

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME:
REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL****Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Nottinghamshire Members' Allowances Scheme and to approve amendments to the Scheme in the light of the introduction of the Committee system.

Information and Advice**Background**

2. Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 before a council makes or revises a members allowances scheme it is required to have regard to a report from an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).
3. The regulations specify that the IRP must recommend on:
 - i. the amount of basic allowance
 - ii. the responsibilities or duties in respect of which special responsibility, travelling and subsistence, and co-optees' allowances should be available and the amount of such allowances
 - iii. whether dependants' carers' allowance should be payable and the amount of such an allowance
 - iv. whether the level of allowances should be index-linked
 - v. which members of an authority are to be entitled to pensions
4. The current scheme was agreed by the County Council on 17th December 2009 following a detailed review by the IRP.

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5. Following the County Council's decision in March to implement a committee system of governance, the IRP met on 2nd and 3rd April to review the implications of that decision for the Members Allowances Scheme. The panel took evidence from the Conservative and

6. The panel's report describes the significant challenge for the political leadership of local authorities arising from the twin pressures of continuing restraint on public spending and the economic, social, and demographic factors which increase the demand for local government services.
7. The panel believes that for democracy to be served it is essential to provide a fair return to councillors to recognise the service they give. The panel concurs with the view expressed by witnesses that no-one should go into local politics expecting to make money. However, the members allowances scheme is designed to go some way to mitigate the financial sacrifice inherent in standing for elected office and to enable more people to make a contribution to public life than would otherwise be possible.
8. The panel is aware of the Council's view that the committee system should not cost any more than the current cabinet system and has shaped its recommendations to reflect this aim.
9. The panel met for two days at a cost of £4,512.

Level of basic allowance

10. The benchmark for the basic allowance was set in 2000 as the median white collar wage for Nottinghamshire (then £23,483 pa). The 2000 panel identified that council work is approximately half-time, which would have meant an allowance of around £12,250, but then discounted it to represent the voluntary element of a councillor's work giving a benchmark of £10,000 pa.
11. This benchmark has been maintained subsequently, with the figure being indexed to local government pay settlements. Consequently the basic allowance is currently £12,904. The link with increases for local government staff means that the allowance has not been increased since April 2009 which the panel estimates is nearly a 10% reduction in real terms.
12. The panel recognises that the committee system will increase the demands on members to attend meetings, with the associated workload. However, the benchmark basic allowance was established under the arrangements obtaining before the introduction of the cabinet system and took account of the workload pressures then. In view of this the panel sees no reason to change the current approach to setting the basic allowance and recommends that it continues at the existing level and remains indexed to pay increases for local government staff.

Special Responsibility Allowances

13. The panel's recommendations for special responsibility allowances (SRA) are set out in Appendix 2 and the thinking behind the recommendations is summarised below.
14. Having considered other models the panel is satisfied that the current approach of defining individual allowance bands as a proportion of the Leader's SRA remains sound. Similarly, it considers that the level of the Leader's SRA remains appropriate.

