



Subject:	Revisions to Scheme of Allowances
Date:	19th March, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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"/>
Sometime 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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider amendments to the Council's Scheme of Allowances to increase the rate of Basic Allowance, to increase the maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance, and to increase the maximum rate of Dependant's Carers' Allowance, in line with the National Living Wage for 2021-2022.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is recommended to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. consider whether it wishes to apply the increase in the Basic Allowance from £15,071 per annum to £15,486 with effect from 1st April, 2020;2. consider whether it wishes to increase the total maximum Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) from the current £108,000 per annum to £117,774 as set out in Appendix 2 with effect from 1st April, 2020; and3. approve the increase to the maximum rate of Dependents' Carers' Allowance as set out in the report, with effect from 1st April, 2021.

3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The Department for Communities issued a circular, LG 07/2021, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April, 2020.
3.2	The Committee, at its meeting in June 2019, agreed to apply the increase in the basic allowance from £14,200 per annum to the current £15,057. Local Government Circular LG 07/2021, dated 8th March, 2021, has increased the maximum basic allowance, which Councils may pay to Members, to £15,486 with effect from 1st April, 2020.
3.3	The Committee is also requested to consider whether to apply the increase to the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) budget, with effect from 1st April, 2020. 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). The current division of SRAs is set out in Appendix 1. If the increase in the overall budget is increased, a suggested split is set out in Appendix 2.
3.4	The Department for Communities determines the maximum hourly rates of Dependant's Carers' Allowance for both standard care and specialised care. The rate for standard care is based on the hourly National Living Wage for age 25+, which will increase on 1st April, 2021 from the current rate of £8.72 per hour to £8.91 per hour. The rate for specialised care is double the rate for standard care. In addition, the Department for Communities sets the maximum monthly amounts for standard care and specialised care, capped at the equivalent of 52 hours per month.
3.5	Accordingly, in line with the increase in the National Living Wage, the Committee is requested to agree to the amendments to the Scheme of Allowances as follows:
3.6	<p><u>“(iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Standard Care</i> £8.91 per hour limited to £463.32 per month • <i>Specialist Care</i> £17.82 per hour limited to £926.64 per month”

<p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p>	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The increase to the maximum rates of each of the allowances has already been considered and can be met through existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are not any Good Relations, Equality or Rural Needs issues associated with this report.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Current division of SRAs</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Revised division of SRAs if the increase in the maximum is applied</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Scheme of Allowances 2021-2022</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Local Government Circular LG 07/2021</p>