

A Review of Councillors' Allowances for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

The 13th Report by the Independent Remuneration Panel

Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Vallance (Chair)
Chris Stevens¹
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December 2024

¹ Chris Stevens was initially part of the Panel and contributed to the early stages of the review. However, due to personal circumstances, he had to resign during the process. As per the IRP's Terms of Reference, the review was able to continue with two Panel Members as the quorum.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommended Schedule of Allowances	Nos	Ratio	Payable per Allowance	Sub Total Payable
Basic Allowance	41		£10,152	£416,232
Special Responsibility Allowances				
Leader	1		£30,456	£30,456
Deputy Leader	1	55%	£16,751	£16,751
Cabinet Members	8	50%	£15,228	£121,824
Chairs of Development Management Committees	2	25%	£7,614	£15,228
Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Panels	Max of 3	20%	£6,092	£18,276
Chair of Licensing Panel	1	15%	£4,569	£4,569
Chair of Audit and Governance Committee	1	15%	£4,569	£4,569
Chair of Berkshire Pension Fund Committee	1	15%	£4,569	£4,569
Leaders of Opposition Groups (shared; see detail)	1	25%	£7,614	£7,614
Chair of Council (SRA only for the Mayor, not including Civic Allowance)	1		£3,409	£3,409
Subtotal SRAs			£227,265	
Total (Basic plus SRA)			£643,497	

The Panel also recommends that changes be made to the allowances schemes as follows (see report for full detail and rationale):

Discontinued SRAs

The following SRAs be discontinued:

- Deputy Chair of Cabinet
- Deputy Mayor
- Members of Appeals Panels

Indexation

In accordance with the '4-year rule' (2003 Regulations 21. (1) (e)) the indexation of allowances should run for the maximum period of 4 years, until December

2028.

Implementation

The recommendations contained in this report be implemented immediately.

Introduction: The Regulatory Context

1. This report is a synopsis of the deliberations and recommendations made by the statutory Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) appointed by the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) to advise the Council on its Councillors' Allowances scheme.
2. The Panel was convened under *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)* (the 2003 Regulations). These regulations, arising out of the relevant provisions in the *Local Government Act 2000*, require all local authorities to maintain an independent remuneration panel (also known as an IRP) to review and provide advice on the council's Councillors' Allowances Scheme. This is in the context whereby Full Council retains powers of determination regarding Councillors' allowances, both levels and scope of remuneration and other allowances/reimbursements.
3. The Panel was convened to undertake a full review of the scheme, as the previous period of indexation had ended in October 2024. Due to capacity issues within the relevant service area at the time and the calling of a snap General Election in July 2024, shortly after the Police & Crime Commissioner elections were held in May 2024, the Panel first initiated the review process in September 2024.

Terms of Reference

4. The Panel was given the following terms of reference, namely to make recommendations on:
 - I. The amount of Basic Allowance that should be payable to the elected Councillors and the expenses it includes.
 - II. The categories of Councillors who should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) and the amount of such an allowance.
 - III. The amount of Co-optee allowances where applicable.
 - IV. Terms and conditions for the Travel and Subsistence Allowances.
 - V. Terms and conditions for Dependants' Carers' Allowance.
 - VI. Whether the allowances should continue to be adjusted in line with the average pay increases negotiated through the National Joint Committee for Local Government Employees or with reference to any other index or none.
 - VII. The implementation date for the recommendations of the Panel.
 - VIII. The Civic Allowances.

The Panel

5. The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead reconvened its Panel and the following Members were appointed to carry out the independent allowances review, namely:
 - Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Vallance CB OBE MPhil FRAeS
Served in the RAF for 38 years, and from December 2004 to February 2017 was Secretary of the UK's Defence Press and Broadcasting Advisory Committee (now known as the Defence and Security Media Advisory Committee). Between 2009 and 2019 he was also Chairman of the Services' Sound and Vision Corporation, and is currently Chairman of the Ascot Arts Society, President of 459 (Windsor) RAF Air Cadets and is actively involved in his local church of St Michael and All Angels, Sunninghill, in addition to several local charitable bodies.
 - Chris Stevens
Was born in Sunningdale, schooled at Windsor Grammar and has lived in Windsor for the past 39 years. He worked at The Sun for 30 years where he was Assistant Editor and is now Senior Sub-Editor at the Daily Mail. Married with two daughters, he is a keen supporter of the Alexander Devine Children's Hospice Service.
 - Karnail Pannu
Chairperson of Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum, President of the local Sikh temple and a governor of Newlands Girls' School. He has served as member of Housing Solutions, the Royal Borough's Standards Board as independent member for 18 years, a governor of East Berks College and Berkshire College of Agriculture for 8 years each. He taught for 37 years in Buckinghamshire.
6. The Panel was supported by Oran Norris-Browne, Governance & Democratic Services Manager, and Mark Beeley, Principal Democratic Services Officer, at the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Process and Methodology

