

# Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

## Scheme of Members' allowances for Dorset Council

### 1. Summary of recommendations

- 1.1. In view of the changes in the constitution of the Council, the Panel recommends that:
- (i) the basic allowance should be set at £13,500 per annum;
  - (ii) a new special responsibility allowance be awarded for Lead Members;
  - (iii) the special responsibility allowance for Lead Members be set at £10,000 per annum;
  - (iv) special responsibility allowances be awarded to the chairs of the Scrutiny Committees of £10,000 per annum;
  - (v) special responsibility allowances be awarded to the chairs of the Overview Committees of £10,000 per annum; and
  - (vi) the special responsibility allowance for school appeal members should be discontinued.
- 1.2. The Panel recommends that otherwise the present Scheme of Members' allowances should remain unchanged.

### 2. Introduction

This report has been prepared by the Independent Remuneration Panel (the **Panel**) for Dorset Council (the **Council**) comprising three individuals drawn from the community:

- (i) John Quinton (Chairman);
- (ii) Keith Broughton; and
- (iii) Martin Varley.

### 3. Legal Basis

- 3.1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the **Regulations**) apply to all local authorities.

- 3.2. The Regulations require a relevant authority to make a scheme providing for the payment of a basic allowance to each member of that authority. The basic allowance (**BA**) must be the same for each member of the authority.
- 3.3. A relevant authority's scheme of allowances may also provide for the payment of special responsibility allowances (**SRAs**) to such members as have special or additional responsibilities. The specified categories of special or additional responsibilities which may be included in a scheme of allowances include:
- i) acting as leader or deputy leader of a political group within the authority;
  - ii) acting as a member of an executive where the authority is operating executive arrangements within the meaning of part 2 of the Local Government Act 2000;
  - iii) presiding at meetings of a committee or sub-committee of the authority;
  - iv) representing the authority at meetings of or arranged by any other body;
  - v) acting as a member of a committee or sub-committee of the authority which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods;
  - vi) acting as the spokesperson of a political group on a committee or sub-committee of the authority; and
  - vii) carrying out 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 or her by any of the above-mentioned activities.
- 3.4. SRAs need not be the same and may reflect the different expectations, time and effort involved in particular roles.
- 3.5. Member allowance schemes may also provide for the payment of a carers' allowance and also for members' travelling and subsistence whilst acting in connection with their duties as a member of the authority.
- 3.6. Before a relevant authority may make or amend a scheme of allowances it must have regard to recommendations made in relation to the scheme by an independent remuneration panel.

#### **4. Context of the Review**

- 4.1. Following the parliamentary approval of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole (Structural Changes) Order 2018, on 1 April 2019 Dorset Council became the responsible authority for local government services

previously delivered in Dorset through five district councils and a county council.

- 4.2. In February 2019 an independent remuneration panel had recommended a scheme of allowances for the new Council (the **February 2019 Report**). At that time the Panel had received significant evidence that the new Council's culture and governance structure would continue to develop and evolve over time. Most importantly how the Executive would work in terms of collective and individual decision making and how it would be held to account by Overview and Scrutiny functions.
- 4.3. Accordingly, the February 2019 Report recommended that the scheme of allowances be reviewed by an independent remuneration panel after twelve months of Council's operation.
- 4.4. A new constitution was adopted by the Council on 18 February 2020 (the **Constitution**).
- 4.5. The Leader of the Council held an initial meeting with the Panel on 10 June 2020 to explain those changes to the Council's decision-making structures pursuant to the Constitution. Those concerning support for the Executive by Lead Members and the overview and scrutiny functions are set out in more detail in paragraphs 8 and 9 of this report. The Leader also articulated his vision for the implementation of those revised arrangements. He asked the Panel to include these revised arrangements within its overall review of the Council's scheme of allowances.

## 5. **Role of the Panel**

- 5.1. A scheme for the payment of a basic allowance must be adopted by Dorset Council. It may also adopt a scheme for the payment of SRAs and other allowances as set out in paragraph 3. Members of the Council (**Councillors**) must have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to a scheme of allowances before adopting any scheme. Therefore, it is the Council that makes the decision about what scheme of allowances is adopted and the rates at which allowances are available to Councillors and others covered by that scheme.
- 5.2. Regulation 20(2) requires that an independent remuneration panel shall consist of at least three members none of whom –
  - (i) is also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of such an authority; or
  - (ii) is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority.