15. The panel has based many of its recommendations on a proposal put forward by the Majority Group which distinguished between “Band A” committees responsible for major areas of service and other committees (“Band B” committees and sub-committees).
16. The major change from introducing the committee system is to replace the existing cabinet portfolios with the new Band A committees and consequently to replace the cabinet member responsibility with that of committee chairmen. The panel explored this thoroughly with witnesses and takes the view that the chairman’s role is not the neutral one of merely presiding over a committee but requires someone who is expected to provide leadership and political accountability for the services within the committee’s responsibilities. The panel considers that this role will continue to demand the current extensive time commitment and will carry the same level of responsibility for important public services as Cabinet Members do at present. It will be a “hands on” role with responsibilities within the County Council, externally with partner organisations, and with the wider community. Consequently the panel recommends that the Band A committee chairmen’s SRA should be pitched at the same level as portfolio holders under the current scheme (ie 66% of the Leader’s SRA).
17. All of the new Band A committees will require a vice-chairman. Members of the panel are aware that in some authorities the vice-chairman is a minor role with all responsibility resting with the chairman. The panel explored this with representatives of the Conservative Group and satisfied itself that the intended role of vice-chairman for Band A committees in Nottinghamshire will be an active one. As is the model with the existing deputy cabinet members the panel understands that many vice-chairmen will be given specific responsibilities which may include chairing particular sub-committees and/or leading on specific aspects of service. Consequently it recommends that the SRA for vice-chairmen of Band A committees should be set at 33% of the Leader’s SRA.
18. The Band B committees include existing committees as well as new committees for Early Years and Youth Services, Economic Development and Health Scrutiny (Northern). The panel considers that the responsibility for chairmen of Band B committees, other than specific instances discussed below should be aligned at 33% of the Leader’s SRA.
19. As the Council’s intention is that the Administration Committee, Senior Staffing Committee, and Local Joint Resolutions Committee will be continue to be chaired either by named members or by councillors already in receipt of a special responsibility allowance the panel has not recommended a SRA for these roles.
20. The IRP reviewed the role of the Chairman of Pensions in 2009 and recommended a small increase in the SRA for the post. As there have not been any changes to this role the panel does not see any reason to revise this SRA. The roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint City/County Health Committee alternate with Nottingham City Council. The IRP has reviewed the implications of this rotating arrangement and considers that the current SRA levels remain appropriate.
21. The panel has considered the anticipated roles of the vice-chairmen for Band B committees and with the exception of the Appeals Committee anticipates that the responsibilities of all will be of a similar level and should be aligned at 22% of the Leader’s SRA. The panel was advised that there is no intention to change the current arrangement whereby the appeals committee provides a pool of councillors with the necessary expertise to undertake appeals work. Consequently, while the chairman of the committee has responsibility for leading the

22. The panel believes that the Opposition within a Council has an important role to play in challenging the controlling group and holding it to account. Therefore the panel recommends continuing the current practice by recognising the role and responsibility of Opposition spokesmen on Band A committees at the present rate of 22% of the Leaders SRA, and for the allocation of these roles to be the responsibility of the largest opposition group. Although the Opposition group may appoint spokesmen on Band B committees the panel does not recommend a SRA for this role.
23. The panel considered the implication of the abolition of the existing standards regime with effect from July 2012 and the provision within the Localism Act for local authorities to discontinue their Standards Committees. At the time the Panel met the Council had not determined its position on continuing a standards committee. However, the panel's report is clear that any continuing local arrangements will be different from the existing statutory arrangements. Consequently, the panel recommended that the Members Allowances scheme does not include a SRA for either the roles of chair or independent member of the Standards Committee.
24. The Council's intention is that the new committees will themselves be responsible for scrutinising the Council's policies and decisions and intends to disestablish the existing overview and scrutiny arrangements. Consequently, the panel recommends that the SRA for chairs and vice-chairs of overview and the standing committees be removed from the scheme.
25. The panel endorses the current approach that councillors should not be eligible for more than one SRA from the scheme.

Other Allowances

26. The panel notes that the Council has implemented its recommendation in 2009 to align travel and subsistence rates with the local scheme for officers, ie to limit claims to HM Revenue and Customs rates and severely restrict the entitlement to claim subsistence. The panel understands that this has produced savings for the Council and sees no reason to change this.
27. The panel was advised of the intention to arrange familiarisation visits for committees to activities and facilities within their purview and for the Council to arrange transport where it is cost effective so to do. The panel would expect members to use transport provided by the council rather than claim for the use of their own vehicles; any claims from members in exceptional circumstances for using their own vehicles would only be payable with the prior agreement of Democratic Services.
28. The panel received representations on the payment of allowances for child care and dependent care allowances. Although the panel felt that the current maximum rates were adequate in most circumstances it did recognise that there could be particular individual circumstances when the maximum is insufficient. The current scheme provides for the Standards Committee to increase the allowances payable for the care of dependents in circumstances of particular difficulty. The panel suggests that this flexibility to increase dependents care allowance should be retained in the scheme and recommends that this

responsibility should be built into another Committee's responsibility. It is considered that this responsibility should rest with the Administration Committee.