Evidence Reviewed by the Panel

7. In October 2024, an online survey was issued to all Councillors to seek their views on all aspects of the Councillors' Allowance Scheme; 22 Councillors completed the survey.
8. The Panel met at the Town Hall, Maidenhead on 1 November 2024 to consider the responses to the survey. Following discussions, the Panel requested to meet with a number of Councillors to discuss certain topics in further detail. Councillors were chosen based on their SRA roles and

also their responses to some of the questions asked in the survey. The Panel also took time to go through the evidence pack that had been produced for them, which included comparative figures with nearest neighbours, key changes in roles and SRA's since the last full review, the Council's programme of meetings, the current Councillor's Allowances Scheme, benchmarking data, statutory guidance, etc². Interview questions were then formed, based upon this evidence.

9. Interviews were held on 19 November 2024 at the Town Hall, Maidenhead with a number of Councillors, who each covered several areas of interest to the Panel, based on their responses and their SRA roles. One written response to the interview questions was also received from a Councillor who was unable to attend on this date.
10. The Panel held their final meeting on 13 December to consider the evidence and finalise the preliminary recommendations that they had made following the interviews. The Panel took into consideration the written submissions from Councillors, verbal comments made during the interviews in November 2024 and also reviewed the relevant written information that was mentioned above. The Panel meetings were held in private, to enable the Panel to meet with Councillors and Officers and consider the evidence in confidence.

Benchmarking - the RBWM comparator group of councils

11. The Panel had reviewed and evaluated the evidence and representations within a comparative context. In particular, the Panel had benchmarked the scope and levels of allowances paid in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead against those paid in a comparator group of councils utilised for benchmarking purposes. The latest data set available to the Panel was the South East Employers 2024 annual survey of Councillor Allowance Schemes.
12. The Panel had access to data for all types of authorities, which were classed as 'Nearest Neighbours', in terms of size and make up of authority, including the five other Berkshire unitary authorities, for the comparator group:
 - Wokingham
 - West Berkshire
 - Bracknell Forest
 - Reading
 - Slough
 - North Somerset
 - Solihull
 - Bedford Borough
 - Wiltshire
 - Cheshire East

²See Appendices 1 & 2 for further details.

- Milton Keynes
 - Bath & Northeast Somerset
 - South Gloucestershire
 - West Northamptonshire
 - Central Bedfordshire
13. In making its recommendations, the Panel had not been driven by the levels of allowances paid across the comparator authorities, but it was deemed important to understand how the issues under review have been addressed elsewhere, i.e., what is the most common and good practice. Moreover, the Panel felt that it was important to place the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Councillors' Allowances Scheme in a comparative perspective.

Principles and Key Messages

The purpose of a Councillors' Allowances scheme

14. The representations made to the Panel varied widely, with some Councillors expressing the view that the level of allowances payable under the current scheme did not fully compensate the work and responsibilities undertaken by Councillors and were not enough to attract a wide variety of candidates. However, the Panel was mindful that the prime purpose of Councillors' allowances schemes was not to 'attract' candidates for Council, but instead allow them to carry out their role effectively for residents. Councillor allowances were never intended to be paid at full 'market rates', otherwise they would have to be at a level so high as not to be publicly acceptable. If elected Councillors were standing for and remaining on the Council due to financial appeal, it would run contrary to the public service ethos. As expressed by a number of interviewees, the desire to serve local communities and residents is the prime motive for being a Councillor, along with giving something back to the communities where they have lived for an extended period of time.
15. The policy intention behind the requirement to establish a Councillors' Allowances scheme for all English councils is to enable and facilitate Councillors' roles and responsibilities as far as practically possible while considering such factors as the nature of the council, local economic conditions and good practice. Thus, the Panel has sought to recommend a scheme that seeks to minimise financial barriers to public service so as to enable a wide range of people to become a Councillor without incurring undue personal financial cost.

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Councillors' Allowances Model

16. The comparative data used by the Panel showed that the Basic Allowance currently paid was slightly below average, with a couple of

Special Responsibility Allowances slightly above average for the comparator group.

