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**The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel  
appointed to review the allowances paid to Councillors  
of Brighton and Hove City Council**

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March 2025

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
2.	CURRENT SCHEME	1
3.	PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING OUR REVIEW	2
3.1	THE PUBLIC SERVICE PRINCIPLE.....	2
3.2	THE FAIR REMUNERATION PRINCIPLE.....	2
4.	CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	3
4.2	SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES (SRAs)	4
4.3	INDEPENDENT PERSONS ALLOWANCE.....	10
	TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE	10
4.5	DEPENDANTS' CARERS' ALLOWANCE	10
4.6	SPECIAL LEAVE.....	111
4.7	INDEXING OF ALLOWANCES.....	111
4.8	REVOCATION OF CURRENT SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES / IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SCHEME	111
5.	OUR INVESTIGATION	111
5.1	BACKGROUND	111
5.2	FUTURE REVIEW	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
6.	APPROVED COUNCILLOR DUTIES	122

Appendix 1	Special Responsibility Allowances/Independent Persons' Allowance/Dependants' Carers' Allowance / Mayoral Allowances – Summary of Recommendations	13
Appendix 2	Comparative data of allowances paid to councillors of the other unitary councils (South East Employers, Members Allowances Survey 2024)	

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"), as amended, require all local authorities to appoint an independent remuneration panel (IRP) to advise on the terms and conditions of their scheme of councillors' allowances.
- 1.1.2 Brighton and Hove City Council formally appointed the following persons to undertake this interim review and make recommendations on its future scheme.

Jaine Jolly - Local Resident and Planning Inspector.
Mark Palmer- Director of Development and Governance, South East Employers (Panel Chair)
Rachel Potter- Local Resident, Journalist and Editor specialising in local government and the public sector.

Elizabeth Culbert- Director Governance & Law, Brighton and Hove City Council provided Panel support.
Anthony Soyinka – Head of Democratic Services, Brighton and Hove City Council provided Panel support

- 1.1.3 Our terms of reference were in accordance with the requirements of the 2003 Regulations, together with "Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances" issued jointly by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inland Revenue (July 2003). Those requirements are to make recommendations to the Council as to:

- (a) the level of allowances and whether allowances should be payable for:
- (i) special responsibility allowances.
 - (ii) travelling and subsistence allowance.
 - (iii) dependants' carers' allowance.
 - (iv) parental leave and.
 - (v) Independent Persons' allowance.
- and the amount of such allowances.
- (b) whether payment of allowances may be backdated if the scheme is amended at any time to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made.
- (c) whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and if so which index and how long that index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years before its application is reviewed.

2. CURRENT SCHEME

- 2.1.1 The last review of councillors' allowances was undertaken by the IRP for the Council in February 2024. This interim review was requested by the Council because at the time of the full review the roles as part of the Leader Cabinet model of governance had yet to be implemented. The Panel had also not had the opportunity at the 2024 review to interview the postholders. This review provided the opportunity to sense check through a questionnaire and interviews whether the recommendations made following the 2024 review required amendment.

- 2.1.2 The Scheme currently provides that all councillors are each entitled to a total basic allowance of £14,218 per annum, with effect from April 2024. In addition, some councillors receive special responsibility allowances for undertaking additional duties.
- 2.1.3 Councillors may also claim the cost of travel and subsistence expenses and for expenditure on the care of children or dependants whilst on approved councillor duties.

3. PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING OUR REVIEW

3.1 The Public Service Principle

- 3.1.1 This is the principle that an important part of being a councillor is the desire to serve the public and, therefore, not all of what a councillor does should be remunerated. Part of a councillor's time should be given voluntarily.