Review

29. The Panel recognises that its recommendations are based on the best information available at the moment but that in the light of experience the Council may decide to make minor adjustments (eg to move a limited number of committees between Band A and Band B). The Panel wants to provide flexibility within the scheme while at the same time discharging its responsibility to advise the Council on the implications of its decisions on the members allowances scheme. To achieve this, the report states that for limited evolutionary changes, where the overall cost of the scheme is kept within broadly the same cost envelope, the panel would be content for the Council to apply the principles underlying these recommendations without reconvening it.
30. However, given the newness of the system, the panel recommends that the Council should review the scheme after twelve months of operation, bearing in mind the flexibility for evolutionary changes noted above.

Financial Implications

31. The panel is conscious that the determination of its structures and allocation of roles is a matter for the Council or the respective political groups. These decisions affect the number of allowances actually paid.
32. In the current scheme there are some 55 roles that could attract a special responsibility allowance. The net effect of the changes the Panel is proposing is to reduce these by four and reduce the possible cost by some £24,000.

Other Options Considered

33. The Council is statutorily required to "have regard" to a report from the IRP when agreeing its members allowances scheme. However, the Council could decide not to accept the recommendations from the panel

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

34. To adapt the members' allowances scheme to the Council's revised system of governance.

Statutory and Policy Implications

35. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Basic Allowance remains at the current level and remains indexed to local government pay settlement.
- 2) That the revised scheme of special responsibility allowances as set out in the Appendix be adopted.
- 3) That the allowances for the Chair and Independent Members of the Standards Committee cease with effect from the date of the abolition of the current arrangements.
- 4) That any claims by members for travel costs where the Council has provided shared transport will only be payable in exceptional circumstances and subject to the prior agreement of the Team Manager (Democratic Services).
- 5) The Administration Committee be given responsibility for determining any variation to the maximum rates for dependent care allowances in the light of particular individual circumstances.

Mick Burrows
Chief Executive

For any enquiries about this report please contact David Ellis, Team Manager (Members and Civic Services) tel 0115 977 2899

Constitutional Comments (SLB 26/04/2012)

36. The function of adopting and revising the scheme of allowances for Members is reserved to Full Council by law. As stated in the report, Council is required to have regard to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Financial Comments (MB 08/05/12)

37. The financial implications are outlined in paragraphs 30 and 31.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

Introduction

1. This paper is the report of the Nottinghamshire County Council Independent Remuneration Panel following our review of the County Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.
2. The Council's main purpose in reconvening the panel was to seek our advice on the implications of its decision to adopt the Committee system of governance, as permitted under the Localism Act, on its members' allowances scheme.
3. The Council also invited the panel to reflect more widely on the members allowances which we have done and report on below.

Background

4. The first Nottinghamshire allowances scheme was established following a report by an independent panel in 2000. Subsequent reports from the Independent Remuneration Panels in 2003, 2006 and 2009 have built on their predecessors' work.
5. The panel last undertook a full review of the Council's allowances scheme in November 2009 the outcomes of which were adopted by the County Council in December 2009.
6. Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 before a council makes a members allowances scheme it is required to have regard to a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) covering:
 - a) the amount of basic allowance
 - b) the responsibilities or duties in respect of which special responsibility, travelling and subsistence, and co-optees' allowances should be available and the amount of such allowances
 - c) whether dependants' carers' allowance should be payable and the amount of such an allowance
 - d) whether the level of allowances should be index-linked
 - e) which members of an authority are to be entitled to pensions.
7. The membership of the IRP is:
 - a) Sir Rodney Brooke CBE, DL (Chair) who has long experience of Local Government as a Chief Executive. He has chaired independent remuneration panels for various authorities. He chairs and is member of various public sector bodies.

- b) Madi Sharma who is a proprietor of a Nottinghamshire business and is an Ambassador for Nottingham. She is also a member of several independent remuneration panels.
- c) Richard Hassett JP DL who is a former independent Chair of the Nottinghamshire Police Authority and non-executive Director of the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. He is also a former Chair of the Nottinghamshire Magistrates Courts Committee

We were assisted in our considerations by David Ellis, Team Manager (Members and Civic Services), and Susan Bearman, Senior Solicitor; however the recommendations in this report are those of the IRP alone.

- 8. We met a delegation from the controlling group on the council including the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, with Councillor Reg Adair and Councillor Mel Shepherd. We also met a delegation consisting of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Business Manager of the Labour Group. We met individually with Councillor Bruce Laughton, Councillor Carol Pepper and Jayne Francis-Ward the Corporate Director for Policy, Planning, and Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer. All other members of the Council had been written to and given the opportunity to make representations in person or in writing. We are grateful to those we met for being open and responding to the Panel's vigorous challenge.