17. The Panel also took into account that, unlike many other councils, RBWM committee vice chairs are not paid an SRA. Thus, the total paid out in allowances was not excessive in the comparative context.
18. It is also noted that in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead a Councillor can draw down one SRA only, regardless of the number of remunerated posts they may hold. As there are usually Councillors who hold more than one remunerated post, then all the available SRAs do not usually get paid. However, the scope does still exist for this to not be the case amongst the 41 Councillors. Survey and interview responses by Councillors were clear that the one SRA principle should remain to ensure that Councillors were taking up these roles in order to better the lives of residents and not necessarily compensate themselves financially.

The Scheme in the current context

19. In the intervening years since the last full review in 2020, the Panel had undertaken an interim review resulting in a number of significant changes to the scheme, such as in 2022, where thoughts were gathered on the level of indexation received per year. SRAs that had been deleted from the scheme in October 2020 included:
 - Councillors attending the Licensing & PSPO Sub-Committees.
20. The Panel noted that since the last review in 2020, both the Basic Allowance and all SRAs had increased marginally following indexation. As per the scheme, this was in line with the average pay increase given to Royal Borough employees. The Panel noted that there had been a 2% officer pay increase for the current financial year, 2024-25.
21. In all their deliberations, the Panel were very mindful of the financial context of the Council, however, they could not let that impact their recommendations. The Royal Borough, as with a host of other local authorities, had been significantly affected by the cost-of-living crisis and the significant rise in demand for statutory services and increased costs in areas such as adult social care and children's services.

Recommendations - the Basic Allowance

Recalibrating the Basic Allowance

22. In arriving at the recommended Basic Allowance in 2020, the Panel followed the formulaic approach as laid out in the 2003 Statutory Guidance (paragraphs 67-69) which recommends the consideration of three variables - namely time, public service and worth of remunerated time. If the Panel 'recalibrated' the Basic Allowance by repeating the

formulaic approach but updated the variables to take into account the most recent data available, it would give the following values:

- Time required to fulfil duties: 132.0 days per year
- Public Service Discount: 49%
- 2024 Rate of Remuneration: £150.80 per day

Time to fulfil duties for which the Basic Allowance is paid

23. The Basic Allowance is primarily a time-based payment (see 2003 Statutory Guidance paragraph 10). In this review, the Panel utilised 132.0 days per year as the minimum required input from a Councillor to fulfil those duties for which the Basic Allowance is paid, including preparing for and attending meetings: both formal and informal, addressing constituents' concerns, representing and engaging with local communities, external appointments and other associated work including telephone calls, emails and meetings with officers and residents.
24. The most up-to-date information available on what is a reasonable time expectation for which the Basic Allowance is paid comes from the 2022 Local Government Association Councillors Census. Data supplied to the Panel showed that Councillors in unitary councils who hold no positions of responsibility report that they put in on average 22.0 hours per week on "council business". This equates to 132.0 days per year based on a 48-week working year and an 8-hour working day - the same working year/day used in 2020.
25. Thus, for the purposes of recalibrating the Basic Allowance for this review, the Panel kept the expected time input from Councillors to the equivalent of 132.0 days per year and the rate of remuneration was increased to £150.80 per day, to reflect inflation and the average in the south east.

The Public Service Discount (PSD)

26. The Public Service Discount (PSD) recognises the principle that not all of what a Councillor does should be remunerated – there is an element of public service. This principle is realised by discounting an element of the expected time inputs associated with the Basic Allowance.
27. The proportion of 49% is at the top end of the spectrum used by Panels in England, typically ranging from 33% to 50%. The Panel therefore considered whether this should be amended, given that the 2022 Census of Councillors shows that 48% of all work undertaken by all English Councillors³ is either:

³See [Census of Local Authority Councillors 2022](#), (LGA), Chart 6, page 11, on average all Councillors spend 11 hours per week on dealing with constituents and community groups, out of a total weekly input of 22.2 hours per week. Data is not broken down for unitary councils in this instance.

- "Engaging with constituents, surgeries, enquiries"
 - "Working with community groups"
28. In determining the appropriate PSD to use in the current review, the Panel took into account responses in the Councillor survey and also through the interview process. This showed that although there were a few respondents who felt the PSD was either 'too high' or 'too low', a significant majority of 59% stated that they felt it was 'about right'. In addition, the responses to this in the interviews were clear, and they concluded that there was no overwhelming evidence to amend the PSD.
29. However, before it finalised its deliberations the Panel considered the recalibration of the Basic Allowance using a number of variables including the options of 47% and 49% (see paragraph 33).
30. In conclusion, the Panel agreed to maintain the PSD of 49%. Thus, of the expected time input of 132.0 days per year 49% of that time, or 64.68 days per year, are deemed public service, leaving 67.32 remunerated days per year.