- 5.3. The three members of the Panel are individuals, none of whom is disqualified from being or becoming a member of a relevant authority.
- 5.4. In view of the exceptional circumstances with regard to the Covid-19 pandemic, all meetings of the Panel were conducted “virtually”. The Panel met on 8, 10, 25, 26, 29 June and 1 July 2020.

## **6. Evidence**

- 6.1. To inform its recommendations, the Panel was provided with the following evidence:
  - (i) the Regulations;
  - (ii) detailed benchmarking data from South West Councils and from other unitary authorities’ current allowances schemes;
  - (iii) the current members’ allowance scheme for Dorset Council;
  - (iv) the articles of the Constitution;
  - (v) a proposed scope of work for the Lead Member role within the governance structure for Dorset Council;
  - (vi) information from neighbouring councils on the operation of their cabinet support arrangements; and
  - (vii) data on the number of meetings at Dorset Council and the role of Vice Chairmen.
- 6.2. The Panel also had the opportunity to interview those individuals named at paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3.

## **7. Methodology for the review**

- 7.1. As part of the review, the Panel interviewed each group leader on the understanding that group leaders would consult with, and represent the views of, the members of their respective groups to the Panel on the operation of the current scheme of allowances. Ordinarily, the Panel would seek the views of all Councillors directly, but given the exceptional circumstances in relation to the current situation with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, the approach of focusing discussion through group leaders was considered appropriate.
- 7.2. The Panel interviewed the following Councillors:
  - (i) Councillor Spencer Flower – Leader of the Council;
  - (ii) Councillor Peter Wharf - Deputy Leader Conservative Group;

- (iii) Councillor Nick Ireland - Leader Liberal Democrat Group;
- (iv) Councillor Clare Sutton – Green Group Leader;
- (v) Councillor Les Fry – Independent Group Leader (Alliance for Local Living);
- (vi) Councillor Andrew Parry – Portfolio Holder for Children, Education & Early Help;
- (vii) Councillor Ray Bryan – Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel & Environment;
- (viii) Councillor Piers Brown – Chairman Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (ix) Councillor Jill Haynes – Chairman Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (x) Councillor Jane Somper – Chairman People Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- (xi) Councillor Daryl Turner – Chairman Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 7.3. In addition, the Chairman of the Panel interviewed Jonathan Mair, Monitoring Officer, Dorset Council.
- 7.4. The Panel wishes to record its thanks to those individuals who gave evidence.
- 7.5. The Panel interviewed Councillors of all political groups with varying roles and responsibilities in an effort to gain the best possible interpretation of how the Council is currently operating and functions and the roles of the Councillor within those arrangements.
- 7.6. The views of the Leader were sought in order that the Panel should have an understanding of how the Council's new constitutional arrangements may affect the operation of the Council and impact upon Councillors.
- 7.7. Portfolio holders and Chairman of committees were given the opportunity to describe the operational tasks, organisation and management of those committees. Evidence as to the extent and role of vice-Chairman and members of those committees was also taken.

## **8. Revised Executive Arrangements**

- 8.1. The Constitution provides;

## 6.6 Substitutes and Lead Members

- (a) *There shall be no power to appoint substitutes to the Executive.*
- (b) *The Leader shall be entitled to appoint up to six members of the controlling group as lead members.*
- (c) *Lead members are not members of the Executive but are appointed to work alongside the Executive, providing additional leadership capacity and support for Executive members.*
- (d) *Lead members may also be members of an overview committee but shall not be appointed to a scrutiny committee.*

- 8.2. In his meeting with the Panel, the Leader outlined the changes made to the Constitution in relation to Executive support/capacity. The Panel was told that these changes had had been considered and supported on a cross-political group basis by a Governance Task and Finish Group.
- 8.3. Many unitary councils with the full range of local authority functions had found that some portfolios were broad and extremely demanding. This was so, even with an Executive of ten members. To address such pressures, a number of authorities had put in place cabinet support or lead member roles. Whilst not Portfolio holders, such Councillors serve to support the Executive and provide additional leadership capacity.
- 8.4. The Leader highlighted the need to address new and urgent priorities through the transformation programme. These, and other issues, like the climate and ecology, create additional demands upon Executive leadership and the capacity of individuals to undertake wide-ranging portfolios. The Leader thought it is vital to enable Cabinet Members to concentrate on the larger strategic issues. The new Lead Member role is intended to be more operational: such as, establishing and maintaining professional, effective and efficient working relationships with other Councillors, with services and external organisations.
- 8.5. The Constitution authorises the Leader to appoint up to six Lead Members to provide extra executive capacity and to aid succession planning. The Panel were provided with a job description for this role as set out in the Appendix to this report. It was also suggested to the Panel that the appointment of Lead Members will assist in succession planning to complex portfolios.
- 8.6. The Panel interviewed the Deputy Leader and two Cabinet Members. All spoke in favour of establishing the Lead Member roles and emphasised the importance of succession planning for Cabinet Members. All agreed on the necessity for Cabinet Members to focus on the strategic priorities of the Council and for them to look at transforming the way the Council works and delivers services. Lead Members would free up the time of Cabinet Members to do this. The Panel was told that it was also intended that Lead Members act as an

