

Coventry City Council

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

December 2023

Recommendations to Coventry City Council

1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1. All local authorities are required to have a Members' Allowances Scheme, agreed locally, which makes provision for a range of allowances and expenses available to elected Members. Whilst each authority approves its own scheme, legislation requires that each authority is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations on allowances, including the amounts payable. When agreeing its scheme of allowances, an authority must have regard to the Panel's recommendations although it is not bound by them.
- 1.2. Coventry's current Scheme of Allowances are set out in the Council's Scheme of Allowances at:
<https://internaldemocraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s58762/Part%205%20-%20Members%20Allowances%20Scheme%20June%202023.pdf>
- 1.3. The Council last considered a report from an Independent Remuneration Panel in December 2020 when the scheme was updated. The Panel recommended that allowances be indexed, allowing an increase to be applied in line with any local government pay awards for officers. This index covered the period April 2020 to March 2024.
- 1.4. The national framework for Member Allowances states that an index may not run for more than four years before a further recommendation on it is sought from an Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 1.5. The members of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) were appointed in October 2023 by the Chief Legal Officer and the scope of the review set following consultation with the Leaders of the controlling and opposition groups in line with the Council's Constitution and the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Panel was asked to make recommendations for the scheme to cover the period April 2024 to March 2028.
- 1.6. The IRP has now completed its review and its recommendations are set out in this report and summarised at Appendix A.
- 1.7. The Members of the Panel were:
 - Tina Costello, Chief Executive, Heart of England Community Foundation
 - Major John Lam, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers
 - Dr Abdullah Shehu MBE DL, Consultant Neurologist, University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Coventry Muslim Forum
- 1.8. Background information about the Panel members is included at Appendix B.

2 Scope and Methodology

- 2.1 In preparing the scope for the review, it was noted that the roles carried out by councillors and structure of responsibilities had not changed significantly since the last two reviews and it was agreed that the review should be limited to consideration of the matter of whether allowances should continue to be indexed. However, it was also noted that several elements of the scheme needed clarification or updating, and these were also reviewed to ensure the scheme remains up to date and fit for purpose.
- 2.2 As a result, the Panel reviewed the City Council's scheme of Member Allowances and Expenses in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations, the underlying philosophy and the scope for this review and were asked:
- a) To make recommendations to the City Council on whether adjustments to the level of Member allowances should be made in line with an index and if so which index and for how long in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003 (as amended).
 - b) If application of an index is proposed, to make recommendations to the City Council whether any index should be applied retrospectively to the start of the 2024/25 financial year.
 - c) To make recommendations to the City Council on changes and amendments to the following elements in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003 (as amended):
 - Minority Opposition Group Leader Allowances
 - Maternity/Paternity/Shared Parental/Adoption Leave Allowances
 - Allowances for Independent Members
 - Telephone and Line Rental Costs
 - Car Mileage
 - Cycle and Motorcycle Mileage
- 2.3 The Panel met in November and December 2024 and considered a range of information to support its work. These included:
- Background information to the review including the regulatory context
 - Information from reports of previous Independent Remuneration Panels
 - Information about the current Council Member structure
 - Information about activity and time commitments as prepared for the Local Government Boundary Review
 - The current Allowances Scheme
 - Benchmarking information about other comparative authorities' schemes.
- 2.4 The guidance states that it is important that some element of the work of Councillors continues to be voluntary – that some hours are not remunerated. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by elected Members and to ensure that despite the input required people are encouraged to come forward as elected Members and that their service to the community is retained. Ensuring representation from a broad section of society is an important objective for local democracy.
- 2.5 Like its predecessors, the Panel was also acutely aware of the sensitivity surrounding payments to Councillors and the financial constraints placed on local authorities. In making its recommendations, the Panel has sought to take a balanced view of these important but sometimes conflicting pressures.