The rate of remuneration

31. In 2024, the Panel used a rate of remuneration that most closely reflected the typical earnings of Councillors' constituents: £167 per day⁴, the median gross daily salary for all full-time employee jobs in RBWM as published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in its 2024 Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings (ASHE).
32. For comparison, the Panel noted that the figure for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (£167) was substantially higher than the equivalent figure for the south east (£150.80). The figure for the south east was still higher than any other UK region (excluding London).⁵
33. Before it finalised its deliberations in relation to the Basic Allowance, the Panel calculated potential figures using the formula (*time required to fulfil duties - PSD*) x *rate of remuneration* based on a number of variables as discussed in paragraphs 23-32:
- 132.0 days minus 49% PSD, multiplied by £150.80 = £10,152
 - 132.0 days minus 47% PSD, multiplied by £150.80 = £10,550

⁴ See [ASHE, 2024](#), Figure 6 - Median weekly pay - gross - for full time employee jobs in the RBWM. This shows the weekly figure to be £834.20 and divided by 5 working days equals £166.80 per day. The ONS advises that the median is a more accurate measure of average earnings due to a handful of high earners and large number of employees earning the minimum wage or just above it.

⁵ See [ASHE, 2024](#), Figure 5 - Median weekly pay - gross - for full time employee jobs in the south east. This shows the weekly figure to be £754.10 and divided by 5 working days equals £150.80 per day.

- 132.0 days minus 49% PSD, multiplied by £167 per day = £11,242
 - 132.0 days minus 47% PSD, multiplied by £167 per day = £11,683
34. In determining the appropriate figures to use in calibrating the Basic Allowance, the Panel was mindful of the council's financial context as detailed in paragraph 21 and took into consideration representations made to it during the interviews in November 2024 on the appropriateness of any increase in the costs of the allowance scheme at this time. However, the Panel were mindful that their recommendations would be set independently of the Council's financial situation.
35. The Panel considered that an argument could potentially be made to use any of the calculations in paragraph 33 but concluded that the Panel's recommendation should reflect the lowest possible figure based on credible statistics. The Panel also noted that although it was required to use the formulaic approach in recommending a Basic Allowance, the Full Council was not bound by these requirements and could opt to modify the recommendation or even reject an increase outright.
36. The Panel decided to re-set the rate of remuneration to £150.80 per day resulting in a recalibrated Basic Allowance of £10,152.
37. In comparison to the other unitary authorities in the south east who completed the survey provided by South East Employers, the borough's Basic Allowance amount would remain lower than the average of £11,222.
38. For the purposes of this review the Panel has been guided by the recalibrated Basic Allowance of £10,152.
39. The Panel reviewed the detail contained in paragraph 4 of the current scheme:
- This [basic] allowance is intended to recognise the time each Councillor spends on their work, and associated costs which includes all Council related telephone calls; including calls on mobile phones, broadband costs, postage and stationery, routine travel (such as meetings with Ward residents) and subsistence costs and other incidental costs, such as office equipment for home use.*
40. The Panel noted that since the last full review in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has since ended, and this had seen a return to in-person meetings and therefore Councillors were using their home broadband on a less regular basis for council work. However, it was also noted that Councillors were consequently now incurring additional travel costs or spending time travelling to and from meeting venues, however this was seen as a return to pre-pandemic levels.

41. The Panel noted that in their last full review, they had recommended that any future review should include a more detailed examination of the costs of digital communications. Having considered the changes that had occurred since then, the Panel was content that the current wording in paragraph 4 of the Councillors' Allowances Scheme⁶ was appropriate.
42. **RECOMMENDATION 1: The Panel recommends that the Basic Allowance payable in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is set at £10,152.**
43. **RECOMMENDATION 2: The Panel further recommends that the Basic Allowance continues to cover the range of expenses as currently set out in the Councillors' Allowances scheme (paragraph 4 of Part 9A of the constitution).**