effective conduit in communicating internally within the Council with services and the wider membership of the Council, and externally with key partners, including parish and town councils.

- 8.7. The Panel understands that Lead Members are not be members of the Cabinet, and as such will have no formal decision-making powers. However, it was emphasised by both the Deputy Leader and the two Cabinet Members that it is intended that Lead Members will have a key role in mastering background papers and information within their portfolios to aid, inform and, thereby, influence both individual Cabinet Member and collective cabinet decision making. The Panel was told that Lead Members may also provide a useful political touchstone for officers when making sensitive delegated decisions.
- 8.8. In discussions with minority group leaders there appeared to be no objection to the appointment of Lead Members. However, there was no consensus as to whether Lead Members should receive an SRA. Two minority group leaders were not convinced that there was evidence to demonstrate an increase in the overall workload of the Cabinet. They contended that if Lead Members were to receive an SRA, the costs of those SRAs should be offset by a similar reduction in the aggregate of Cabinet members' SRAs. The other minority group leader spoke in support of Lead Members receiving as SRA but asked for consideration to be given to some Lead Members being appointed from a minority group.
- 8.9. The evidence given by the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet members was very clear: that the role of Lead Member would be a significant one and one that is essential to the continuing transformation of the Council. The Panel was told that there would undoubtedly be some flexibility and variety in the way Portfolio holders deployed this resource.
- 8.10. The Panel received evidence from neighbouring councils as to the effectiveness of their cabinet support arrangements and the SRAs paid to councillors carrying out roles equivalent to Lead Members. Views expressed during the interviews suggested that the SRA should be similar to that of the Chairman of an overview and scrutiny committee, i.e. £10,000, although higher levels were also proposed.
- 8.11. Based on the evidence presented, the Panel is persuaded that the Lead Member role justifies the payment of an SRA. The Panel did not agree with the suggestion from two group leaders that there should be some consequent reduction in the Cabinet Member SRA. The Panel is of the view that the Cabinet Member SRA is currently set at the right level and therefore needs no adjustment. It is not possible to appoint a lead member from a minority group, as suggested by one group leader, as the Constitution does not allow for this.

## **9. Revised Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements**

- 9.1. The Leader outlined the constitutional changes in relation to Overview and Scrutiny. The changes to the Constitution had been considered and supported on a cross-political group basis by a Governance Task and Finish Group.
- 9.2. The arrangements in the Council's Constitution had combined the responsibility for both the scrutiny of the Executive and the overview of Council services, and this may have served to hold the existing committees back from being actively involved in shaping policies (which those same committees might later be expected to scrutinise).
- 9.3. The Panel was told that separating overview from scrutiny provided an opportunity for a very clear division of responsibility between:
  - (i) those committees responsible for keeping an overview of Executive functions within their terms of reference and developing policy; and
  - (ii) those (scrutiny) committees responsible for challenging, reviewing or scrutinising policies and the decisions or actions of the Executive.
- 9.4. The evidence received by the Panel was that in consequence of a division of responsibilities overview committees would be able to take on the role previously played by a significant number of the Executive advisory panels. It is the view of some Councillors that Executive advisory panels rather diminish the formal overview and scrutiny function. Other evidence received was to the effect that the new approach to overview would promote a wider involvement by non-Executive members and inject real pace into the change agenda.
- 9.5. The Leader spoke in support of a strong overview and scrutiny function and one in which members of all groups were actively engaged in policy development. He also stressed the importance of opposition groups chairing the two scrutiny committees that would hold the Executive to account. He was clear that these were two distinct functions with different skills attached to them. He suggested that there would be comparable levels of workload and responsibility between the proposed new committees and the existing ones.
- 9.6. The Panel interviewed the current Chairmen of overview and scrutiny committees who, in general, support the proposed changes to the overview and scrutiny function. There was some differing opinions over the workloads of the current committees and how effective they have been. There was consensus that the workloads and responsibilities of the new committees would be comparable to the existing committees

and that therefore the SRAs for the Chairmen should be the same as currently paid.

