



Subject:	Revisions to Scheme of Allowances
Date:	24th January 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
<p>After Committee Decision</p> <p>After Council Decision</p> <p>Sometime in the future</p> <p>Never</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. consider whether it wishes to increase the Basic Allowance paid to each Councillor from £15,486 per annum to £17,456 with effect from 1st April, 2024; 2. consider whether it wishes to increase the total maximum Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) from the current £117,774 per annum to £132,751, with the allocation as set out in Appendix 2, with effect from 1st April, 2024; and 3. Approve the increase to rate of Dependents' Carers' Allowance in line with the National Living Wage for 2025-2026
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, Part 2, paragraph 3 states that the Council must agree a new Scheme of Allowances for each year in which allowances are paid.</p> <p>3.2 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>3.3 The Department for Communities has issued a circular, LG 15/24 dated 9th December, 2024, which sets out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April,2024.</p> <p><u>Basic Allowance</u></p> <p>3.4 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 £17,456 per annum.</p> <p><u>Special Responsibility Allowance</u></p> <p>3.5 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, 2024. 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 Party size). The current division of SRAs is set out in Appendix 1. If the increase in the overall budget is agreed, a suggested split is set out in Appendix 2.</p>

3.6	<p>The Committee will note that the Council has not increased either the Basic Allowance nor the Special Responsibility Allowance since March, 2021, which was for the financial year commencing 1st April, 2020.</p> <p><u>Dependents' Carers' Allowance</u></p>
3.7	<p>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, 2025 from the current rate of £10.42 per hour to £11.44 per hour. 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>
3.8	<p>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"> • <i>Standard Care £11.44 per hour limited to £595.00 per month</i> • <i>Specialist Care £22.88 per hour limited to £1,190.00 per month"</i> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.9	<p>The increase to the maximum rates of each of the allowances can be met through existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.10	<p>There are not any Good Relations, Equality or Rural Needs issues associate with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Current division of SRAs Appendix 2 – Proposed division of SRAs Appendix 3 – Proposed Scheme of Allowances 2025-2026 Appendix 4 – Local Government Circular LG 15/24</p>