Special Responsibility Allowances - the Leader's SRA

44. The Panel noted that currently the Leader's SRA (£27,226) was below average compared to the unitary authorities benchmarking group.
45. Looking at the role of Leader of the Council in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, it remains the fact that the Leader's overall commitment, regardless of the individual, was not explicitly a full-time role, but requires a significant time commitment.
46. In common with all Leaders, the Leader of RBWM since the implementation of the relevant sections (in 2011) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 now holds all executive powers and the discharge of these functions. It is the Leader who chooses the Cabinet and assigns their portfolios and the extent of delegations. The Panel were aware that the former Leader of the Council had been employed full time in a private capacity but was still required to commit a significant amount of time to the role. The current Leader of the Council had adopted a very 'hands on' approach when they took on the role, however, had since also taken on a part-time role. A significant proportion of their time however was still committed to the role of Leader of the Council.
47. The Panel received no evidence to suggest the multiplier of 3 in calculating the SRA for the Leader of the Council should not continue.
48. Consequently, the Panel proposes the Leader's SRA be set at 3 times the recommended Basic Allowance (£10,152), which equates to £30,456.
49. **RECOMMENDATION 3: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Leader of the Council be set at £30,456.**

⁶ RBWM Constitution – Councillors' Allowances Scheme – [Part 9A](#)

Arriving at the other SRAs

50. In arriving at the other recommended SRAs, the Panel continued with the pro rata approach as set out in the 2003 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 76). In most cases, the current ratios as expressed as a percentage of the Leader's SRA have been maintained, except where there is a case to reset the original ratio.

The Deputy Leader and Deputy Chair of Cabinet

51. The Panel noted, with some surprise, that the somewhat unique set up of having both a Deputy Leader and a Deputy Chair of Cabinet continued at the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. This surprise went further, as it appeared that the role of 'Deputy Chair of the Cabinet' was not something that the current Leader of the Council utilised. The Panel noted from both the survey responses and interviews held with Councillors, that it was almost unanimous that the role of Deputy Chair of the Cabinet be removed as it was felt that this was a function that should be reserved for the Deputy Leader of the Council.
52. The Panel noted that currently the Deputy Leader SRA (£14,974) was slightly below average compared to the unitary authorities benchmarking group. However, the Panel received no evidence to suggest the figure of 55% in calculating the SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Council should not continue.
53. **RECOMMENDATION 4: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Council remain set at 55% of the Leader's recommended SRA, £16,751.**
54. **RECOMMENDATION 5: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Deputy Chair of Cabinet be removed from the Councillors' Allowance Scheme.**

The other 8 Cabinet Members

55. The Panel noted that currently the Cabinet Member SRA (£13,612) was marginally below average compared to the unitary authorities benchmarking group. However, the Panel received no evidence to suggest the figure of 50% in calculating the SRA for the Cabinet Member SRA should not continue.
56. **RECOMMENDATION 6: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the other Cabinet Members be set at 50% of the Leader's recommended SRA, £15,228.**

The Chairs of the main Statutory Committees

57. Currently, the Chairs of the main statutory committees each receive an SRA, originally set in 2008 at 25% of the Leader's SRA, as follows:
- 2 Development Management Committees - £6,807
 - 3 Overview & Scrutiny Panels - £5,446
 - 1 Licensing Panel - £6,807
 - 1 Audit & Governance Committee - £5,446
58. The Panel noted that currently these SRAs were slightly below average compared to the unitary authorities benchmarking group.
59. It was also noted that in a number of the comparator authorities, the allowance schemes included SRAs for Deputy Chairs of statutory committees, which was not the case at the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
60. The Panel took into account all of the evidence that it had received from both the evidence pack provided, along with the responses from Councillors, both in interviews and via their survey responses. It was discussed that some meetings were programmed in annually to meet a lot more regularly than others and that the workloads associated with these appeared to differ somewhat outside of the meetings themselves.
61. The Panel received a significant amount of feedback from Councillors in relation to the chairing of Council meetings and the ability that was sometimes shown. Councillors questioned the level of SRA that was provided and whether this was a fair reflection of the time put in and ability of the individual. This was accompanied with the observation that some meetings were programmed considerably less than others annually and involved a great deal less involvement outside of the meetings.
62. It is important to note that the Panel did take into consideration that this often came down to the individual Councillors themselves and was not reflective upon the SRA itself. This was also discussed in a wider context and was not specifically aimed at any particular Chair by name or committee.
63. The Panel received no evidence to suggest the current ratio of 25% for Chairs of Development Management Committees be altered due to the number of meetings that were programmed in annually and the quantity of work that appeared to go into it, from the evidence gathered.
64. The Panel also received no evidence to suggest that the current ratio of 20% for Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny Panels needed to be amended, again due to the frequency of meetings, which had been seen to increase since the last review in 2020.
65. The Panel also noted that since their last review in 2020, the number of Overview & Scrutiny Panels had reduced from 4 to 3 and therefore the

Panel recommended that the maximum number of SRAs that could be claimed for this was changed from a maximum of 4, to a maximum of 3.