Context

- 9. When we reported in 2009 we acknowledged that local government was facing challenging times. Just over two years later the picture remains difficult. The current economic climate and the deficit reduction strategy continue to put significant pressure on public spending. At the same time economic, social, and demographic factors increase the demand for local government services. These twin pressures enhance the challenge on the political leadership of local authorities.
- 10. The members of the panel have had various contacts with Nottinghamshire County Council going back over 12 years. We recognise that the County Council has a tradition of strong political leadership and an aim, which is shared across the political spectrum, of being inclusive and representative of the community it serves. Those we met as part of this review were anticipating the selection of candidates for the County Council elections in 2013 and wanted us to ensure that the members allowances scheme did not discourage people from standing for election.
- 11. We believe that if democracy is to be served it is essential to provide a fair return to councillors to recognise the service they give. As one of our witnesses described it this is "the cost of democracy".
- 12. However, we share the view expressed by our witnesses that no one should go into local politics expecting to make money. It is a public service and we recognise that it involves a sacrifice – in terms of time, and often financially in terms of career opportunities foregone. The members allowances scheme is designed to go some way to mitigate this sacrifice and make it possible for more people to make a contribution to public life than would otherwise be possible.

13. Against this background the IRP took a hard look at the members allowances scheme. We took the opportunity to review the assumptions on which the scheme is based and the comparison with other similar councils.
14. In the report to Council on setting up the committee system the Leader of the Council was clear that it should not cost any more than the current cabinet system. We entirely share that view. Our recommendations reflect this aim.

Committee System

15. Since 2001 the County Council has operated under the cabinet system of governance. More recently, in 2009, it adopted the “strong leader” model.
16. The Localism Act 2011 enables local authorities to change their governance arrangements to the committee system. The Nottinghamshire Conservative Party manifesto for the County Council in 2009 anticipated this and included a commitment to revert to the committee system as soon as it was possible.
17. The Council takes the view that the committee system is the most democratic form of decision making for the Authority. It enables all councillors to be involved in decision making and gain experience of the areas covered by the committees on which they serve. The Council believes that from the public’s point of view the committee system is more transparent, as it is clear who is taking the decisions, with the papers being available to the public in advance of the meeting.
18. The County Council passed a resolution to change its existing governance arrangements to a committee system on 29th March 2012. The new system will then be introduced with effect from the Annual Meeting in May. The law does not permit the passing of a further resolution to alter governance arrangements for a period of 5 years from the date of the original resolution, other than as a result of a referendum.
19. Our assumption therefore is that the committee system will last for the rest of this administration and life of that elected in 2013. We recognise that a new system of governance will require some time to settle in and that there may be changes in the light of experience. However as far as possible we have tried to “future proof” our recommendations so that the Council has the scope to respond to experience without the need to reconvene the panel.
20. It is not part of our remit to comment on the structure that the Council wishes to adopt. Our role is to consider these changes and assess their implications for the members allowances scheme and make recommendations to the the Council. This we do below.
21. In the current scheme there are some 55 roles that could attract a special responsibility allowance. The net effect of the changes we are proposing below is to reduce these by four and reduce the possible cost by some £24,000.
22. The allocation of roles is a matter for the Council or the respective political groups. *However, we would confirm our recommendation that, irrespective of the number of roles with special responsibilities any individual councillor undertakes, no-one should receive more than one SRA.*