- 9.7. Minority group leaders welcomed the proposed changes to the arrangements and saw no reason to change the SRAs currently paid to Chairmen.
- 9.8. Based on the evidence presented, the Panel agreed to recommend that the current levels of SRAs payable to the Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be paid to the Chairmen of both the new Scrutiny Committees and the new Overview Committees.

## **10. Issues arising from meetings with Group Leaders**

10.1. As discussed at paragraph 7.1, group leaders (the Deputy Leader on behalf of the majority group in this respect) represented the views of their respective members on the operation of the current allowances scheme. They had been asked prior to interview to consult their membership on:

- (i) how the scheme of members' allowances is working generally, including the level of BA and SRAs; and
- (ii) how the role of Councillor compares with expectations at the beginning of the Council; and
- (iii) what effect might the constitutional changes make to the workloads of Councillors, generally and those with special responsibilities.

10.2. In view of the current COVID-19 pandemic group leaders expressed the views of Councillors in their respective groups concerning the allowances scheme:

- (i) primarily in respect of the normal operation of the Council; and
- (ii) any relevant recent experiences performing duties arising from lockdown and social distancing.

10.3. In addition to the views set out in paragraphs 8.8 and 9.7, group leaders raised the following issues:

### **A. Basic Allowance**

- a) Some group leaders referred to benchmarking data that indicated that the BA was well placed within the broad range of comparable councils within the South West region, although possibly slightly on the low side. Several group leaders referred to the need to ensure that it was uplifted for inflation. There is an uplift mechanism within the current scheme of allowances that automatically increases the BA by a percentage equal to the Council officers' annual pay award.

- b) One group leader reported that the view of his group was that the workload of the unitary councillor was greater than anticipated and it is felt that the BA currently paid is inadequate. The BA currently paid is less than the aggregate of the previous district and county BAs. In the view of that minority group leader, the BA should be capable of being varied between members and be based on other sources of income available to the individual or be set at the national living wage.
- c) Another group leader acknowledged that the BA under the present allowances scheme falls within comparable allowance schemes operated in the South West of England. He was of the opinion that now is not the time to make any significant increase to it. Another group leader expressed the view that the level of the current BA meant that many people could not afford to stand for election as a Councillor. The role had become a full-time commitment, with Councillors on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A higher level of BA would attract people from a broader age range and demographic to stand for election.
- d) A similar argument was put forward by the Deputy Leader who felt that the workload of the unitary Councillor was significant and this, added to the current low level of BA, made it difficult to attract individuals to stand for election to the Council. He particularly emphasised that a person in full-time employment would likely suffer a material diminution of income upon election.
- e) The Panel was sympathetic to the views of Councillors who believe that the BA should be set at a level to remove financial constraints to standing for office. The Panel is mindful that the Regulations do not provide that a BA should replace lost salary of an individual holding office and cannot recommend a BA which takes account of loss of earnings.
- f) The Panel is also mindful of the recommendations made in the February 2019 report predicated on the basis that the role of the new unitary Councillor would be greater than that of a county councillor (as they were at that time). It was clear, from interviews conducted in relation to the February 2019 Report, that smarter and more effective working was intended to ease the workload burden of Councillors. However, the evidence also supplied to the Panel from Councillors suggests that the impact from a reduced officer structure may have led to an increase in their casework and workloads.
- g) The Panel was advised that an unlooked for COVID-19 bonus had been the use of technology to hold virtual meetings by video conference. These had significantly improved the effectiveness of some Councillors because it was not necessary for them to travel to the county town to conduct meetings. The Panel was told that it was

hoped that this use of technology would continue to improve efficiency and the calls upon the time of Councillors.

- h) The February 2019 Report noted an intention that Councillors would be involved in cluster working at a local level. This is not an initiative that has been pursued by the majority group. The Leader was clear that he supports more effective working with existing democratic organisations, eg parish and town councils, rather than creating new layers of bureaucracy.
- i) The Panel received anecdotal evidence that the number and length of meetings had increased over the last year, and this has impacted upon the workload of members. It was quite difficult within the current circumstances to compare the number of meetings held but no objective evidence to support the assertion that the number or length of meetings has increased significantly was presented to the Panel.
- j) The Panel was told that significant additional work is being undertaken in consequence of restructuring the Council as a unitary authority. It is not anticipated this additional work should continue for a sustained period. It is also thought that the additional work consequent upon the COVID-19 pandemic will be temporary.
- k) It is understood that discussions between the trades unions and the Council's representatives concerning the increase in officers' salaries have not been completed and that the automatic increase to the BA in 2020 has not yet been applied. The Panel has therefore made its recommendation concerning the BA on the assumption that it currently stands at £13,000 per annum.
- l) Having taken into account all of these competing factors, on balance the Panel is of the view that based on the evidence presented relating to workloads, there should be a small increase in the BA. As the 2020 pay award still awaits settlement the view of the Panel is that the BA should be increased to a maximum of £13,500 per annum but that this should include the 2020 pay award.