66. In comparison to paragraphs 63 and 64, the Panel noted that on average, the Licensing Panel appeared to meet less frequently than these. The Panel therefore decided that this should be reflected in a slight decrease for the Licensing Panel Chair SRA, to 15%.
67. Similarly to that of the Licensing Panel, the Panel also felt that due to the less frequent number of programmed meetings for the Audit & Governance Committee, which was a newly established committee when the Panel last carried out their full review in 2020. The Panel recommends that the SRA be decreased marginally to 15%.
68. **RECOMMENDATION 7: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Chairs of the Development Management Committees remains set at 25% of the Leader's recommended SRA, £7,614.**
69. **RECOMMENDATION 8: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Panels remains set at 20% of the Leader's recommended SRA, £6,092.**
70. **RECOMMENDATION 9: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Licensing Panel be set at 15% of the Leader's recommended SRA, £4,569.**
71. **RECOMMENDATION 10: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee be set at 15% of the Leader's recommended SRA, £4,569.**
72. **RECOMMENDATION 11: The Panel also recommends that the number of remunerated Chairs in this category are capped as follows:**
 - **Development Management Committees: a maximum of 2**
 - **Licensing Panel: a maximum of 1**
 - **Overview & Scrutiny Panels: a maximum of 3**

The Chair of the Berkshire Pension Fund Committee

73. The Chair of the Berkshire Pension Fund Committee currently receives an SRA of £5,446, 20% of the Leader's SRA. The Panel noted that the frequency of meetings was again similar to that of the Licensing Panel and the Audit & Governance Committee and should therefore be lowered to the same level for consistency.
74. **RECOMMENDATION 12: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Berkshire Pension Fund Committee be set at 15% of the Leader's recommended SRA, £4,569.**

Members of the Appeals Panel

75. Currently Councillors sitting on an Appeals Panel are paid an SRA of £37 per meeting (for meetings up to a maximum of three hours in length) or £73 per meeting (for meetings over 3 hours in length). These Panels consist of 3 Councillors drawn from any elected Councillor across the Council and meet as and when required. Appeals Panels mainly meet to consider:
- School Transport Appeals to consider and determine appeals against decisions made by officers under delegated powers relating to applications for home to school transport and discretionary awards.
 - Appeals in relation to the refusal to grant, suspension or revocation of Private Hire or Hackney Carriage Driver or Vehicle Licences.
76. The Appeals Panel meets occasionally, with 10 meetings since May 2024, hearing 15 appeals. Usually, Panels deal with 1-2 appeals in a single sitting, however on one occasion, this was up to 3.
77. Compared to when the Panel conducted their last full review in 2020, where the reliance on membership fell on a small cohort of Councillors, namely those who were available and willing to undertake mandatory training and then sit on an Appeals Panel. There now appears to be a greater pool of Councillors who have undertaken training due to annual sessions and also a greater willingness amongst Councillors to do so. Feedback gained by the Panel through the Councillor interviews suggested that some Councillors felt quite strongly that persons should be sitting on the Panels in their roles as Councillors and not in addition to receiving an SRA.
78. Following the 2020 review, the SRAs for the Licensing & PSPO Sub-Committees were removed. These meetings were deemed similar to both types of Appeals Panels outlined in paragraph 75, both in time and preparation. Therefore, for consistency, the Panel recommends that this SRA also now be removed from the scheme.
79. **RECOMMENDATION 13: The Panel recommends the SRA for Members of the Appeals Panel be removed from the scheme.**

The Leaders of the Opposition Groups (minimum of 3 Members)

80. The Panel noted that in its last review back in 2020, they had recommended to Full Council that both the SRAs for the main opposition group and the minority opposition group should be combined and split proportionately between each group leader, according to the number of members they each had. This was subsequently approved by Full Council.

