

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Item No.</b>
<b>Open / Closed</b>	

<b>Meeting:</b>	Council
<b>Meeting date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
<b>Title of report:</b>	Independent Remuneration Panel – Recommendations
<b>Report by:</b>	Director of Law & Governance
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Council/Key Decision/Non Key Decision (delete as appropriate)</b>
<b>Ward(s) to which report relates</b>	<b>All</b>

### Executive Summary:

1. This report is a synopsis of the deliberations and recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (the IRP or Panel) for Bury Council to advise the Council on its Members' Allowances scheme.
2. The IRP was convened under The Local Authorities' (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021) ("the 2003 Regulations"). These regulations, which arise out of the relevant provisions contained in the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to establish and maintain an advisory Independent [Members] Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances on a periodic basis.
3. All Councils are required to convene their IRP and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their Members' Allowances Scheme. They must 'pay regard' to their IRPs recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme. On this particular occasion, the IRP has been reconvened in accordance with a decision of the Standards Committee (27 November 2024) which agreed to the review of allowances and the membership of the IRP.

4. Members will note the IRP has recommended that basic Members allowances the majority of Special responsibility allowance remain at current levels.

## **Recommendation(s)**

### **That:**

1. That Council notes the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel dated November 2025 (Appendix 1)
2. Following consultation with the Group Leaders, the Mayor and the Standards Committee Council consider the recommendations 1 – 26.
  1. The IRP recommends that the Basic Allowance remains at £11,954, subject to indexation going forward.
  2. The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Leader remains at £35,862 for 2025/26.
  3. The IRP recommends that the SRA for the two Deputy Leaders is reset at £19,724, which is 55 per cent of the Leader's recommended SRA (£35,862).
  - 3 The IRP recommends that the SRA for the six other Members of the Cabinet is maintained at £16,138, which has been set at 45% of the Leader's recommended SRA.
  - 4 The IRP recommends that the SRA for the nine Deputy Cabinet Members is maintained at £2,421, which is 15 per of the recommended SRA (£16,138) for the other Cabinet Members.
  - 5 The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Chairs of the six main Committees is maintained at £8,965, which is 25 per cent of the recommended SRA (£35,862) for the Leader.
  - 6 The IRP recommends that the SRA for Members who sit on Licensing Hearings Sub Committees is maintained as follows:
    - Meetings over 4 hours: £106
    - Meetings up to 4 hours: £53
  - 7 Furthermore, it recommends that the threshold for this SRA to be payable should be reset at over four Hearings attended in a year.
  - 8 Also, as per current practice this SRA should only be paid to Members who are not otherwise in receipt of an SRA.
  - 9 The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group is maintained at £11,834, which is 33% of the Leader's recommended SRA of (£35,862).

- 10 The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group is maintained at £4,734, which is 40 per cent of the recommended SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group (£11,834). Furthermore the IRP recommends that the threshold for this SRA to be payable is reset at five Main Opposition Group Members.
- 11 The IRP recommends that the SRA for Leader(s) of Other Opposition Groups is maintained at £5,917, which has been set at 16.5 per cent of the recommended SRA for the Leader.
- 12 The IRP recommends that where there are two Main Opposition Groups of equal size their respective Leaders and Deputy Leaders are paid an SRA as follows:
- Main Opposition Group Leaders £8,876
  - Main Opposition Group Deputy Leaders £3,255
- 13 The IRP further recommends that the SRA for the Deputy Leaders of two Main Opposition Groups of equal size is only payable if each Main Opposition Group reaches the qualifying threshold of five Group Members.
- 14 The IRP recommends that the SRA paid to the Leader as a Member/Portfolio Holder on the GMCA under the 2011 Order is reset at £9,000.
- 15 The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Bury Member appointed to the GM Bee Network Committee is maintained at £3,000, which is one third of the recommended SRA (£9,000) for Leader appointed to the GMCA.
- 16 The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Bury Council Members appointed to the GM Waste and Recycling Committee is maintained at £1,500, which is 16.5 per cent of the recommended SRA (£9,000) for the Leader appointed to the GMCA.
- 17 The IRP is not making a recommendation for an SRA regarding the Council's appointment to the GM Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.
- 18 The IRP recommends that the 1-SRA only rule is maintained with the exception of the additional SRAs paid under the 2011 GMCA Order.
- 19 The IRP recommends that the two Audit Committee Co-optees be paid a Co-optees' Allowance that has two elements maintained as follows:
- Standard element £500 per year
  - Meetings element
  - Meetings over four hours £106 per meeting
  - Meetings up to four hours £53 per meeting
- 20 The IRP is not recommending any change to the Mayoral Civic Allowance (£18,567) and Deputy Mayor Civic Allowance (£4,642).
- 21 The IRP recommends that the remuneration of the Independent Persons is reset as follows:
- Standard element £1,000 per year

22 The IRP recommends that the rates at which the DCA can be claimed are maintained as follows:

- Child care: maximum hourly rate paid at real living wage  
(Currently £12.60)
- Elderly/disabled care: maximum rate paid at the hourly rate charged By Bury Council Social Services (Persona) for a Home Help

23 The IRP further recommends that the DCA is amended as follows:

- That the DCA may be claimed an hour before an approved duty starts and an hour after an approved duty ends
- That the annual cap on the total amount that can be claimed under each category is increased as follows:
  - Child care: £4,000 per year
  - Elderly/disabled care: £8,000 per year

24 The IRP recommends that the current terms and conditions and rates at which Members can claim travel and subsistence outwith the Council are maintained.