## **B. Vice-Chairmen of Committees**

- a) The Panel received a request to consider the payment of an SRA to Vice-Chairmen of particular committees. The evidence of the Chairmen of the overview and scrutiny committees was varied. One felt that an SRA should be paid to Vice-Chairmen, although the Vice-Chairman of his committee had never actually chaired any of its meetings. Two other committee Chairmen did not support the payment of an SRA to Vice-Chairmen, on the basis that the Vice-Chairmen of their committees had never chaired any meetings and did not perform any additional substantive duties over and above that of an committee member.

- b) The Panel was provided with data which showed that since May 2019, no committee meetings had been chaired by Vice-Chairmen. There was one exception where the Vice-Chairman of an area planning committee had on occasion took the chair for an individual application where the Chairman had declared an interest in the application under consideration.
- c) The Panel was advised that there were a number of duties undertaken by the Vice-Chairman beyond formal meetings and so responsibilities go beyond chairing meetings. However, the only additional responsibility which was particularly mentioned was to attend briefings by the Council's officers. On balance the Panel felt that these duties were not sufficient to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 3.3 for the payment of an SRA. Consequently, the Panel recommends that no SRA is paid to the Vice-Chairmen of committees.

### **C. Group Leader's SRA**

- a) Currently, minority Group Leaders were paid an SRA of £5,000, providing their group had a membership of not less than 10% of the membership of the Council. At the time of this report, a Group Leader's SRA is only paid to the leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.
- b) The Panel received representation from the group leader of the Green Party that a 10% de minimis requirement was too blunt an instrument for determining this SRA, and that an SRA should be based on the number of Councillors adhering to a group. The argument was that the responsibilities of a group leader to represent their group and attend meetings were the same, regardless of the number of Councillors represented by that individual Group Leader.
- c) The Panel were not persuaded by this argument. The Panel considers that the task of managing a group of 29 Councillors is undoubtedly more complex than managing a much smaller group.
- d) The Panel received evidence from other minority Group Leaders to the effect that there had to be some de minimis level to qualify for this SRA.

## **11. Travel allowance**

11.1. The Panel received no representations in relation to the current level of travelling allowances payable and therefore recommends that no changes be made to the current scheme of allowances.

11.2. The MAP approved amounts are currently:

- i) Car – 45p per mile up to 10,000 and 25p per mile thereafter;
- ii) Passenger payments – up to 5p per mile per passenger (up to a maximum of four) to be claimed only for passengers who would otherwise be eligible for travelling allowance;
- iii) Motorcycle – 24p per mile;
- iv) Bicycle – 20p per mile;
- v) In relation to public transport (including rail and bus) - standard fare; and
- vi) parking fees – actual cost.

11.3. The Panel is persuaded that travel allowances should continue to be paid to Councillors:

- i) in line with the HMRC MAPs for undertaking official business; and
- ii) when travelling to the Council’s offices for meetings.

## **12. Subsistence allowances**

12.1. Subsistence allowances include the costs of:

- i) accommodation (if a member needs to stay away overnight); and
- ii) meals and other ‘subsistence’ while travelling.

12.2. The Panel did not receive any evidence on the issue of subsistence payments and therefore recommends that allowances continue to be payable for undertaking official business outside of the ceremonial Dorset county (which includes the unitary council area of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole).

12.3. The current subsistence allowances paid officers of Dorset Council are as follows:

	Maximum amount claimable
At least 5 hours outside of the ceremonial county	£5.00
At least 10 hours outside of the ceremonial county	£10.00
At least 15 hours outside the ceremonial county (and ongoing at 8pm)	£15.00 including VAT (or £25.00 including VAT for Greater and Inner London)

Overnight (room only)

£87.64 including VAT  
(or £115.02  
including VAT for  
Greater and Inner London)

12.4. The Panel is of the view that it is efficient that the subsistence allowances paid to Councillors are at the same rates applicable for officers of Dorset Council.