81. The Panel felt that no evidence had been provided via the surveys or the interviews to suggest that this SRA should be altered in terms of amount or minimum number of members.
82. **RECOMMENDATION 14: The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Leaders of the Opposition Groups (minimum of 3 Members) remained set at 25% of the Leader's recommended SRA, £7,614.**

Champions

83. The Panel considered whether the roles of Champions should receive an SRA. The Panel heard from a range of Councillors on this topic including several champions themselves, along with the Leader, who had created these roles.
84. The Panel appreciated and commended the role that the Council's Champions played. However, they concluded from the evidence provided that the freedom that was available to Champions to define their role and how they carried it out mitigated the need for an allowance to be paid. As a result, the Panel felt that no SRA should be introduced.
85. **RECOMMENDATION 15: The Panel recommends that no SRA be introduced for the role of Champions.**

Confirmation of the 1-SRA only rule

86. The 2003 Regulations do not prohibit the payment of multiple SRAs to Councillors, but as per good practice, the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead has adopted a 1-SRA only rule. In other words, regardless of the number of remunerated posts individual Councillors hold they can only be paid 1 SRA. Moreover, this cap on the payment of SRAs to Councillors means that posts are not simply sought out for financial reasons, i.e. collecting remunerated posts does not enhance remuneration. Indeed, the logic of the 1-SRA only rule is that it helps to spread such posts around more. It also makes for a more transparent allowances scheme and acts as a brake on the total paid out each year in SRAs, as in practice it will be highly unusual if all SRAs are paid out annually, resulting in a saving to the council. Some evidence provided to the Panel concluded that no SRAs should be paid out at all, as some of these roles were seen more as a privilege.
87. **RECOMMENDATION 16: The Panel recommends that the 1-SRA only rule continues to apply in the Councillors' Allowances scheme.**

Co-optee Allowances

88. The Panel noted that there were a number of co-optees on Council committees and panels (mainly Overview and Scrutiny Panels), but no evidence was received during the review to suggest the roles merited a Co-optee Allowance.

89. **RECOMMENDATION 17: The Panel recommends that a Co-optee Allowance should continue to not be included in the Councillors' Allowances scheme.**

The Allowances for expenses

The Subsistence Allowance

90. The Royal Borough does not provide for a Subsistence Allowance for Councillors whether they are attending an approved duty within or outside its boundaries. No evidence was received to suggest this should be revised.
91. **RECOMMENDATION 18: The Panel recommends that Subsistence Allowances should continue to not be included in the Councillors' Allowances scheme.**

Travel Allowances

92. No evidence was received to suggest a need to revise the current terms and conditions and rates payable for travel allowances.
93. **RECOMMENDATION 19: The Panel recommends that the current terms and conditions and the rates payable for Travel Allowances are maintained in the scheme.**

The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)

94. The Panel considered responses around the Dependants' Carers' Allowance and felt that no evidence was received to suggest this should be revised.
95. **RECOMMENDATION 20: The Panel recommends that the terms and conditions of the Dependants' Carers' allowance be maintained in the scheme.**

Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave

96. The Panel received no evidence to suggest changes should be made to this element of the scheme.
97. **RECOMMENDATION 21: The Panel recommends that no changes be made to the section on Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave in the current scheme.**

The Mayoral and Civic Allowances

98. While not formally within the remit of the 2003 Regulations the current Civic Allowances that are payable to the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor of

the Royal Borough are included in the scheme for transparency and indexation purposes.

99. The Civic Allowances are paid under the Local Government Act 1972 (sections 3.5 and 5.4) not as remuneration but to meet the expenses of holding the offices of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Royal Borough. Not all of the Civic Allowance is paid directly to the Office holder, a proportion is held by the Mayor's Office to pay a number of expenses directly on their behalf.
100. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor also currently receive SRAs (£3,409 and £1,136 respectively) as part of the Councillors' Allowances scheme. The SRAs had been introduced in May 2017 following the Eighth Panel report to Full Council, to acknowledge the fact that chairing Council meetings was a significant responsibility and to broaden the appeal of the position of Mayor from a wider range of Councillors.
101. Feedback from Councillors was considered on this matter, where the consensus was that the roles of both Mayor and Deputy Mayor brought with them huge time commitments, which also sometimes included unsociable hours. Therefore, the Panel believed that the current Civic Allowances should remain unchanged and continue to rise in line with the agreed level of indexation.
102. In relation to the SRAs that both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor received, the Panel considered the evidence that had been presented to them within both the survey responses and the interviews. The Panel acknowledged that the chairing of meetings of the Full Council brought with it an added responsibility and therefore felt comfortable with continuing with this SRA. The Panel did however put forward a minor amendment to the wording of this. The current SRA titled 'Mayor' was recommended to be changed to 'Chair of Council', to clearly distinguish from the separate Civic Allowance.
103. In terms of the SRA titled 'Deputy Mayor', the Panel noted that no other Council committees had SRAs for Vice-Chairs and therefore to better align with other meetings, the Panel recommends that this SRA is removed from the scheme.
104. **RECOMMENDATION 22: The Panel recommends that no changes be made to the Civic Allowances.**
105. **RECOMMENDATION 23: The Panel recommends that the Mayor SRA remained in the current scheme at an amount of £3,409, with the minor amendment of changing its listed title to 'Chair of Council'.**
106. **RECOMMENDATION 24: The Panel recommends that the Deputy Mayor SRA be removed from the current Councillors' Allowances Scheme.**