3 Background Information – Coventry City Council

- 4.1 Coventry City Council has 54 Councillors representing 18 wards. The current political composition of the Council is:

Party	Number of Seats
Conservative	15
Green	2
Labour	37

- 4.2 The Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model of governance. The Cabinet is currently made up of the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and eight other Cabinet Members. Each of the 10 members of the Cabinet has a specific portfolio of responsibilities.
- 4.3 The Council currently has five themed Scrutiny Boards and an overarching Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee whose role is to hold the executive to account, contribute to policy development, carry out reviews and monitor the performance of the Council. Each Board is responsible for setting its own work programme with oversight from the Co-ordination Committee.
- 4.4 The Council also appoints a number of other Committees to exercise its regulatory functions and other functions that are not the responsibility of the executive.

4 Annual Adjustment of Allowances

- 4.1 The regulations governing schemes of allowances allow annual adjustments to the level of allowances in line with an index. The Panel can recommend which index should be used and for how long the index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years. After this period, the regulations require that the issue of indexation should be reviewed. The terms of reference for this review asked the Panel to decide whether an index should continue be applied to the scheme of allowances, and if so which and for how long.
- 4.2 Since its introduction, Coventry's scheme of allowances has included provision for allowances to rise by an index. This has meant that Councillor allowances have risen in line with any pay awards made to local government employees on a specific spinal point on the National Joint Council Scheme for local government.
- 4.3 The Panel considered the framework and context for the payment of allowances to Councillors. It noted the requirement for all local authorities to pay a basic allowance to recognise the calls on Councillors' time including meetings of the Council and external bodies, meetings with council officers, meetings with constituents, attendance at political group meetings and incidental costs such as use of their homes. It also noted the provision for paying Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for Councillors who have significant responsibilities in additional roles. Separate legislation provides for allowances to be paid to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council and, in line with recent reviews, these civic allowances were included in the scope of this review.
- 4.4 In forming their recommendations, the Panel discussed issues including:
- the current financial context and pressures on local authorities. They asked about the financial impact on the authority and noted that inflationary impact of pay awards agreed via the National Joint Council for Local Government Services is

- provided for as part of Council's medium-term financial strategy planning each year.
- the range of activities undertaken by Councillors in the city and the commitment and time given in evidence which had been produced earlier in the year for the Local Authority Boundary Commission Review.
 - the need to ensure the Council does everything it can to ensure that its Councillors are diverse and representative of the communities that they serve and recognised the importance of appropriate remuneration as a key part in this.
- 4.5 They noted the findings of the previous Panel, together with benchmarking information which compared the types and levels of allowances paid by Coventry City Council with those paid by neighbouring West Midlands Metropolitan Councils and others across the country who are statistically similar to Coventry. Overall they observed that Coventry pays a higher than average basic allowance (it was also noted that Coventry Councillors serve a higher number of members of the population than the majority of comparator authorities) and that while there are some specific variations, the majority of SRAs are at or below the average. The Panel was assured that the broad basis of the scheme and the levels of allowances paid remain broadly sound in comparison to other similar authorities and more information about the information considered is shown in Appendix C.
- 4.6 The Panel supported the principle that allowances should continue to be increased by an index and noted that the majority of comparator authorities do so. They discussed the other types of index that could be applied but it was clear that the existing index which aligns increases in allowances to any increase in the pay of local authority employees remains the most appropriate for a number of reasons including that it is negotiated nationally and is thus removed from any local determination and that it avoids creating any difference between Member and officer arrangements from year to year. The point of the national scale to which any rise is linked is at the top, which also means that, as in the last two years when pay awards have been higher for local government employees on lower grades, Members only receive the lowest percentage increase that is offered and therefore are not put in the position of receiving a higher award than some officers.
- 4.7 The Panel considered the period for which the index should be applied and agreed that it should continue to run concurrently from the point at which the previous index expired for a period of four years.
- 4.8 In agreeing its recommendation, the Panel asked that the Council ensure the Scheme is kept under review to make sure it reflects any changing circumstances and that the Scheme is recognised as an important element to support the attraction of a diverse and representative range of candidates for election and to support the retention of Councillors.

Recommendation 1: That the Basic, Special Responsibility, co-optee and civic allowances continue to be increased each year by any percentage increase in pay agreed for local government employees, (pegged to spinal column point 43 of the NJC scheme); this indexing to be effective from 1 April 2024 and expire on 31 March 2028.