Level of basic allowance

23. The independent panel which met in 2000 established the benchmark for the basic allowance as the median white collar wage for Nottinghamshire (then £23,483 pa). The panel identified that council work is approximately half-time, which would have meant an allowance of around £12,250, but then discounted it to represent the voluntary element of a councillor's work giving a benchmark of £10,000 pa.
24. Subsequent panels have maintained this benchmark with the figure being indexed to local government pay settlements. Consequently the basic allowance is currently £12,904. The link with increases for local government staff means that the allowance has not been increased since April 2009. Compared to the RPI this represents nearly a 10% reduction in real terms.
25. Under the committee system it is anticipated that more councillors will have an involvement in the decision-making process. The new committees will meet on different cycles but it is anticipated that individual members will attend more meetings and will face an increased workload as well as greater expectations that they attend meetings at County Hall. Councillors will have to continue to balance their role in their local community with their responsibility to develop and scrutinise policy proposals and review performance of the Council's services through their membership of committees.
26. Councillors in Nottinghamshire frequently represent large areas, with high expectations that they make themselves available for their constituents in both formal and informal settings. Although the business of the Council primarily takes place during the day, being a county councillor is not a "9-5" Monday to Friday job; in addition to their commitments at County Hall they frequently have evening and weekend commitments.
27. The benchmark for the basic allowance set in 2000 was before the introduction of the cabinet system. It took account of the time commitment required by the committee system as it existed then. We believe that the approach has stood the test of time and see no reason to change.
28. *We have considered the basic allowance and in the absence of evidence to the contrary consider that the benchmark level which was set remains appropriate and that it remains appropriate to index-link this to pay awards for local government staff.*

Special Responsibility Allowances

29. Previous IRPs established a schedule of positions eligible for Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs). The 2006 IRP defined individual allowance bands as a proportion of the Leader's SRA. Having considered other models we are satisfied that this approach remains sound.
30. SRAs are set with reference to the SRA for the Leader of the Council. This provides a constraint for individual allowances. Comparisons with other county councils in the nearest neighbours group shows that the Leader's SRA is broadly at the median.
31. *In the absence of any evidence to the contrary we recommend that the current overall rates of special responsibility allowances, ie based on a proportion of the rate for the Leader, index-linked to the local government pay settlement should continue.*

32. *The changes to the Council's internal system do not affect the level of responsibility and extensive time commitment required of the Leader of the Council. Consequently, we consider that the benchmark level for special responsibility of the Leader of the Council remains appropriate.*
33. The Conservative group built on the existing approach by submitting a proposed scheme of allowances for the new committee system which demonstrated their view on the relativities between different roles. It was broadly acceptable to the Labour Group representatives whom we met. We found this submission useful and it has formed the basis of our recommendations.
34. The submission distinguishes between Band A committees, which primarily replace the current cabinet portfolios, and Band B committees which include existing regulatory committees as well as some new committee and sub-committees. The submission identified the structure as follows

Policy Committee

Band A Committees

Adult Social Care and Health	Environment and Sustainability
Children and Young People	Finance and Property
Community Safety	Personnel
Culture	Transport and Highways

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a Band A Committee but it is assumed that it will always be chaired by the holder of an existing SRA (at present the Deputy Leader).

Band B Committees

Appeals	Health Scrutiny (Northern)
Audit	Planning and Licensing
Early Years and Youth Services Sub	Rights of Way
Economic Development	

Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee is a Band B committee and it is assumed that the Vice-Chairman of the Children and Young People Committee will chair it.

Grant Aid Sub-Committee is a Band B committee and it is assumed that the Deputy Leader of the Council will chair it.

35. We assume that the Leader and Deputy Leader will always be the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Policy Committee and therefore are not recommending separate SRAs for the latter roles.
36. The major change from introducing the committee system is to replace the existing cabinet portfolios with the new Band A committees and consequently to replace the cabinet member responsibility with that of committee chairmen. We explored this thoroughly with witnesses and take the view that the chairman's role is not the neutral one of merely presiding over a committee but requires someone who is expected to provide leadership and political accountability for the services within the committee's responsibilities. The role will continue to demand the current extensive time commitment