25 The IRP recommends that the following indices are applied to the allowances paid to Members and appointees of Bury Council:

- Basic Allowance, SRAs (including those paid in accordance with the GMCA 2011 Order), Co-optees' Allowance, within Council Travel Allowance, Civic (Mayoral) Allowances and the remuneration for the Independent Persons:
  - Indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column 43) as agreed each year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services and applicable to the same year it applies to Officers but with an implementation date from the start of the municipal rather than financial year.
- Mileage Allowance (Outwith only):
  - Members' mileage allowances rates indexed to HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance Payment rates.
- Subsistence Allowances (Outwith only):
  - Subsistence allowances should continue to be indexed to the same rates that are applicable to Officers.
- The Dependants' Carers' Allowance:
  - Child care: maximum rate indexed to the real living wage
  - Elderly/disabled care: maximum rate indexed to the hourly rate charged by Bury Council Social Services (Persona) for a Home Help

26 The IRP also recommends that indexation should run for four years (2025/26 – 2028/29), which is the maximum length of time permitted by the 2003 Regulations. For authority for indexation to be extended beyond the fourth anniversary of the establishment of the new scheme of allowances the Council is required to first seek advice from the IRP.

- 3 Instructs the Monitoring Officer to amend the Councils Members Allowance scheme in accordance with the decision of the Full Council meeting held on 25th May 2022

### **Background**

5. The terms of reference provided to the IRP for this review were as follows:

In accordance with the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations the IRP shall make recommendations to be considered by the Council at Full Council on 21 May 2025 for a proposed implementation from that date regarding:-

- i. The amount of basic allowance that should be payable to its elected members
- ii. The responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a special responsibility allowance (SRA) and as to the amount of such an allowance
- iii. About other allowances including an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and if it does make such a recommendation, the amount of this allowance, travel and subsistence allowances
- iv. The level of allowances paid to co-opted members of the Council's Audit Committee and the Independent Persons appointed under the 2011 Localism Act
- v. The level of allowance paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the purpose of meeting the expenses of those offices (i.e., the Civic Allowances)
- vi. The payment of member(s) appointed to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in respect of duties and responsibilities undertaken as a member of the GMCA, and if so to specify the amount of any such allowance (in accordance with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Order 2011 Schedule 1 - Constitution (Remuneration page 18)
- vii. Whether annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should run

6. In arriving at its recommendations the IRP shall also take into account:

- A. The views of Members both written and oral, with an opportunity for selected Members to meet with the IRP
- B. Factual Briefings from Officers
- C. The Statutory Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances 2006.
- D. The 2003 Members Allowances Regulations (SI 2003/1021)
- E. Roles and Responsibilities as contained with the Council's Constitution

- F. That the recommendations should confirm to existing legislation and anticipate likely future legislation as far as possible
  - G. The requirement for their report and recommended changes to the scheme of allowances to be easy to understand and adequately justifiable to the electorate
  - H. Allowances paid in comparable councils, namely the other Greater Manchester Metropolitan Councils
7. In accordance with the decision of Bury Council Standards Committee on 27 November 2024 the IRP was reconvened consisting of the following appointees:
- Dr Declan Hall (Chair): an independent consultant specialising in members' allowances and support and a former lecturer in local government and politics at the Institute of Local Government, The University of Birmingham.
  - Dr Andrew Roberts: A local businessman and MD of a local IT Company; Chair of Bury Business Leaders Group and a Governor of the University of Greater Manchester
  - John Thomson: UNISON Bury Branch Secretary (Local Government)
8. The IRP met in person at Bury Council Offices on 30 April and 1 May 2025 to consider all the written evidence and data and receive factual briefings on the Council and how it operates from relevant Officers. It was during this time that a representative range of Members met with the IRP to discuss their roles and responsibilities and to raise any issues of concern. Any Member not invited but who wanted to meet with the IRP was accommodated.
9. In addition, every Member was sent a short questionnaire through which they could make their views known and raise any concerns directly with the IRP, of which 12 were received. The questionnaire also had the methodological advantage of ensuring all Members were being asked a common set of questions during the interviews, the main point being that all Members had at least one opportunity to exercise their voice during the review.
10. In compliance with the terms of reference and for benchmarking purposes the IRP also took into account the range and levels of allowances paid in comparable local authorities, namely the other Greater Manchester Councils. Benchmarking information is set out in the report of the IRP which is annexed to this report.
11. The full range of interviewees and written information received and considered by the IRP was as follows:

- List of information and evidence that was included in the Information Pack for IRP Members
- Elected Members who met with the IRP
- Officers who provided a factual briefing to the IRP
- Summary of benchmarking of Bury Council Allowances against other Greater Manchester Councils

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## Community impact/links with Community Strategy

An up to date Member Allowance Scheme will ensure decision are taken lawfully and in an open and transparent manner.

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## Equality Impact and considerations:

*Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:*

*A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -*

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

*The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.*

<b>Equality Analysis</b>	<i>Please provide a written explanation of the outcome(s) of either conducting an initial or full EA.</i>
An up to date Member Allowance Scheme will ensure decisions contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.	

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### Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Ensure compliance with the Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003	. Independent panel establish and report to Members for consideration

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### Consultation:

Group Leaders and the Mayor at the Democratic Arrangements Forum and Members of the Standards Committee. The terms of reference set out members would be interviewed by the IRP and a Member survey was sent to all Members to obtain their views.

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### Legal Implications:

*To be completed by the Council's Monitoring Officer*

Legal comments are contained within the body of the report

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### Financial Implications:

*To be completed by the Council's Section 151 Officer*

The proposals can be met from existing budget provision.

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### Report Author and Contact Details:

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### Background papers:

Appendix 1 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel 2025



**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

Term	Meaning
IRP	Independent Remuneration Panel