



Subject:	Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances
Date:	21 st June 2019
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager
Contact Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To consider the rates of basic and special responsibility allowances payable for the Council.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is recommended to <ul style="list-style-type: none">consider whether it wishes to apply the increase in the basic allowance from £14,200 per annum to £15,071 with effect from 7th May, 2019. The Committee is also recommended to consider whether it wishes to apply the revised allocation of the special responsibility allowances (SRAs), as set out in Appendix 3, with effect from 21st May, 2019.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1.1	The Department for Communities issued a circular, LG 07/2019, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April, 2019.
3.1.2	The Committee, at its meeting in August 2016, agreed to apply the increase in the basic allowance from £14,200 per annum to £14,342 with effect from 1st April, 2016 and to agree the increase in the basic allowance to £14,485 with effect from 1st April, 2017. This represented a 1% increase for both the 2016 and 2017 years. However, the Council, at its meeting in September 2016, rejected that decision and agreed not to apply any increase in the basic and special responsibility allowances for 2016 and 2017. Since that date, no increase in either the basic or the special responsibility allowance has been approved.
3.1.3	The Committee should note that the information which we have indicates that all of the other ten local councils have agreed to apply the increases and, therefore, an elected Member in Belfast is currently receiving a lesser basic allowance than Councillors in the other councils. The Committee is requested to consider whether it wishes to agree to the increase in the basic allowance to £15,071 per annum with effect from 7 th May, 2019 (the date upon which Members of the Council officially took up office after the local elections).
3.1.4	The Committee is also requested to consider whether to apply the revised allocation of the special responsibility allowances, as set out in Appendix 3, with effect from 21 st May, 2019 (the date of the Annual Council Meeting). 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). In this new Council Term, there are now eight Parties as opposed to the six we had in the previous Term and therefore there are more Party Officers sharing the overall allowance. If the increase in the overall budget is not applied, then this will mean that the Committee will need to approve a new split of the SRAs. A suggested split is set out in Appendix 2.

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.2.1</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.3.1</p>	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The increase in the basic and special responsibility allowances has been included in the budget.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Current split of SRAs</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Revised split of SRAs if the overall increase in the budget is not applied</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Revised split of SRAs if the overall increase in the budget is applied</p>