a City Councillor. These roles take City Councillors into areas not traditionally part of the City Council role, most notably transport, and they bring a level of complexity greater than that present within a single Council.

Our reasoning revolves around several factors:

- additional areas of responsibility and greater complexity
- the amount of time needed to attend daytime meetings at various locations within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough,
- the weight of decision-making,
- the necessity of proper scrutiny within both the CA and GCP,
- the increasing importance of each of these roles to City Council residents and/or businesses.

## Recommendations

1. That each of the roles should receive an SRA in the following percentages of Basic Allowance and that these allowances be back-dated to the start of the Municipal Year.

Role Title	Percentage of Basic Allowance	Cost in this Municipal Year
Combined Authority: Cabinet Member (1)	50%	1169 (25% increase on what is already in the scheme)
Combined Authority: Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (2)	25%	2338
Combined Authority: Member on the Audit and Governance Committee (1)	10%	467
Greater Cambridge Partnership: Assembly Members (3)	15%	2100
Police and Crime Panel Member (1)	15%	701

2. Given the evolving nature of the partnership bodies and of the roles undertaken by Councillor members, we recommend that these allowances should be reviewed in 2020 to take account of any further changes in roles and responsibilities. At that time there should

be more evidence about the approaches being taken to SRAs in the other constituent councils of the Combined Authority and Greater Cambridge Partnership.

In addition

At present there does not seem to be a significant problem with recruitment and retention for these roles. Succession planning is difficult in elected bodies but, if the Council is to continue to ensure that appropriate councillors are available to fill the most arduous roles, planning for succession will become increasingly important.

## **B) Travel Expenses**

We were asked to provide further clarification with regard to travel costs to City Council meetings and suggest the following addition:

For Cambridge City Council meetings only, you can only claim travel costs **from outside** Cambridge if your absence from Cambridge was unavoidable or if a meeting is called at short notice, and you have to make a journey which you would not otherwise have made. The exception to this rule is attending Planning or Licensing Committee meetings, as these take place more frequently than other meetings.

If a claim is made and an officer is unclear whether or not the travel expense should be reimbursed, the officer shall consult the political group leaders prior to approving payment. If any claim remains unresolved, it is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to determine.