5 Minority Opposition Group(s) Allowances

- 5.1 As well as making provision for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) to Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, it also makes SRAs available to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the 'Opposition Group'. Coventry's Scheme does not state a position in relation to the Leaders of any other groups. Since the last review of the current scheme, a third political group has been recognised on the Council and the Panel were asked to clarify the position.
- 5.2 The Panel reviewed the way comparator Councils' Schemes provide for smaller opposition groups.
- 5.3 Some authorities, as is currently the case in Coventry and Wolverhampton, SRAs are paid only to the Leader (and often the Deputy Leader) of the Largest Opposition Group.
- 5.4 Some authorities provide SRAs for the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of minority opposition groups with a specific minimum number of members in their party required to reach the threshold for payment. For example, Oldham pays an SRA to the Leader of the Minority Opposition Group because their group has reached their Local Authority's minimum threshold of 6 elected Members.
- 5.5 Other authorities pay allowances to opposition group Leaders and deputies depending on their percentage size of either the controlling group or the overall number of Councillors in the Local Authority. For example, Sandwell pays an SRA to the Leader of the largest Opposition Group and the Leader of the next biggest group because both groups are in the 15% bracket size in comparison to the controlling group, while Bolton pays an SRA to the Leader of the Minority Opposition Group because they have 10% of the total seats of the Council.
- 5.6 Where authorities do pay allowances for minority opposition groups, the vast majority only pay an SRA to the group Leader.
- 5.7 The Panel considered the information from other authorities, together with the size of the current groups and the thresholds at which it might be appropriate to pay an allowance and on balance decided to leave the scheme unchanged and simply clarify the position that SRAs should only be paid to the largest opposition group. (In the event of the number of members in the largest opposition group being equalled by another group, the same allowances should be paid to both.) They did however propose that this be considered again when the scheme is next reviewed to reflect any changing circumstances.

Recommendation 2: That the current scheme be clarified to confirm that Special Responsibility Allowances for any opposition groups are only paid to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest Opposition Group on the Council.

6 **Maternity / Paternity / Shared Parental / Adoption Leave**

- 6.1 Currently, the scheme makes no provision for Members allowances during maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave.
- 6.2 As part of the Panel's review, they were provided with information about what measures other local authorities have in place. In preparing for the meeting, advice was also sought from the Council's Human Resources (HR) service about what should be considered bearing in mind the Equality Act and other relevant legislation and the nature of the Councillor role.
- 6.3 Most other local authority schemes simply state that any allowances will continue to be paid for the appropriate fixed period, while any Councillor appointed to cover a vacant role for which an SRA is payable, would also receive the relevant allowance on a pro rata basis for the period being covered.
- 6.4 The Panel were made aware of the fact that a small minority of Local Authorities, recognised in the benchmarking data and by HR, have linked Members' allowances during maternity/paternity/shared parental and adoption leave to statutory pay. However, this is not recommended due to Members not being employees but elected officials.
- 6.5 The Panel noted that legislation states that an elected Member who does not attend a formal meeting of the Council for a period of 6 months ceases to be a Councillor, unless a meeting of full Council determines that they be granted a dispensation, and this is taken into account in other schemes.
- 6.6 The Panel debated the length of time schemes should apply; whether it should apply to both basic and SRA allowances; the impact of the legislation which requires Councillors to attend at least one meeting in a six month period and how this might be managed in terms of keeping in touch days; and any requests for an extension to leave beyond 6 months; as well as the circumstances in which payments would stop. They also recognised the role that such provision could play in encouraging diversity and community representation when attracting candidates and retaining Councillors, as well as the importance of the Council both meeting its legal and equalities obligations in this area.
- 6.7 The Panel decided to recommend the inclusion of provisions for Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental and Adoption Leave for Members based on the following:

6.7.1 Leave Periods

- Councillors who give birth or adopt a child can take up to six months of leave, with the option to extend to up to 52 weeks.
- Where a birth is premature, the Councillor is entitled to take leave during the period between the date of the birth and the due date in addition to the 6 months' period.
- Councillors who are biological fathers or nominated carers can take at least two weeks of paternity leave.
- The Council will endeavour to replicate Shared Parental Leave arrangements agreed with any Councillor's external employers.
- Councillors who share parental leave arrangements can split the leave up to 50 weeks.