3.2 The Fair Remuneration Principle

- 3.2.1 Alongside the belief that the role of the elected Councillor should, in part, be viewed as unpaid voluntary service, we advocate a principle of fair remuneration. The Panel in 2024 subscribes to the view promoted by the independent Councillors' Commission:

Remuneration should not be an incentive for service as a councillor. Nor should lack of remuneration be a barrier.¹

- 3.2.2 We are keen to ensure that our recommended scheme of allowances provides reasonable financial compensation for councillors. Equally, the scheme should be fair, transparent, logical, simple, and seen as such.
- 3.2.3 Hence, we continue to acknowledge that:
- (i) allowances should apply to roles within the Council, not individual councillors.
 - (ii) allowances should represent reasonable *compensation* to councillors for expenses they incur and time they commit in relation to their role, not *payment* for their work; and
 - (iii) special responsibility allowances are used to recognise the *significant* additional responsibilities which attach to some roles, not merely the extra time required.
- 3.2.4 In making our recommendations, we have therefore sought to maintain a balance between:
- (i) the voluntary quality of a councillor's role.
 - (ii) the need for appropriate financial recognition for the expenses incurred and time spent by councillors in fulfilling their roles; and
 - (iii) the overall need to ensure that the scheme of allowances is neither an incentive nor a barrier to service as a councillor.

¹ Rodney Brooke and Declan Hall, *Members' Remuneration: Models, Issues, Incentives and Barriers*. London: Communities and Local Government, 2007, p.3.

- 3.2.5 The Panel also sought to ensure that the scheme of allowances is understandable in the way it is calculated. This includes ensuring the bandings, tiers and differentials of the allowances are as transparent as possible.
- 3.2.6 In making our recommendations, we wish to emphasise that any possible negative impact they may have is not intended and should not be interpreted as a reflection on any individual councillor's performance in the role.

4. CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Basic Allowance

- 4.1.1 A Council's scheme of allowances must include provision for a basic allowance, payable at an equal flat rate to all councillors. The guidance on arriving at the basic allowance states, "*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.*"²
- 4.1.2 The Panel was of the view that consideration of the Basic Allowance should *not* be part of this interim review as a thorough review of the Basic Allowance was undertaken in 2024. The Panel recommend that the Basic Allowance should therefore continue at £14,218 subject to any indexation that may apply. The Basic Allowance should be reviewed by an Independent Remuneration Panel as part of the next full review scheduled to take place in 2028.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that as part of this interim review no change should be made to the Basic Allowance payable to all Members of Brighton and Hove City Council of £14,218 per annum subject to any indexation that may apply. The Basic Allowance should be reviewed by a Panel again in 2028, when the next full review should be scheduled.

² The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Inland Revenue (now HM Revenue and Customs), *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraph 67.

4.2 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

- 4.2.1 Special Responsibility Allowances are awarded to councillors who perform significant additional responsibilities over and above the roles and expenses covered by the basic allowance. These special responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the council's functions. The SRA payable is in addition to the Basic Allowance payable to all Brighton and Hove City Councillors.
- 4.2.2 The 2003 Regulations do not limit the number of SRAs which may be paid, nor do they prohibit the payment of more than one SRA to any one councillor. They do require that an SRA be paid to at least one councillor who is not a member of the controlling group of the Council. As the guidance suggests, if the majority of councillors receive an SRA, the local electorate may rightly question the justification for this.³
- 4.2.3 We conclude from the evidence we have considered that the following offices bear *significant* additional responsibilities:
- Leader of the Council
 - Deputy Leader of the Council
 - Cabinet Members (8)
 - Cabinet Advisors (4)
 - Leader of the Opposition Group
 - Leader of the Minority Group
 - Chair of Overview and Scrutiny (2)
 - Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Chair of Planning
 - Chair of Licensing
 - Chair of Audit Standards and General Purposes
 - Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board
 - Mayor
 - Deputy Mayor
 - Independent Persons

One SRA Only Rule

- 4.2.4 To improve the transparency of the scheme of allowances, we continue to feel that no councillor should be entitled to receive at any time more than **one SRA**. If a councillor can receive more than one SRA, then the public are unable to ascertain the actual level of remuneration for an individual councillor from a reading of the Scheme of Allowances.
- 4.2.5 Moreover, the One SRA Only Rule avoids the possible anomaly of the Leader receiving a lower allowance than another councillor. If two or more allowances are applicable to a councillor, then the higher-valued allowance would be received. The One SRA Only Rule is common practice for many councils. Our calculations for the SRAs are based on this principle, which should be highlighted.

