



<b>Subject:</b>	Revisions to Scheme of Allowances
<b>Date:</b>	24th March, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ms. Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr. Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider amendments to the Council's Scheme of Allowances to increase the rates of Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, and Dependents' Carers' Allowance
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is recommended to:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. consider whether it wishes to increase the Basic Allowance paid to each Councillor from £15,486 per annum to £16,394 with effect from 1st April, 2022;</li><li>2. consider whether it wishes to increase the total maximum Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) from the current £117,774 per annum to £124,676 as set out in Appendix 2 with effect from 1st April, 2022; and</li><li>3. Approve the increase to rate of Dependents' Carers' Allowance in line with the National Living Wage for 2023-2024</li></ol>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p data-bbox="276 226 424 255"><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p data-bbox="276 275 1490 405">The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, Part 2, par 3 states that the Council must agree a new Scheme of Allowances for each year in which allowances are paid.</p> <p data-bbox="165 477 1490 560">3.1.1 Paragraphs 4(2) and 5(2) further state that the amount of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances shall be determined by the Council.</p> <p data-bbox="165 629 1490 759">3.1.2 The Department for Communities issued a circular, LG 10/2022, dated 28th March, 2022, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April, 2021.</p> <p data-bbox="165 828 1490 1061">3.1.3 The Committee, at its meeting in April, 2022, agreed not to apply any increase in the basic and special responsibility allowances, and instead agreed to write to the Department for Communities calling for the current legislation to be amended to provide for the establishment of an independent process to deal with the scheme of allowances, thereby removing Elected Member involvement.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1131 1490 1214">3.1.4 The Council has not yet received a reply from the Department for Communities to our letter send in mid-2022.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1283 1490 1413">3.1.5 The Department for Communities issued a further circular, LG 03/2023 dated 25th January, 2023, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April,2022.</p>
3.16	<p data-bbox="276 1485 494 1514"><u>Basic Allowance</u></p> <p data-bbox="276 1534 1490 1617">The Committee is requested to consider whether it wishes to increase the rate of basic allowance paid to each Councillor from the current £15,486 per annum to £16,394 per annum.</p>
3.17	<p data-bbox="276 1682 708 1711"><u>Special Responsibility Allowance</u></p> <p data-bbox="276 1731 1490 1973">The Committee is further requested to consider whether it wishes to apply the increase to the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) budget, with effect from 1st April, 2022. For a number of years, the Council has agreed a split in the special responsibility allowance budget so as to pay both the Chairpersons and the Deputy Chairpersons of the Standing Committees and the Party Officers (Party Leader, Deputy Party Leader and Party Secretary – depending upon</p>

	<p>Party size). The current division of SRAs is set out in Appendix 1. If the increase in the overall budget is increased, a suggested split is set out in Appendix 2.</p> <p><u>Dependents' Carers' Allowance</u></p> <p>3.18 The Department for Communities determines the maximum hourly rates of Dependant's Carers' Allowance for both standard care and specialised care. The rate for standard care is based on the hourly National Living Wage for age 23+, which will increase on 1st April, 2023 from the current rate of £9.50 per hour to £10.42 per hour.</p> <p>3.19 The rate for specialised care is double the rate for standard care. In addition, the Department for Communities sets the maximum monthly amounts for standard care and specialised care, capped at the equivalent of 52 hours per month.</p> <p>3.20 Accordingly, in line with the increase in the National Living Wage, the Committee is requested to agree to following amendment to the Scheme of Allowances:</p> <p><u>"(iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Standard Care £10.42 per hour limited to £542.00 per month</i></li> <li>• <i>Specialist Care £20.84 per hour limited to £1,084.00 per month"</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.21 The increase to the maximum rates of each of the allowances has already been considered and can be met through existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.22 There are not any Good Relations, Equality or Rural Needs issues associate with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
4.1	<p>Appendix 1 – Current division of SRAs  Appendix 2 – Revised division of SRAs if the increase in the maximum is applied  Appendix 3 – Proposed Scheme of Allowances 2023-2024  Appendix 4 – Local Government Circular LG 03/2023</p>