- Councillors must comply with the notice requirements of the Council and keep the Council informed of their intended return dates and requests for extensions.

6.7.2 Allowances during parental leave (Basic Allowance and SRAs)

- Councillors will receive their basic allowance in full during their leave.
- Councillors who have a special responsibility allowance (SRA) will also receive it in full, and their replacements will receive an SRA on a pro rata basis for the period a role is covered.
- The payment of SRAs will continue for six months or until the next annual Council meeting or election of said Councillor, whichever is sooner – leading to a review and possible further 6-month extension.
- If the Councillor covering a role for which an SRA is payable and is already in receipt of another, they will only receive one payment in line with the allowances scheme.
- Unless they are removed from their post at an annual meeting or their party loses control of the Council during their leave period. Councillors on leave should return to the same post where possible.

6.7.3 Resigning from Office and Elections

- Councillors who decide not to return after their leave must notify the Council immediately (allowances will cease from the effective resignation date).
- Councillors who are not re-elected or who do not stand for re-election will stop receiving all their allowances on the retirement date, usually four days after the election.

Recommendation 3: That the Scheme is amended to make provision for maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and continue to pay Members' Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance (where applicable) for up to 6 months with the option to extend for up to one year as set out in this report.

7 **Co-optees and Independent Members/Persons Allowances**

- 7.1 Coventry's scheme includes an allowance to co-opted members of Committees. This is currently limited to co-opted members of Scrutiny Boards who sit on the Board with responsibility for education where there are places for statutory co-optees. The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board also has appointed co-optees.
- 7.2 The Panel were made aware that currently, the Council appoints four Independent Persons to its Ethics Committee who do not currently receive any allowance for their role. The Ethics Committee meets less frequently than Scrutiny Boards (normally 4 meetings a year on average) but have additional responsibilities. In the event of a code of conduct complaint against a Councillor, the views of an Independent Person may be sought at various points during the investigation and hearing process regarding any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code.
- 7.3 Furthermore, the Panel were informed that following a national independent review into local audit and local authority financial reporting which recommended local authorities consider appointing at least one Independent member to their Audit Committees, government committed to work with key stakeholders to issue new guidance, although this has yet to be published.

- 7.4 The Audit and Procurement Committee meet on average 6 times a year and consider matters relating to financial management, governance and risk. Responsibilities would be similar to those of the other co-optees and they would also be expected to bring relevant experience to the role.
- 7.5 The Panel considered the type and level of allowances paid by other authorities and the nature of the roles carried out by co-optees and Independent Members/Persons and determined that it would be appropriate to extend co-optees' allowances to any Independent Members/Persons appointed. This approach would also future proof the allowances scheme in the event of independent Persons/Members being appointed to the Audit and Procurement Committee.

Recommendation 4: That the existing co-optee allowance be extended to Independent Members/Persons.

8 Telephone and Line Rental Allowance

- 8.1 The Telephone and Line Rental Allowance has been a long-standing provision for Councillors to be able to claim up to £30.15 for line rental per quarter and up to £488.80 per year.
- 8.2 Since the introduction of the scheme all Members have been given access to a laptop with a built-in telephone facility, giving Members access to the Council's network from any location (providing there is a suitable mobile phone signal) where there is no Wi-Fi available. In addition, all Members are offered a smartphone, which allows access to email and the internet, as well as the provision of unlimited calls. IT and telephone provision is part of the Council's corporate procurement framework.
- 8.3 The number of Councillors claiming the allowance has reduced over time with longer serving Councillors tending to use the scheme and only four Councillors having made claims since the scheme was last reviewed. For context:
In 2015/16: 13 Councillors claimed for telephone costs totalling £2,585.
In 2022/23: 3 Councillors claimed for telephone costs totalling £453.
- 8.4 The Panel recognised the change in IT and telephone provision and ways of working and alternative methods of communication in place for Councillors to conduct their duties. They also noted the increasingly challenging climate in which Councillors now operate and the clear benefits from maintaining a distinction between Councillor and personal contact details. However, for those remaining Councillors using the scheme, they also recognised that their contact details may be well established as part of their way of working and that there may be some challenges associated with changing these.
- 8.5 The Panel agreed that the aim should be to completely remove provision from the scheme, and that the Councillors who currently use their home phone for work purposes should be supported to transition away from this where possible. However, given the relatively low cost of the allowance now claimed and the context, the Panel felt that on balance the allowance should be closed to new Councillors and who have not claimed over the last four years and eventually withdrawn when the final claiming Councillor steps down.