### **13. Carers' allowance**

13.1. The Panel did not receive any evidence on the issue of carers' allowances and therefore recommends that allowances continue to be payable at the current level.

13.2. The current carers' allowance is paid to recompense the actual cost expended (and is not payable to a member of the claimant's own household):

- i) for care of dependents, whether children, elderly people or people with disabilities;
- ii) for such time as a member is on Dorset Council business where travelling allowances are payable;
- iii) at an hourly rate equivalent to 110% of the minimum wage, rounded up to the nearest whole pound, i.e. actual expenditure incurred subject to a maximum of £10\* per hour.

\*As at April 2020

### **14. Co-opted and Independent Members' allowances**

14.1. The Panel did not receive any evidence on Co-opted and Independent Members' allowances, and therefore recommends that those allowances continue to be payable at the current level.

14.2. However, the Panel was informed that the Department for Education Guidance for school appeal members suggested that appeal panel members should only receive expenses, ie for travel and subsistence and carers, and loss of earnings. On this basis the Panel agreed that with effect from 2021 this allowance should be discontinued.

14.3. The Council's scheme of members' allowances currently provides that £350 per annum is paid to:

- (i) the co-opted members of the scrutiny committee with oversight of education matters and the Dorset Police and Crime Panel;

- (ii) the independent persons appointed to contribute to the arrangements of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct; and
- (iii) the independent persons appointed to serve on School Admission Appeals Panels (in addition to travel and subsistence allowances) but for 2021 onwards this allowance be discontinued.

14.4. The Council's scheme of members' allowances currently provides that co-opted and independent members of committees be eligible to claim travelling and subsistence allowances as set out above.

## **15. Foregoing and suspension of allowances**

15.1. The Council's scheme of members' allowances currently provides that members may, if they wish, forego all or any part of their entitlement to basic allowance or SRA by giving notice in writing to the clerk to the Dorset Council.

15.2. The Council's scheme of members' allowances currently provides that where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his/her duties as a Councillor in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000, or regulations made under that Part:

- i) the part of the basic allowance payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld;
- ii) the part of SRA payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld; and
- iii) the part of travelling and subsistence allowance payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld.

15.3. The Council's scheme of members' allowances currently provides that where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which the member concerned is:

- i) suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a Councillor in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part;
- ii) ceases to be a member of Dorset Council; or
- iii) is any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of a relevant period.

the Council may require that such part of the allowance as relates to any such period be repaid to the Council.

## **16. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**16.1. *The Panel recommends that the rate of the basic allowance paid to Councillors:***

- i) be increased by £500 to £13,500 per annum; and***
- ii) that this be adjusted by an amount equivalent to the mean of any Council officers' pay award for each subsequent year for the period up to the next review of the scheme.***

**16.2. *The Panel recommends that a Special Responsibility Allowances for the Lead Member role be set at £10,000 per annum.***

**16.3. *The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for the Chairmen of both the two new Overview Committees and the two new Scrutiny Committees be set at £10,000 per annum:***

**16.4. *The Panel recommends that all other Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) remain at their current levels, i.e.***

***Leader – £35,000;***

***Executive Members (including Deputy Leader) – £22,000;***

***Chairman of the Council – £10,000;***

***Vice-Chairman of the Council – £5,000;***

***Chairmen of Audit and Governance Committee and all planning committees (including strategic) - £10,000;***

***Chairmen of all other committees listed in Article 8 of the Dorset Council Constitution - £5,000;***

***Minority Group Leaders - £5,000***

***(Note: Minority Parties must have a membership of not less than 10% of Dorset Council for their Leader to receive an SRA).***

**16.5. *The Panel recommends that:***

- i) no SRAs be paid to Vice-Chairmen of committees;***
- ii) Councillors may not receive more than one SRA (and may elect which SRA to receive); and***



16.10. ***The Panel recommends that members may, if they wish, forego all or any part of their entitlement to basic allowance or SRA by giving notice in writing to the clerk to the Dorset Council.***

16.11. ***The Panel recommends that where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his/her duties as a Councillor in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000, or regulations made under that Part:***

***iv) the part of the basic allowance payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld;***

***v) the part of SRA payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld; and***

***vi) the part of travelling and subsistence allowance payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld.***

16.12. ***The Panel recommends that where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which the member concerned is:***

***iv) suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a Councillor in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part;***

***v) ceases to be a member of Dorset Council; or***

***vi) is any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of a relevant period,***

***the Council may require that such part of the allowance as relates to any such period be repaid to the Council.***