37. *Consequently we conclude that levels of responsibility associated with chairmen of the new Band A committees are comparable with those of cabinet members and that the SRA should be set at 66% of the Leader's SRA.*
38. All of the new Band A committees will require a vice-chairman. From our experience we are aware that in some authorities the vice-chairman is a minor role with all responsibility resting with the chairman. We explored this with representatives of the Conservative Group and are satisfied that the role of vice-chairman in Nottinghamshire will be an active one. As is the model with the existing junior cabinet members we understand that many vice-chairmen will be given specific responsibilities which may include chairing particular sub-committees and/or leading on specific aspects of service.
39. *We recommend that the vice-chairmen of Band A committees should receive an SRA set at 33% of the Leaders SRA.*
40. The Band B committees include existing committees as well as new committees for Early Years and Youth Services, Economic Development and Health Scrutiny (Northern). *We consider that the roles of the chairmen of these new committees should be aligned with those of the chairmen of the existing committees at 33% of the Leader's SRA.*
41. *With the exception of the Appeals Committee, we anticipate that the responsibilities of all vice-chairmen for Band B committees will be of a similar level and should be aligned at 22% of the Leader's SRA.*
42. The appeals committee provides a pool of councillors with the necessary expertise to undertake appeals work. Although the Chairman of the committee has responsibility for leading the area there is no similar role for a vice-chairman of appeals. Consequently we do not recommend a SRA for this role.
43. We understand that the Administration Committee, Senior Staffing Committee, and Local Joint Resolutions Committee will be chaired either by named members or by councillors in receipt of a special responsibility allowance. Therefore we do not recommend an SRA for these roles.
44. In the light of experience the Council may decide to make minor adjustments (eg to move a limited number of committees between Band A and Band B). Specifically, we felt that the potential importance of the Economic Development Committee might warrant a Band A allowance. However we recognise that the Committee will be in its infancy; and that some of the most important aspects of economic development will be dealt with by the Policy Committee and the Local Economic Partnership, chaired by the Leader. But we anticipate that the Committee's importance may evolve and in time justify a Band A allowance for its Chairman. For limited changes of this nature, where the overall cost of the scheme is kept within broadly the same cost envelope, we would be content for the Council to apply the principles underlying these recommendations without reconvening the panel.

45. There are two further committees - the Pensions Committee and the Joint City/County Health Committee. We reviewed the role of the Chairman of Pensions in 2009 and recommended a small increase in the SRA for the post. We are not aware of any changes to the role and therefore do not see any reason to revise this SRA. The roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Health Committee alternate with Nottingham City Council. This rotation is reflected in the scheme and still remains appropriate at the current levels.
46. The Panel believes that the Opposition within a Council has an important role to play in challenging the controlling group and holding it to account. Where there is always the possibility of a change of control, as in Nottinghamshire, the main Opposition Group has a particular responsibility in ensuring that it is in position to assume the reins if called upon.
47. *Therefore we would recommend continuing the current practice by recognising the role of Opposition spokesmen on Band A committees at the present rate of 22% of the Leaders SRA, and for the allocation of these roles to be the responsibility of the largest opposition group.*
48. We note that the Council has a practice of appointing councillors from opposition groups to positions of responsibility on some of the regulatory committees and recognise that this is a useful way of tapping into a variety of backgrounds and experience. While the Opposition Group may decide to appoint spokesmen to Band B committees we do not consider it appropriate to recommend an SRA for any such roles.
49. In adopting our recommendations in 2009 the Council reduced the number of roles that would be entitled to a SRA. There was no suggestion from the Council that we revisit those proposals and we are not recommending that any of those allowances be restored.

Standards Committee

50. The Localism Act abolishes the existing standards regime with effect from July 2012 and allows local authorities to discontinue their Standards Committee. While no formal decision has yet been made by Nottinghamshire we understand that there is a strong possibility that the Standards Committee will be abolished and therefore are not proposing a future SRA for either the roles of chair or independent member. If the Council does subsequently decide to establish a local standards committee this would be without the existing statutory responsibilities and therefore we would not assume that the current SRAs remain appropriate.
51. *Therefore we recommend the deletion of the SRA for the chair and independent members of the standards committee from the members allowances scheme with effect from the disestablishment of the Standards Committee.*
52. The Council's intention is that the new committees will themselves be responsible for scrutinising the Council's policies and decisions and intends to disestablish the existing overview and scrutiny arrangements.
53. *Consequently we recommend deleting the existing posts of Chair and Vice-Chairs of Overview and the Standing Committees from the scheme*

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

54. The County Council adopted the recommendations we made in 2009 to align the members scheme with local officer scheme – ie to limit claims to HMRC rates and severely restrict the entitlement to claim subsistence. This approach has produced savings for the Council. In current climate we see no reason to change this.
55. *Therefore we recommend that the revised local scheme for travel and subsistence for officers should continue to apply to councillors and that in principle, any future changes to the officer scheme as applied locally should also apply to members.*
56. As part of their work programme it is planned to arrange familiarisation visits for committees to activities and facilities within their purview. We understand that the council may arrange transport where it is cost effective so to do. In general we would expect members to use transport provided by the council rather than claim for the use of their own vehicles. There may be exceptional circumstances which would justify members using their own transport and claiming from the Council – however in these instances travel allowances should only be payable with the prior agreement of Democratic Services.

