

**Key elements of the Councillor role covered by the Allowances provided**

Text is extracted from *Guidance on members' allowances for local authorities in England* published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2001

**A) Basic Allowance**

Paragraphs from the DCLG document:

13. Each local authority must make provision in its scheme of allowances for a basic, flat rate allowance payable to all members. The allowance must be the same for each councillor. The allowance may be paid in a lump sum, or in instalments through the year.
14. Basic allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes.
52. Paragraph 14 describes the sorts of things basic allowance is intended to cover. 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.
53. It is important that some element of the work of members continues to be voluntary - that some hours are not remunerated. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by elected members, and further to ensure that, despite the input required, people are encouraged to come forward as elected members and that their service to the community is retained.

As a more detailed checklist for the Paragraph 14 definition, the following is reproduced from the report of the Independent remuneration Panel published in 2015:

1. Membership of, preparation for and attendance at
  - a) Full Council,
  - b) One Planning Committee, and
  - c) any other Committees or Working Groups as appointed
2. All other meetings of Members and meetings with Officers
3. Site meetings
4. Training
5. Attending conferences (and travelling and subsistence)
6. Attending the Standards Committee (as appropriate)
7. Preparation for meetings
8. Travelling time (plus travel allowances)
9. Constituency work

10. Attendance at Parish Council meetings (as appropriate) as District Councillor
11. Broadband provision
12. Telephone calls to office
13. Other telephone calls, correspondence etc
14. Postage and stationery
15. Approved duties - outside bodies

NB Councillors are also supplied with a laptop or tablet computer and may use dedicated in house office facilities

## **B) Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)**

Paragraphs from the DCLG document:

15. Each local authority may also make provision in its scheme for the payment of special responsibility allowances for those councillors who have significant responsibilities. The authority, or the panel, has to identify the special responsibilities for which the allowance is to be paid, and the amounts of allowance to be paid for each such responsibility.
16. Where one political group is in control, and where an authority has decided to pay special responsibility allowances, the authority must make provision for the payment of a special responsibility allowance to at least one member of a minority group.
17. The 1991 Regulations provide that special responsibility allowances may be paid for special responsibilities within one or more of the following categories:
  - membership of the executive where the authority is operating executive arrangements
  - acting as leader or deputy leader of a political group within the authority
  - presiding at meetings of a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee
  - representing the authority at meetings of, or arranged by, any other body
  - membership of a committee or sub-committee of the authority which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods
  - acting as spokesperson of a political group on a committee or sub-committee of the authority
  - such other activities in relation to the discharge of the authority's functions as require of the member an amount of time and effort equal to or greater than would be required of him by any one of the activities mentioned above whether or not that activity is specified in the scheme.

Note: the 2003 Regulations add two additional categories attracting an SRA;

- acting as a member of an adoption panel within the meaning of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983;
  - acting as a member of any committee or sub-committee that deals with any function arising from any enactment authorising the authority to license or control the carrying on of any activity.
55. Special responsibility allowance may be paid to those members of the council who have significant additional responsibilities, over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor. These special responsibilities must fall into one of the categories which are specified in the 1991 (now 2003) Regulation and which are detailed at paragraph 17 above.
56. The 1991 (now 2003) Regulations do not limit the number of special responsibility allowances which may be paid, nor do the regulations prohibit the payment of more than one special responsibility allowance to any one member.
57. However, these are important considerations for local authorities. If the majority of members of a council receive a special responsibility allowance the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified. Local authorities will wish to consider very carefully the additional roles of members and the significance of these roles, both in terms of responsibility and real time commitment before deciding which will warrant the payment of a special responsibility allowance.
58. It does not necessarily follow that a particular responsibility which is vested to a particular member is a significant additional responsibility for which a special responsibility allowance should be paid. Local authorities will need to consider such particular responsibilities very carefully. Whilst such responsibilities may be unique to a particular member it may be that all or most members have some such responsibility to varying degrees. Such duties may not lead to a significant extra workload for any one particular member above another. These sorts of responsibilities should be recognised as a time commitment to council work which is acknowledged within the basic allowance and not responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be recommended.
59. In addition, any particular local authority will need to look carefully at the nature of its constitution when determining its scheme. New arrangements will mean that there are inevitable changes in the positions of responsibility on the council, both in terms of number and workload. Some councillors will be spending significantly more of their time on council duties than has ever previously been the case. On the other hand, changes in the traditional committee structure will mean that there are far fewer committees and, as a consequence, fewer councillors engaged as chairs and vice-chairs of numerous committees.

60. In a case where a local authority has agreed that the holder of the chair of its overview and scrutiny committees should be rotated, that local authority will need to assure itself of the additional responsibilities of the temporary chairs before determining what allowances to recommend.
61. Having determined which duties should be acknowledged as significant additional responsibilities, the local authority will need to consider the levels of special responsibility allowance which are attached to each post. A good starting point in determining special responsibility allowances may be to agree the allowance which should be attached to the most time consuming post on the council (this maybe the elected mayor or the leader) and pro rata downwards for the other roles which it has agreed ought to receive an extra allowance. One way of calculating special responsibility allowances may be to take the agreed level of basic allowance and recommend a multiple of this allowance as an appropriate special responsibility allowance for either the elected mayor or the leader.