WE THEREFORE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that that no councillor shall be entitled to receive at any time more than one Special Responsibility Allowance and that this One SRA Only Rule be adopted into the Scheme of Allowances.

³ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraph 72.

The Maximum Number of SRA's Payable

- 4.2.6 In accordance with the 2003 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 72) the Panel is of the view that the Council should adhere to the principal that no more than **50%** of Council Members (27) should receive an SRA at any one time.

WE THEREFORE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Council should adhere to a maximum number of SRA's payable at any one time that does not exceed 50% of Council Members (27 Members).

Calculating SRAs

- 4.2.7 The Panel continued to support the criteria and formula for calculating the Leader of the Councils allowance based on a multiplier of the Basic Allowance; this role carries the most significant additional responsibilities and is the most time consuming.
- 4.2.8 We applied a multiplier of the basic allowance to establish the Leader's SRA. Other SRAs are then valued downwards as a percentage of the Leader's allowance. This approach has the advantage that, when future adjustments to the SRAs are required, changing the Leader's SRA will have a proportionate and easily calculable effect on the other SRAs within the scheme.

We grouped together in Tiers those roles that we judged to have a similar level of responsibility. The outline result of this approach is illustrated in a pyramid of responsibility:



The rationale for these ten tiers of responsibility are discussed below.

Leader (Tier One)

4.2.9 The Council in May 2024 adopted a Leader and Cabinet model of governance and therefore elects for a four-year term of office a Leader who is ultimately responsible for the discharge of all executive functions of the Council. The Leader is the principal policy maker and has personal authority to determine delegated powers to the rest of the Cabinet. The Leader is also responsible for the appointment (and dismissal) of members of the Cabinet and their respective areas of responsibility.

4.2.10 The multiplier we continue to apply to calculate the Leader's SRA is 260% (2.6 times) of the basic allowance. This results in a Leader's Allowance of £36,967.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Leader of the Council should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 260% of the Basic Allowance, £36,967.

Deputy Leader (Tier Two)

4.2.11 The Deputy Leader acts on the Leader's behalf in their absence and provides additional support to the Leader of the Council. From the information we gathered, we continue to consider this additional responsibility should be reflected in the level of allowance. Therefore, we continue to recommend the Deputy Leader's SRA be set at

60% of the Leader's SRA. If our recommendations concerning the Leader's SRA are adopted, this continues to result in an allowance of £22,180.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Deputy Leader receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 60% of the Leader's Allowance, £22,180.

Cabinet Members (Tier Three)

- 4.2.12 Cabinet Members appointed by the Leader of the Council have significant delegated decision-making responsibilities across their portfolio. The Cabinet Member role has more responsibility than the previous Chair of a Committee.
- 4.2.13 The Panel is therefore of the view that the Special Responsibility Allowance for a Cabinet Member should be increased from 35% to 40% of the Leader's Allowance to better reflect the additional responsibility, resulting in an allowance of £14,787.
- 4.2.14 The Panel was conscious that at the 2024 review the allowance had been set at the same percentage of the Leader's Allowance as the former Chairs of Committee. However, discussions with individual cabinet members had demonstrated to the Panel that this was a bigger role than a Chair of a Committee both in terms of the time commitment and also the complexity and overall impact of the role.
- 4.2.15 The Panel was also conscious that in terms of a percentage of the Leader's Allowance the current 35% is low in comparison to the percentage in other comparable Councils. The average percentage of the Leader's Allowance in other comparable Councils is between 40% and 50%.

WE RECOMMEND that a Cabinet Member should now receive an allowance of 40% of the Leaders' Allowance, £14,787.

