

Section 6 - Additional arrangements

3.6.1. Establishment of working groups

3.6.2. Council, the cabinet and any committee may from time to time establish working groups which include in their membership councillors and/or officers.

3.6.3. Working groups have no formal decision making responsibilities but may provide advice or recommendations.

3.6.4. Independent Remuneration Panel

3.6.5. Before the council makes or amends a scheme for member's allowances, it shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an independent remuneration panel. This panel comprises of at least three members none of whom -

(a) is also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of such an authority; or

(b) is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority

3.6.6. The independent remuneration panel shall produce a report;

(a) as to the responsibilities or duties in respect of which the following should be available -

(i) special responsibility allowance;

(ii) travelling and subsistence allowance; and

(iii) co-optees' allowance;

(b) as to the amount of such allowances and as to the amount of basic allowance;

(c) as to whether dependents' carers' allowance should be payable to members of an authority, and as to the amount of such an allowance;

(d) as to whether, in the event that the scheme is amended at any time so as to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, payment of allowances may be backdated;

(e) as to whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and if so which index and how long that index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years, before its application is reviewed;

(f) as to which members of an authority are to be entitled to pensions in accordance with a scheme; and

(g) as to treating basic allowance or special responsibility allowance, or both, as amounts in respect of which such pensions are payable in accordance with a scheme made under section 7 of the Superannuation Act 1972.

3.6.7. The report will be published and considered at a council meeting when deciding the scheme of allowances.

3.6.8. Political Management

3.6.9. The council comprises councillors who may be members of political or other groups, as referred to in article 2 (2.2.22). Those groups are an important part of the way the council operates and are formally recognised in the appointment of committees. The leader of the council, who is elected by Council, is usually from the political group comprising the majority of councillors and the leader usually appoints members from their political group to be cabinet members.

3.6.10. Each political group appoints a group leader. The group leaders have an important informal role to play in relation to the functions scheme. This role is separate and distinct from any role or function that any councillor who is a leader of a political group has under the functions scheme. Other than those functions allocated to any political group leader under the functions scheme, the political group leaders have no authority to take decisions on behalf of the council but do fulfil important informal political management functions.

3.6.11. In particular, the political group leaders have the following roles:

- (a) to provide leadership to the respective groups on all matters related to council business;
- (b) to act as a link between the political and other groups and to meet regularly with other group leaders and the Mayor as the Democratic Arrangements Forum, chaired by the Mayor, to discuss matters relating to the political management of the council;
- (c) to ensure that the views of his or her group are made known to Council, the cabinet and the chief executive;
- (d) to ensure that members of their group abide by the council's codes of conduct;
- (e) to help identify whether there is any consensus or other ways that the groups can work together on matters related to Council functions;
- (f) to attend Council and other meetings as set out in the constitution as a recognised group leader for the purpose of fulfilling these functions.

3.6.12 Champions

3.6.13. The leader of the council may from time to time appoint individual councillors or other individuals to champion a particular issue within the council, with its partners, in communities, across the council, regionally or nationally.

3.6.14. Such appointments will be made following consultation with political group leaders and the chief executive.

3.6.15. Such champions shall have no formal decision making power and shall not take or purport to take any decisions on behalf of the council.