Recommendation 5: That the telephone and line rental allowances element of the scheme be closed to existing Councillors who have not claimed since April

2020 and all incoming Councillors, while allowing existing claimants to continue for the remainder of their time in office.

9 Travel

- 9.1 Allowance schemes are required to set out the approved duties for which travelling allowances are payable in line with regulations and Coventry's scheme meets this requirement.
- 9.2 The Panel notes that claims against the travel elements of the scheme are low – less than £2,000 in each of the last two financial years. This in part reflects the arrangements in place for advanced bookings by the Council on behalf of Members for attendance at approved events. This means that costs can be kept to a minimum by taking advantage of advanced or bulk rail bookings for example and the Panel supports this continued approach.
- 9.3 The basis for the scheme is to ensure that reasonable costs are covered and the Panel supports this.
- 9.4 In reviewing the car mileage element of the scheme, the Panel noted that currently the scheme allows for car mileage to be paid at two rates according to the size of engine (45p per mile for engines up to 1199cc or at 48.5p per mile for engines over 1199cc). This is out of line with the PAYE dispensation granted by the HM Revenue and Customs and the scheme for Council officers which both have a single rate of 45p per mile. While the numbers and amount claimed are very small, the current arrangements are outdated and could be seen as not in line with the Council's environmental objectives.
- 9.5 In 2015/16: 10 Councillors claimed travel allowances totalling £1,675 (NB most of this will have been for mileage but some will have included train travel.) In 2022/23: no Councillors claimed any mileage.
- 9.6 The Panel also noted that the HMRC scheme has an approved passenger rate of 5p per passenger per business mile for carrying fellow employees in a car or van on journeys which are also work journeys for them. While this is not currently included in the officer scheme, this was seen as providing an incentive to encourage car sharing where appropriate.
- 9.7 In addition, the Scheme does not make any provision for Councillors to claim mileage for use of their own cycles or motorcycles. The Council officer scheme provides reimbursement for travel by private motorcycle at 24p per mile and bicycle at 20p per mile in line with the PAYE dispensation granted by the HM Revenue and Customs.
- 9.8 The Panel concluded that while the impact may be small, the introduction of these allowances would support the Council's environmental priorities for carbon reduction and modal shift and that the Scheme should be updated accordingly.

Recommendation 6: That the Members' Scheme be aligned with HMRC guidance to pay a rate of 45p per mile for qualifying travel by car and an additional 5p per passenger per mile for carrying fellow Councillors and/or officers in a car or van on journeys which are also qualifying journeys for them.

Recommendation 7: That the Scheme be amended to include reimbursement for travel by private motorcycle at 24p per mile and bicycle at 20p per mile.

10 Financial Implications of Recommendations

- 10.1 The inflationary impact of pay awards agreed via the National Joint Council for Local Government Services is provided for as part of Council's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) planning each year. This applies to both Members' allowances and officer pay.
- 10.2 Any payments associated with maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave would need to be met on a one off basis, but are not expected to be significant.
- 10.3 The additional costs of paying Independent Members/Persons an allowance could be taken from the existing budget for telephone and line rental which could be reduced and still provide a small saving.

11 Review Implementation

- 11.1 While the Panel has made recommendations on the issues identified in the scope, and some issues are linked, the recommendations are not to be considered as a single "all or nothing" decision by the City Council and most recommendations can be dealt with on an individual basis.
- 11.2 In considering the Panel's report the Council must have regard to the recommendation of the Panel but may reject any of them. Should the Council amend or reject any recommendations, it should consider the implications of such decisions, including the impact on the overall financial position.
- 11.3 Recommendations that are approved will need to be incorporated in a revised Scheme of Allowances and Expenses to be published within the Council's Constitution.
- 11.4 Any amendment to the indexing arrangements will cover the period from April 2024 to March 2028.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the Basic, Special Responsibility, co-optee and civic allowances continue to be increased each year by any percentage increase in pay agreed for local government employees, (pegged to spinal column point 43 of the NJC scheme); this indexing to be effective from 1 April 2024 and expire on 31 March 2028.

