



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Special Responsibility Allowance
Date:	23rd November, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager
Contact Officer:	

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 provide that the maximum amount which the Council is permitted to spend on Special Responsibility Allowance is £82,000 per annum.
1.2	The Committee, at its meeting in June, 2011, agreed to the allocation of the Special Responsibility Allowance to cover the Chairmen and the Deputy Chairmen of the Standing Committees and the office holders within the political parties on the Council.
1.3	Part of the allowance paid to each Party Leader was based upon the number of members of their Party on the Council. An amount of £194.48 per Member was allocated and this covered 50 of the 51 Councillors. As Alderman McCoubrey was an Independent Member he was not included in the calculations.

2	Key Issues
2.1	As Members will be aware, the Chief Executive has, on 14th November, received a letter from the Rt Hon Peter D Robinson, MLA informing him that Alderman McCoubrey had, from that date, become a Member of the Democratic Unionist Party.

2.2	<p>This means that the allocation of the Special Responsibility Allowance must be reviewed as Party strengths have altered with the Democratic Unionist Party now increasing to 16 Members. The result of the recalculation is shown in Appendix 1. The main change is that the amount allocated for each Party Member has reduced from £194.48 to £190.66.</p> <p>It is recommended that the changes to the allocation of the Special Responsibility Allowance take effect from 1st December, 2012.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	The recommended levels of allowance are provided for within the current revenue budgets.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	None. The division of the Special Responsibility Allowance is based upon the positions held by individual Members either as Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees or as Officers within the Political Parties. 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.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is requested to adopt the amended allocation of the Special Responsibility Allowance with effect from 1st December, 2012.

6	Decision Tracking
<p>Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>December, 2012.</p>	

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Allocation of Special Responsibility Allowance	