



**The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel
appointed to review the allowances paid to Councillors
of Thurrock Council**



March 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"), as amended, require all local authorities to appoint an independent remuneration panel (IRP) to advise on the terms and conditions of their scheme of councillors' allowances.

1.1.2 Thurrock Council formally appointed the following persons to undertake this process and make recommendations on its future scheme.

John Freeman	- Local Resident
Jasvinder Jassel	- Local Resident
Mark Palmer	- Director: Development and Governance, East of England LGA (Chair)

1.1.3 Our terms of reference were in accordance with the requirements of the 2003 Regulations, together with "Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances" issued jointly by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inland Revenue (July 2003). Those requirements are to make recommendations to the Council as to:

- (a) the allowances if applicable for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the three newly constituted Overview and Scrutiny Committees for Place, People and Corporate,
- (b) the allowances if applicable for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee,
- (c) the allowances if applicable for the Chair and Vice of the Standards Committee and
- (d) the allowances if applicable for the Independent Persons and Co-Optees.

2. CURRENT SCHEME

2.1.1 The last full review of councillors' allowances was undertaken by the IRP for the Council in July 2023 and this review responds to recommendations in respect of the Councils governance structure arising from the Councils Improvement and Recovery Plan.

2.1.2 The Scheme currently provides that all councillors are each entitled to a total basic allowance of £9,595 per annum for 2023/24. In addition, some councillors receive special responsibility allowances for undertaking additional duties.

2.1.3 Councillors may also claim the cost of travel and subsistence expenses and for expenditure on the care of children or dependants whilst on approved duties.

3. CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

3.1.1 Special Responsibility Allowances are awarded to councillors who perform significant additional responsibilities over and above the roles and expenses covered by the basic

allowance. These special responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the council's functions.

Calculating SRAs

- 3.1.2 The Panel in July 2023 recommend the criteria and formula for calculating the Leader of the Council allowance based on a multiplier of the Basic Allowance; this role carries the most significant additional responsibilities and is the most time consuming.
- 3.1.3 We applied a multiplier of the basic allowance to establish the Leader's SRA. Other SRAs are then valued downwards as a percentage of the Basic Allowance. This approach has the advantage that, when future adjustments to the SRAs are required, changing the Basic Allowance will have a proportionate and easily calculable effect on the other SRAs within the scheme.

The recommendations are as follows:

Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny

- 3.1.4 The Panel is aware that the Council is moving from the current six Overview and Scrutiny Committees to three around the thematic areas of Place, People and Corporate.
- 3.1.5 The Panel has been made aware that following a review of the role and responsibilities of overview and scrutiny undertaken by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny the role of overview and scrutiny will have an increased impact and influence in addition to the number of committees been reduced from six to three. With that in mind the role of the Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee will become larger and more complex both in time and the expectation of impact.
- 3.1.6 The six Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny currently receive an allowance of 75% of the Basic Allowance, £7,196. The Panel is of the view that in response to the reduction in the number of the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny and the more increased impact of the role the three Chairs should now receive an allowance of 100% of the Basic Allowance, £9,595.

WE RECOMMEND that the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 100% of the Basic Allowance, £9,595.

Vice Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny

- 3.1.7 The Vice Chairs of the six Overview and Scrutiny Committees currently receive an allowance of 15% of the Basic Allowance, £1,440. The Panel continues to be of the view that the Vice Chairs of the proposed three Overview and Scrutiny Committees continue to meet the criteria for a *Special Responsibility Allowance*.
- 3.1.8 The Panel recommends that the Vice Chairs of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 25% of the Basic Allowance, £2,399.

WE RECOMMEND that the three Vice Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny should receive an allowance of 25% of the Basic Allowance, £2,399.

Chair of the Audit Committee

- 3.1.9 The Standards and Audit Committee currently have a single Chair overseeing the Committee. The Council has recommended that the current single committee should become two distinct Committees one for Audit and one for Standards each having their own terms of reference. The current Chair of Standards and Audit receives a Special Responsibility Allowance of 25% of the Basic Allowance, £2,399.
- 3.1.10 The Panel has been informed that the Audit Committee will be a larger and more complex role and therefore recommend that the Chair of the Audit Committee receive an allowance of 75% of the Basic Allowance, £7,196.

WE RECOMMEND that the Chairs of the Audit Committee receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 75% of the recommended Basic Allowance, £7,196.

Vice Chair of the Audit Committee

- 3.1.11 The role of Vice Chair of the newly constituted Audit Committee will have a key role that meets the criteria for a *Special Responsibility Allowance*. The Panel therefore recommends that the Vice Chair of the Audit Committee should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 15% of the Basic Allowance, £1,440.

WE RECOMMEND that the Vice Chair of the Audit Committee should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 15% of the Basic Allowance, £1,440.

Chair of the Standards Committee

- 3.1.12 The Chair of the newly constituted Standards Committee will have a role that meets the criteria for a *Special Responsibility Allowance*. The new Standards Committee will we have been informed have a significant role. The Panel therefore recommends that the Chair of the Standards Committee should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the Basic Allowance, £4,798.

WE RECOMMEND that the Chair of the Standards Committee receive an allowance of 50% of the Basic Allowance, £4,798.

Vice Chair of the Standards Committee

- 3.1.13 The role of Vice Chair of the newly constituted Standards Committee will have a role that meets the criteria for a *Special Responsibility Allowance*. The Panel is of the view that the role of Vice Chair of the Standards Committee should receive an allowance of 10% of the Basic Allowance, £960.

WE RECOMMEND that the Vice Chair of Standards should receive an Allowance, 10% of the Basic Allowance, £960.

Independent Persons and Co-Optees

- 3.1.14 The Panel was informed that because of the newly constituted Audit Committee and Standards Committee the frequency of the meetings for the Independent Persons and Co-Optees will increase from four to seven meetings per annum.
- 3.1.15 Currently the Independent Persons and Co-Optees receive an annual allowance of £1,199. The Panel is of the view that since the number and frequency of meetings will increase that will place additional demands on the role of the Independent Persons

and Co-Optees the annual allowance should be increased from £1,199 to £1,919, 20% of the Basic Allowance.

WE RECOMMEND that the Independent Persons and the Co-Optees should receive an annual allowance of 20% of the Basic Allowance, £1,919.

4. FUTURE REVIEW

4.1 Future Review

- 4.1.1 The Panel was conscious that when making the recommendations in this report the new committees had yet to be implemented and that the Panel had not had the opportunity to interview the postholders, Chairs and Vice Chairs about the roles. The Panel therefore recommend that following the implementation of the new committees the Panel would like to undertake a further review of the roles and responsibilities to include the interviewing of Chairs and Vice Chairs postholders. The Panel recommends that this review be undertaken no later than February 2025.

**Mark Palmer (Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel)
Director: Development and Governance, East of England LGA.
March 2024**

Appendix 1: Summary of Panel's Recommendations

Allowance	Current Amount for 2023-24	Number	Recommended Allowance	Recommended Allowance Calculation
Basic (BA)				
Total Basic:	£9,595	49		

Special Responsibility:				
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny	£7,196	3	£9,595	100% of the Basic Allowance
Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny	£1,440	3	£2,399	25% of the Basic Allowance
Chair of the Audit Committee	NA	1	£7,196	75% of the Basic Allowance
Vice Chair of Audit Committee	NA	1	£1,440	15% of the Basic Allowance
Chair of Standards Committee	NA	1	£4,798	50% of the Basic Allowance
Vice Chair of Standards Committee	NA	1	£960	10% of the Basic Allowance
Independent Persons and Co-Optees	£1,199		£1,919	20% of the Basic Allowance