Chair of Planning (Tier Four)

- 4.2.16 The Chair of Planning continues to have a high impact across the Council area and has a high workload that includes regular site visits and a high number of meetings. The Panel therefore recommends that the Chair Planning should receive a Tier Three allowance, 35% of the Leader's Allowance, £12,938.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Chair of Planning continues to receive an allowance of 35% of the Leader's Allowance, £12,938

Leader of the Opposition and Chair of Licensing (Tier Five)

- 4.2.17 From the evidence gathered as part of the structured interviews we continue to consider the Leader of the Opposition to be a significant role and the 2003 Regulations require that the Leader of the Opposition receive a Special Responsibility Allowance. The Leader of the Opposition has to both ensure democratic accountability and the holding to account of the administration but also manage and develop a Group.
- 4.2.18 The Leader of the Opposition should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance calculated on the same basis as the other SRA's, a percentage of the Leader's Allowance. Based on the size and complexity of the role the Panel is of the view that the Main Opposition Group Leader should receive an allowance of 33% of the Leader's Allowance, £12,199.
- 4.2.19 The Panel was made aware in 2024 that the number and frequency of meetings of the Licensing Committee have reduced and this appears to have continued. However, Special Responsibility Allowances are not based only on the frequency of meetings

but also on the complexity of the role. The Panel therefore continues to recommend that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of the Licensing should continue to be a Tier Five allowance, 33% of the Leader's Allowance, £12,199.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Leader of the Opposition and the Chair of the Licensing Committee should all receive a Tier Five Allowance, 33% of the Leader's Allowance, £12,199.

Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny, Mayor and Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board (Tier Six)

- 4.2.20 The Panel was of the view that Overview and Scrutiny is beginning to be a pivotal part of the Council's new governance arrangements in ensuring internal and external accountability and holding the Cabinet to account. The Panel continues to reflect the importance of overview and scrutiny in Brighton and Hove City Council. The Panel therefore recommends that the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny should continue to receive a Tier Six allowance, 30% of the Leader's Allowance, £11,090.
- 4.2.21 The role of Mayor is highly visible across the Council area and continues to undertake a high number of civic engagements that raise the profile of the Council and this is reflected in the current allowance. The Panel was of the view that the Mayoral Allowance should continue to be at the same percentage of the Leader's Allowance, 30%. We therefore recommend that the role of Mayor be recognised at Tier Six and receive an allowance of £11,090, 30% of the Leader's Allowance.
- 4.2.22 The Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board continues to be a pivotal role. The Panel continues to recommend that the Chair of the Health and Well Being Board should continue to receive a Tier Six allowance, 30% of Leader's Allowance, £11,090

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny, Mayor and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board should continue to each receive an allowance of 30% of the Leaders' Allowance, £11,090.

Leader of the Minority Group (Tier Seven)

- 4.2.21 The Leader of a Minority Group should continue to be recognised as a role of significant importance, however the Panel continues to be of the view that to qualify for the allowance the group should comprise of at least 10% of total councillors on Brighton and Hove City Council, six councillors.
- 4.2.22 The Panel continues to recommend that the Leader of a Minority Group should receive an allowance of 20% of the Leader's Allowance, £7,393. The Panel continues to further recommend that to qualify for this allowance the group should consist of at least 10% of total councillors, six councillors.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Leader of a Minority Group should receive An allowance of 20% of the Leader's Allowance, £7,393. The Panel continues to further recommend that to qualify for this allowance the group should consist of at least 10% of total councillors, six councillors.

Chair of Audit Standards and General Purposes Committee (Tier Eight).

- 4.2.23 The Audit Standards and General Purposes Committee continues to be recognised as a high-profile committee that has a key role in terms of financial management and effective governance. The committee also has a lead responsibility for ensuring effective standards and overseeing the Code of Conduct. The Panel continues to be of the view that the Chair should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 15% of the Leader's Allowance, £5,758.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Chair of the Audit Standards and General Purposes Committee should continue to receive a Tier Eight allowance, 15% of the Leader's Allowance, £5,758.