Indexation

107. In accordance with the '4 year rule' (2003 Regulations 21. (1) (e)) the Panel confirmed that the indexation of allowances should run for the maximum period of 4 years, until December 2028.
108. **RECOMMENDATION 25: Consequently, the Panel confirms and recommends that the following allowances continue to be indexed (up to December 2028) at the following rates:**
- **Basic Allowance, SRAs, Civic Allowances, and the Financial Loss Allowances:** updated annually in line with the average pay increase given to Royal Borough employees (and rounded to the nearest pound as appropriate). Any implementation of this index should continue to be applicable from the same date that it applies to officers.
 - **Mileage Allowance:** adjusted on the 1 April each year by reference to the HMRC AMAP (Authorised Mileage Allowance Payments) approved rates.
 - **Other travel:** will be reimbursement of actual costs taking into account the most cost-effective means of transport available and the convenience of use.
 - **Dependants' Carer's Allowance:** paid at the maximum hourly minimum wage applicable to the age of the carer (who must be 16 years of age or over) or, for carers of dependants on social/medical grounds, the Royal Borough's average hourly homecare charge.
 - The adjustments recommended above to be made each year for a period of up to 4 years (January 2025 to December 2028) without the need for a review by the Remuneration Panel, unless such a review is requested by the Panel or the Council.

Implementation

109. Due to the situation that was outlined within paragraph 3 of this report, the Panel first initiated the review process in September 2024, which ran past the expiration date of the scheme in October 2024, that was agreed by Full Council in October 2020. The Panel therefore recommends that the updated amounts recommended within this report be backdated to October 2024 and be paid as soon as practically possible.
110. **RECOMMENDATION 26: The Panel recommends that the recommendations contained in this report be implemented immediately and be backdated to 1 November 2024.**

Appendix One

Councillors who met with the Panel

Cllr Werner	Leader of the Council
Cllr Jones	Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Cross	Ward Councillor for Bray
Cllr Wilson	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cllr Price	Ward Councillor for Clewer & Dedworth East & Corporate Social Responsibility Champion
Cllr Hunt	Leader of the Minority Opposition Group

Councillors who were unable to attend to meet with the Panel

Cllr Moriarty	Chair of Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel and Consultations Champion – <i>Written Response to Questions was received.</i>
Cllr Knowles	Leader of the Main Opposition Group, Chair of a Development Management Committee & Armed Forces Champion

Councillors who responded to the online survey and/or provided a written representation

Cllrs Hill, Knowles, Price, Grove, D Davies, Carpenter, Coe, Werner, Bond, Howard, K Singh, Cross, Moriarty, A Tisi, J Tisi, Wilson, G Singh, Hunt, Buckley, Martin, Jones & Davies.

Appendix Two

Information Received by the Panel

1. Comparative figures of 'Nearest Neighbour Authorities' compared with RBWM.
2. Full details of current RBWM Cllrs & their SRA's, accompanied with notes of changes since May 2023
3. Key changes at RBWM since the last IRP review
4. Survey questions & results of all RBWM Cllrs – Oct 2024
5. Possible interview schedule and questions for IRP
6. Current Panel Memberships of RBWM Cllrs
7. [The Local Authorities \(Members' Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)
8. IRP Terms of reference
9. [Current Councillors' Allowances scheme](#) (Part 9A of RBWM Constitution)
10. [Previous IRP reports](#)
11. [Allowances paid to Councillors 2023/24](#)
12. [Schedule of Council meetings 2024/25](#)
13. [Role Profiles](#) (Part 9C and addendum of RBWM constitution)
14. [Council Plan 2024-2028](#)
15. [2022 LGA Census of Cllrs](#)
16. [Real Living Wage data](#)
17. [Nomis \(official labour market statistics\) hourly pay data](#)
18. Comparative data with other authorities (South East Employers)