Recommendation 2: That the current Scheme be clarified to confirm that Special Responsibility Allowances for any opposition groups are only paid to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest Opposition Group on the Council.

Recommendation 3: That provision is made for maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and continue to pay Members' Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance (where applicable) for up to 6 months with the option to extend for up to one year as set out in this report.

Recommendation 4: That the existing co-optee allowance be extended to Independent Members/Persons.

Recommendation 5: That the telephone and line rental allowances element of the Scheme be closed to existing Councillors who have not claimed since April 2020 and all incoming Councillors, while allowing existing claimants to continue for the remainder of their time in office.

Recommendation 6: That the Members' Scheme be aligned with HMRC guidance to pay a rate of 45p per mile for qualifying travel by car and an additional 5p per passenger per mile for carrying fellow Councillors and/or officers in a car or van on journeys which are also qualifying journeys for them.

Recommendation 7: That the Scheme be amended to include reimbursement for travel by private motorcycle at 24p per mile and bicycle at 20p per mile.

Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Tina Costello

Tina has been the Heart of England Community Foundation's Chief Executive since 2013.

Her responsibilities include developing and implementing high-level strategies, building effective relationships with our stakeholders, developing major corporate partnerships and managing the overall operations and resources of the charity.

Tina has over 24 years' experience in senior positions as Head of Awards for all of the West Midlands region at Big Lottery Fund and managing external funding at Coventry City Council, with a lengthy track record of delivering successful community investment and grant making programmes as well as working with donors to develop new funding streams.

She is a proud Brummie and hugely passionate about philanthropy and supporting grassroots community activity.

Major John Lam

Major Lam is a Chinese origin from Hong Kong who studied an MBA at Coventry University and served as a volunteer officer in the Royal Hong Kong Regiment when he was attached to the 5th (Warwickshire) Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers that based in Keresley.

He was employed by HSBC Hong Kong as Human Resources Officer and the Hong Kong Exchange and Clearing as Administration Manager before being commissioned into the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

He resumed active service with the Army Reserve in 2007 when he settled in Coventry and was deployed to Afghanistan, London for the Olympics and Uganda for various military operations. He also served as a Staff Officer at different HQs and now acts as the Aide-De-Camp to the Deputy Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

He is involved in several associations and trusts related to the Fusiliers and the Army Cadet Force and actively engages in civic events in Warwickshire and the West Midlands.

Dr Abdullah Shehu MBBS, Diploma Clinical Neurology, FRCP, MBE, DL

Dr Shehu was originally from Nigeria and came to UK in 1986. He has been in Coventry since 1993 and a consultant neurologist at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust for more than twenty five years.

He is the chairman of the Coventry Muslim Forum which carries out community activities including community building, health education to the communities and safeguarding among others. The Forum was awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Services in 2017.

Dr Shehu is also a chairman or member of board of trustees in many organisations in the UK and abroad.

He was a recipient of The Coventry Award of Merit in 2014 and awarded an MBE by the late Her Majesty The Queen in 2019.

Dr Shehu was appointed as one of the Deputy Lord Lieutenants of HM's Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands in 2017.

Benchmarking Information

As part of their review, the Panel looked at benchmarking information which compared the levels and types of allowances paid in Coventry with those in other similar authorities. The authorities selected for comparison were the other West Midlands Metropolitan Authorities and local authorities that are identified by the Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy as being statistically the most similar to Coventry.

Extracts of the information considered by the Panel relating to the levels of allowances paid by other authorities are shown below. While the framework for Member Allowances is common to all, local authorities are free to apply this to suit local circumstances which means that not all elements of the schemes are directly comparable. Local authorities have their own political management structures which means that decision-making bodies operate in different ways and this is reflected accordingly in roles and responsibilities. In addition, local authorities present information in different ways and update their published information at different times in the year. Where information is not readily available or cannot be appropriately compared, gaps have been left.

Finally, during the work of the Panel, the 2023/24 pay award for local government officers was agreed and local authorities are in the process of updating their schemes. For consistency, comparative data relates to the 2022/23 year unless otherwise stated (Walsall, Leicester, and Salford) - the most up-to-date data available has been used in its absence. Coventry's updated allowances for 2023/24 are shown at Appendix D.