Deputy Mayor (Tier Nine)

- 4.2.24 The role of Deputy Mayor, like that of the Mayor, continues to be a high-profile role that has a significant impact across the Council area and a high workload based on the number and frequency of civic engagements. The Panel is of the view that the role of Deputy Mayor should continue to receive an allowance based on 6% of the Leader's Allowance, £2,218.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Deputy Mayor receive a Tier Nine Allowance, 6% of the recommended Leader's Allowance, £2,218.

Cabinet Advisors (Tier Ten)

- 4.2.25 The Leader has appointed four Cabinet Advisors. Initially, three of the Cabinet Advisors had a City Focus whilst the fourth focused on economic regeneration, including across neighbouring areas. The Cabinet Advisors each focus on a specific policy area in which they produce policy recommendations for the consideration of the Cabinet Member or Members. The Cabinet Advisors operate in an advisory capacity to Cabinet with research, engagement and support.
- 4.2.26 Following a review in February all four Cabinet Advisors currently receive an allowance of 4% of the Leader's Allowance, £1,479. The Panel recommends that the four Cabinet Advisors should continue to receive an allowance of 4% of the Leader's Allowance, £1,479.

WE RECOMMEND that the four Cabinet Advisors should continue to receive a Tier Ten allowance, 4% of the Leader's Allowance, £1,479

Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Chief Whip

- 4.2.27 The Panel was asked to consider if an allowance for the role of Deputy Leader of the Opposition could be reintroduced. The Panel is of the view that this role does not meet the criteria of a Special Responsibility Allowance and the allowance should not be reintroduced in to the Scheme of Allowances.
- 4.2.28 The Panel was further asked to consider the introduction of an allowance for the role of Chief Whip for the administration. A number of Councils, particularly Boroughs in London, do provide an allowance for this role. However, the Panel was of the view that

the role of Chief Whip did not meet the criteria for a Special Responsibility Role as it is primarily a political role managing party business.

WE RECOMMEND that no Special Responsibility Allowances should be payable for the roles of Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Chief Whip.

4.3 Independent Persons Allowance

- 4.3.1 The IRP recommended the payment and level of an allowance for those who serve on the committees or sub-committees of a Council but are not members of the Council. We continue to recognise an element of the contribution made by the Independent Persons should be voluntary. We therefore continue to recommend that the Independent Persons of the Council are entitled to an allowance plus travel, subsistence and other expenses in accordance with the scheme applicable to councillors.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the Independent Persons should continue to receive an allowance of £1,030 per annum. The role will continue to receive travel, subsistence and other expenses in accordance with the scheme applicable to councillors.

WE ALSO CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the allowance for an Independent Person chairing a Standards Panel hearing continue to be at a rate of £200 per meeting.

4.4 Travelling and Subsistence Allowance

- 4.4.1 A scheme of allowances may provide for any councillor to be paid for travelling and subsistence undertaken in connection with any of the duties specified in Regulation 8 of the 2003 Regulations (see paragraph 5.10). Similarly, such an allowance may also be paid to co-opted/Independent Persons of a committee or sub-committee of the Council in connection with any of those duties, provided that their expenses are not also being met by a third party.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that travelling and subsistence allowance should continue to be payable to councillors and independent persons in connection with any approved duties. The amount of travel and subsistence payable shall continue to be at the maximum levels payable to council staff in line with HM Revenue and Customs' rates. We propose no changes to the current travel and subsistence allowances.

4.5 Child Care and Dependent Carers' Allowance

- 4.5.1 The child and dependant carers' allowance ensures that potential candidates are not deterred from standing for election and should enable current councillors to continue despite any change in their personal circumstances. The current scheme awards reimbursement for Child Care at the rate of the Real Living Wage as recommended by the Living Wage Foundation, currently **£12.60 per hour**.
- 4.5.2 With regard to more specialist care of dependents the Panel continues to be of the view that this should continue to be reimbursed at the actual cost incurred by the councillor upon production of receipts.
- 4.5.7 The Panel is of the view that no changes should be made to the Child Care and Dependent Care Allowance.

