



**Belfast District Council**

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Shadow Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Allocation of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)</b>
<b>Date:</b>	13th February, 2015
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	The Minister for the Environment has agreed the scheme of allowances payable to Members of the new Councils in April 2015
1.2	Belfast (as a council with a population greater than 200,000) will receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) of <b>£108,000 per annum.</b>

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p>The following conditions in relation to the payment of Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There will be a Special Responsibility Allowance threshold of <b>£108,000</b> which the Council may pay to those Members who hold positions on the Council which are considered to involve additional responsibility.</li><li>• No more than 50% of the Councillors can receive a special responsibility payment - (equates to no more than <b>30 councillors</b> within the Council)</li><li>• No individual member can receive more than one special responsibility payment from this overall budget.</li><li>• The maximum amount of Special Responsibility Allowance payable to an individual Member is £21,600.</li></ul>

2.2	<p><b><u>Existing Shadow Council arrangements</u></b></p> <p>The existing Shadow Council pays Special Responsibility Allowances to those Councillors it considers to have significant, additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a Councillor.</p>
2.3	<p>The division of the Special Responsibility Allowance is based upon the positions held by individual Members either as Presiding Councillor and Deputy Presiding Councillor, Chair and Deputy Chair of Committees or as Officers within the Political Parties.</p> <p>The allocations are consistent with the Council's system of proportionality which seeks to allocate positions in accordance with the relative strength of the Parties within the Council. No councillor is paid more than one SRA, and no more than 50% of councillors (excluding the council chairperson and vice-chairperson) receive an SRA.</p>
2.3	<p><b><u>Proposals for New Council in April 2015</u></b></p> <p>A proposed scheme for the allocation of Special Responsibility Allowance during the new Council is attached at <b>Appendix 1</b>. This allocation mirrors the arrangements that were agreed in June 2014 by the Shadow Council for the Shadow Council period and is recommended for adoption by the Committee.</p>
2.4	<p>The draft allocation is based on the same general principles that have been used to determine SRA allowance in the past. These principles have been discussed in conjunction with all party leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Shadow Council will select a traditional committee form of governance with five standing committees</li> <li>• That the following political officer positions will be eligible for SRA payment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of each standing committee</li> <li>- Party leaders of all parties (a party must consist of more than one member)</li> <li>- Deputy Party leaders – for parties with more than 6 members</li> <li>- Party Secretaries – for parties with more than 11 members</li> </ul> </li> <li>• That an SRA allowance be allocated to Chairperson positions</li> <li>• That an SRA allowance be allocated to Deputy Chairperson positions</li> <li>• That a basic SRA allowance (equal to the Deputy Chairperson allowance) will be allocated to all remaining political officer positions</li> <li>• That the amount of SRA allocated to party group leaders is uplifted to be reflective of party strength.</li> </ul>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	Revenue expenditure to cover the cost of Special Responsibility Allowance has been included in the 2015/16 budgets.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
4.1	There are not any equality or good relations implications associated with this report.

<b>5</b>	<b>Call-In</b>
5.1	This decision is subject to call-in.

<b>6</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
6.1	The Committee is requested to agree the scheme for SRA allocation attached at Appendix 1 with effect from 1st April, 2015.

<b>7</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
Appendix 1 – Special Responsibility Allowance allocation for Belfast City Council	