

Committee: Council

Date:

Title: Special Responsibility Allowance for Planning
Committee Co-Chairs Review

Tuesday,
22nd July 2025

Report Author: The Independent Remuneration Panel:
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Dodson; assisted by
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Summary

1. The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) were asked to consider a new allowance for the Co-Chairs of Planning, following the adoption of the Planning Committee Co-Chair Protocol agreed at the Full Council meeting on 22nd April 2025.
2. The Council is required to have regard to the recommendation of the Independent Panel but is not bound by their findings.
3. This report sets out the recommendation made by the IRP for the review of the Planning Co-Chairs Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA).

Recommendations

That the Council:

- I. Agrees that the Planning Committee Co-Chairs SRA is set at £3,529.08 for 2025/26 and is included in the Scheme of Allowances as set out in Appendix B.

Financial Implications

4. The proposal is within the budget agreed for 2025/26.

Background Papers

- Co-Chair Protocol [report](#) from the Council Meeting on 22nd April 2025.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	The Co-Chairs were asked to complete a short survey sent on behalf of the IRP regarding the role.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The report has been drafted in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

5. This mid-year SRA review was requested following the adoption of a new Co-Chair role on the Planning Committee, as agreed at the meeting on 22 April 2025.
6. The Panel met on 13 May 2025 to consider the new SRA for Planning Committee Co-Chairs. The Panel consisted of Steve Dale (Chair), Brigid Dyson and James Dodson.

Summary of the Review

7. In conducting its appraisal, the Panel primarily focussed on data relating to the frequency and length of meetings, as well as the number of planning applications going through the Planning Committee, as per the table below:

	Number of meetings	Number of Applications	Duration in hours
2022	17	97	90
2023	15	104	67
2024	13	92	53

8. The Panel requested that short surveys were sent out to the Co-Chairs of Planning Committee. The survey questions can be found in Appendix A.
9. The Panel were grateful that the Co-Chairs of Planning Committee had taken the time to reply to the survey and had taken their comments into account.

Conclusion

10. In summary the Panel concluded that whilst the workload involved in the Planning Committee was considerable, they agreed unanimously to formalise the interim Co-Chairs allowance, which was an equal split of the combined Chair (£5881.79) and Planning Committee member (£1,176.36) allowances, resulting in an SRA of £3,529.08 for each Co-Chair.
11. In coming to this conclusion, they took into particular account that:-
 - Notably, the number of meetings, applications and the duration in hours had reduced in the past 3 years. Furthermore, the job-sharing nature of the co-chairing role would reduce the workload on a single member.
 - The Planning Committee SRAs had been reviewed in 2023, with the Panel recommending substantial increases to full Council equating to an uplift of 39% to the Chair's allowance and 125% to Planning Committee Members.

Extract from the Full Council Report for 2024/25

- a. *The Chair of Planning Committee would receive 100% of the basic allowance, in view of the increase in meetings and their duration as well as the amount of preparation required, including site visits. This should be reviewed next year and if the number of meetings decrease once the designation period has ended, it should be reconsidered.*
 - b. *Members of Planning Committee had previously had a complicated calculation to do with the number of days worked, the Panel decided that to make it simpler and to give the Members of Planning Committee a similar raise to that of the Chair it was decided that they should have 20% of the basic allowance. This would also be reviewed next year along with the Chair.*
- Whilst reviewing the new role the Panel noted that the option to have a single Chair was still available and therefore gave the Committee more flexibility in regards to chairing arrangements in the future.

- In times of budget constraint this did not add any further impact to the budget.
- The IRP will look again at this specific SRA during the substantive review later in the year.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The new allowance was not sufficient and one or both of the Co-Chairs step down.	2 – there is some risk as the split allowance is noticeably less than the single Chair allowance.	2 – the Council could lose the current Chair or Vice Chair – now Co-Chairs and may struggle to replace due to the large workload involved.	Agreement to look at the allowance again in the main review coming up later in the year.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix A

Co-Chair Survey Questions

Approximately how many hours per month do you work in your capacity as Chair/Vice Chair of Planning? Broken down into the following:-

- Pre-meeting – including Chairs briefing
- Preparation for the meeting
- After the meeting
- Other responsibilities – including PCWG

(We already have data for the frequency and length of meetings).

What duties do you think the Chair does over and above a committee member?

Do you think the allowance is a fair remuneration for the work you are carrying out in this role?

Would you be willing to speak to the Independent Remuneration Panel about the role?

Anything else you would like to add that would help the IRP in their decision making

Appendix B

PROPOSAL FOR CO-CHAIRS SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME 2025/26

All councillors receive the basic allowance unless they request otherwise. Special responsibility allowances are paid to those who hold responsibility for those positions. Members are entitled to only one Special Responsibility Allowance unless otherwise specified.

Proposed changes to the Members' Allowance Scheme are set out in red text:

Allowance	Amount
Basic Allowance	£5,881.79
Chair of the Council	£4,705.43 + civic expenses
Vice Chair of the Council	£2,352.72
Leader of the Council	£14,410.39
Deputy Leader of the Council	£7,646.33
Portfolio Holders	£7,250.06
Overview/Scrutiny and Ordinary Committee Chairs	£4,117.26
Chair of Licensing and Environmental Health Committee	£4,117.26
Licensing Panel*	£271.74 subject to attending 10 panel meetings per municipal year a payment will be made to members attending at least 50% of those meetings.
Chair of Planning Committee	£5,881.79
Co-Chairs of Planning Committee**	£3,529.08
Members of Planning Committee	£1,176.36
Substitute Members of Planning Committee*	£135.87 subject to attending 5 meetings per municipal year, or 50% of meetings in a municipal year.
Main Opposition Group Leader	£4,117.26

Other Opposition Group Leaders	£2,352.72
Independent representatives on the Standards Committee	£588.18
Independent representatives on the Statutory Officer Discipline and Dismissal Committee	£588.18
Panel members of Independent Remuneration Panel	£588.18

Explanatory notes about how the Special Responsibility Allowances are calculated:

Chair of the Council - 80% of the basic allowance

Vice-Chair – 40% of the basic allowance

Leader of the Council - 245% of the basic allowance

Deputy Leader of the Council - 130% of the basic allowance

Members of the Executive – 123.26% of the basic allowance

Chair of Overview, Scrutiny and Ordinary committees - 70% of the basic allowance

Chair of Licensing and Environmental Health Committee - 70% of the basic allowance

Licensing Panel Members – 4.62% of the basic allowance, subject to attending 10 panel meetings per annum a payment will be made to members attending at least 50% of those meetings. *

Chair of Planning Committee - 100% of the basic allowance

Members of the Planning Committee – 20% of the basic allowance

Co-Chairs of Planning Committee – 60% of the basic allowance (120% of the basic allowance, divided by two)

Substitute Members of the Planning Committee – 2.31% of the basic allowance, subject to the substitute member attending 50% of Planning Committee meetings, or 5 meetings in the municipal year whichever threshold was reached first. *

Leader of the largest opposition group - 70% of the basic allowance

Leader of all other opposition groups - 40% of the basic allowance

Independent members of the Standards Committee - benchmarked to 10% of the basic allowance

Independent members of the Statutory Officer Discipline and Dismissal Committees - benchmarked to 10% of the basic allowance

Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel - benchmarked to 10% of the basic allowance (although this allowance is not reviewed by the Panel and is agreed independently by the Council)

** Paid in addition to other SRAs.*

*** Allowance to be paid to each Co-Chair of Planning Committee in the event that co-chairs, rather than a single Chair, are appointed during the committee membership process by full Council in accordance with the Planning Committee Co-Chairs protocol.*