WE RECOMMEND that no changes should be made to the current Child Care and Dependant Carers' Allowance.

4.6 Special Leave

- 4.6.1 The Panel was aware of the current policy in respect of Special Leave that has been approved by the Council and propose no changes to the current scheme.

WE RECOMMEND that no changes be made to the current policy regarding Special Leave for Councillors

The policy on Special Leave for Councillors should be actively promoted to prospective and current Councillors alongside the Child Care and Dependents' Carers Allowance.

4.7 Indexing of Allowances

- 4.7.1 A scheme of allowances makes provision for an annual adjustment of allowances in line with a specified index. The present scheme makes provision for the basic allowance, the special responsibility allowances and Independent Persons allowance to be adjusted annually in line with the percentage increase for staff salaries.

WE CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND that the basic allowance, each of the SRAs and the Independent Persons Allowance be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries from April 2025 for a period of up to four years. After this period, the Scheme shall be reviewed again by an independent remuneration panel.

4.8 Revocation of current Scheme of Allowances / Implementation of new Scheme

- 4.8.1 The 2003 Regulations provide that a scheme of allowances may only be revoked with effect from the beginning of a financial year, and that this may only take effect on the basis that the authority makes a further scheme of allowances for the period beginning with the date of revocation.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the new scheme of allowances to be agreed by the Council be implemented with effect from May 2025, at which time the current scheme of allowances will be revoked.

5. OUR INVESTIGATION

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 We interviewed ten current councillors including each group leader using a structured questioning process. We further held a well-attended workshop for councillors. We are grateful to all our interviewees and workshop participants for their assistance.
- 5.1.2 A questionnaire in respect of Members Allowances was circulated to all Councillors and twenty-eight of the fifty-four Councillors (52% of Councillors) completed the questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire analysis is included as Appendix 2.

6. APPROVED COUNCILLOR DUTIES

- 6.1.1 The Panel recommends that no changes be made to the Approved Councillor Duties.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND: That no changes are made to the Approved Duties as outlined in the Members' Allowance Scheme.

**Mark Palmer (Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel)
Jaine Jolly (Member of the Independent Remuneration Panel)
Rachel Potter (Member of the Independent Remuneration Panel)**

March 2025

Appendix 1: Summary of Panel's Recommendations

Allowance	Current Amount for 2024-25	Number	Recommended Allowance (33% PSD)	Recommended Allowance Calculation
Basic (BA)				
Total Basic:	£14,218	54	£14,218	

Special Responsibility:				
Leader of the Council	£36,967	1	£36,967	260% of BA
Deputy Leader	£22,180	1	£22,180	60% of Leader's Allowance
Cabinet Members	£12,938	8	£14,787	40% of Leader's Allowance
Chair of Planning	£12,938	1	£12,938	35% of Leader's Allowance
Chair of Licensing	£12,199	1	£12,199	33% of Leader's Allowance
Leader of Largest Opposition	£12,199	1	£12,199	33% of Leader's Allowance
Chair of Overview & Scrutiny	£11,090	3	£11,090	30% of Leader's Allowance
Mayor	£11,090	1	£11,090	30% of Leader's Allowance
Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board	£11,090	1	£11,090	30% of Leader's Allowance
Leader of Minority Group 1	£7,393	1	£7,393	20% of Leader's Allowance
Chair of Audit, Standards and General Purposes	£5,758	1	£5,758	15% of Leader's Allowance
Deputy Mayor	£2,218	1	£2,218	6% of Leader's Allowance
Cabinet Advisors	£1,479	4	£1,479	4% of Leader's Allowance
Independent Persons/ Co-opted Members	£1,030		£1,030	
Chair of Standards Panel Hearing	£200		£200	

1. Leader of Minority Group to lead a group of at least 10% of total Members (6 Councillors).