Dependent's Carer's Allowance

57. Under the current scheme councillors may claim up to £5.84 per hour per child for child care and up to £11.58 per hour for other dependants, in respect of expenses for the care of their children or other dependants when attending meetings of the Council or other approved duty as described in the Scheme.
58. We understand that few councillors claim these allowances but recognise that they are a potentially important help which might enable those with caring responsibilities to serve on the Council. The actual cost of care is reimbursed up to the maximum specified in the scheme. The rate for child care exceeds the average cost of childcare locally and therefore gives parents some flexibility. The position on adult dependents is more complicated and probably needs assessing on an individual basis if the maximum is insufficient.
59. The current scheme provides for the Standards Committee to increase the allowances payable for the care of dependents in circumstances of particular difficulty. Although the Standards Committee is expected to be disestablished we would suggest that this flexibility to increase dependents care allowance should be retained in the scheme and recommend that this responsibility should be built into another Committee's responsibility.

Chairman of the Council

60. Allowances for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the County Council are paid in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 to enable them to meet the costs of their office.
61. We were invited to consider an additional clothing allowance for Chairman of the Council, especially for a female Chairman. We understand the argument that expectations as regards the range of clothing she needs for her year in office, and the maintenance costs,

are higher for female Chairmen. The Chairman's allowance already includes provision for clothing and is the third highest in the nearest neighbours' group. We have reviewed the Chairman's allowance but do not consider it appropriate to increase it.

Review

62. *Given the newness of the system, we recommend that the Council should review the scheme after twelve months of operation, bearing in mind the flexibility which we recommend in paragraph 42.*

Rodney Brooke

Richard Hassett

Madi Sharma

14th April 2012

PROPOSED SCHEME OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES
April 2012

Band	% of Leader's SRA	Amount of Allowance (pa)	Current role
1	100	£31,906	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader of the Council
2	70	£22,331	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Leader of the Council
3	66	£21,271	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairmen of Band A Committees • Business Manager of Majority Group • Leader of the main Minority Group
4	50	£15,953	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of County Council*
5	40	£12,762	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of Joint Health Committee (when chaired by a county councillor) • Chairman of Pensions
6	33	£10,635	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairmen of Band B Committees: • Vice-Chairmen of Band A Committees • Leader of smaller Minority Groups on the Council (provided the group has more than 10% of the Members of the Council)
7	25	£7,975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice-Chairman of Joint Health Committee (when this position is occupied by a county councillor)
8	24	£7,657	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice-Chairman of the County Council* • Business Manager of the main Minority Group
9	22	£7,021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Leader of the main Minority Group • Vice-Chairmen of Band B Committees • Main Minority Group Spokesmen on Band A Committees
10	4	£1,276	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Manager of any Minority Group consisting of more than 10% of the Members of the Council • Ordinary Members of the Appeals Committee when undertaking work of exceptional frequency

Note

- * These SRAs include an element for clothing. Sections 3(5) and 5(4) (as appropriate) of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972, enables the County Council to make a reasonable payment to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to enable them to meet the expenses of their office.

Band A Committees

Adult Social Care and Health
 Children and Young People
 Community Safety
 Culture

Environment and Sustainability
 Finance and Property
 Personnel
 Transport and Highways

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a Band A Committee but it is assumed that it will always be chaired by the holder of an existing SRA

Band B Committees

Appeals	Health Scrutiny (Northern)
Audit	Planning and Licensing
Early Years and Youth Services Sub Committee	Rights of Way
Economic Development	

Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee is a Band B committee but it is assumed that the Vice-Chairman of the Children and Young People Committee will chair it

Grant Aid Sub-Committee is a Band B committee but it is assumed that the Deputy Leader of the Council will chair the sub-committee

It is assumed that the Administration Committee, Senior Staffing Committee, and Local Joint Resolutions Committee will always be chaired either by named members or by councillors already in receipt of a special responsibility.