Summary of Benchmarking Information – Basic Allowance

West Midland Metropolitan Councils	
Coventry	£15,340
Birmingham	£18,876
Dudley	£11,435
Sandwell	£11,552
Solihull	£10,500
Walsall (2021-22)	£11,938
Wolverhampton	£11,500
Average	£13,020

CIPFA Nearest Neighbours for Coventry (2023)	
Coventry	£15,340
Blackburn with Darwen	£7,667
Bolton	£11,848
Bradford MBC	£13,463
Bristol	£15,169
Derby	£12,145
Kirklees	£15,080
Leicester (2021-22)	£11,276
Newcastle Upon Tyne	£9,200
Medway	£11,474
Oldham MBC	£10,514
Rochdale	£11,172
Salford (2021-22)	£11,043
Sandwell	£11,552
Sheffield	£15,606
Wolverhampton	£11,500
Average	£12,128

Summary of Benchmarking Information – Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) – Executive, Opposition and Scrutiny

Authority	Leader	Deputy Leader	Leader of the largest Opposition Group	Deputy Leader of Opposition	Leader of Minority Opposition	Cabinet Member	Deputy Cabinet Member	Scrutiny Co-ordination Chair	Scrutiny Co-ordination Dep Chair	Scrutiny Chairs
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West Midland Metropolitan Councils:										
Coventry	£27,609	£19,936	£5,659	£2830		£12,273	£4,171	£12,273	£3,071	£7,673
Birmingham	£56,579	£45,263	£16,973	£9,618	£7,921	£28,289		£14,145		
Dudley	£26,852	£21,236	£12,024	£9,499		£15,288				£10,181
Sandwell	£28,584	£21,438	£4,173		£4,173	£17,151				£9,519
Solihull	£26,429	£16,175	£10,571		£5,264	£10,571		£8,456		
Walsall (2021-22)	£33,325	£20,614	£11,158			£11,660				£10,821
Wolverhampton	£27,000	£20,000	£12,000	£5,500		£15,000		£10,000	£4,000	£8,500
Average	£32,340	£23,523	£10,365	£6,862	£5,786	£15,747	£4,171	£11,219	£3,536	£9,339

CIPFA Nearest Neighbours for Coventry (2023):										
Coventry	£27,609	£19,936	£5,659	£2,830		£12,273	4,171	£12,273	£3,071	£7,673
Blackburn with Darwen	£21,908	£13,145	£7,667		£2,191	£7,667	£3,286	£4,272	£1,643	£3,286
Bolton	£31,989	£19,104	£10,741	£4,833	£2,991	£8,665				£6,089
Bradford MBC	£37,056	£18,528	£25,939	£16,675		£25,939	£16,675	£12,970		£12,970
Bristol	£71,270	£28,281				£26,105		£8,702		£7,174
Derby	£36,436	£27,327	£9,109	£4,554	£9,109	£18,218				£9,109
Kirklees	£27,210	£20,618	£11,083		£4,157	£13,709		£12,423		£6,927
Leicester (2021-22)					£1,165	£65,787	£44,343	£10,483	£2,620	£8,736
Newcastle Upon Tyne	£18,400	£9,200	£6,900	£3,450		£6,900	£2,300	£4,600	£2,300	£4,600
Medway	£34,422	£22,948	£13,769	£6,885		£17,211		£11,474	£4,016	£6,572
Oldham MBC	£37,848	£22,079	£15,771	£6,309	£4,731	£18,925	£7,885			£9,462
Rochdale	£33,516	£16,758	£11,731		£1,676	£15,082				£8,379
Salford (2021-22)	£65,697	£33,296	£14,253		£14,253	£10,689				£8,910
Sandwell	£28,584	£21,438				£17,151				£9,519
Sheffield	£26,010	£13,005	£10,404			£13,005	£5,202			
Wolverhampton	£27,000	£20,000	£12,000	£5,500		£15,000		£10,000	£4,000	£8,500
Average	£34,997	£20,378	£11,925	£6,380	£5,034	£18,270	£11,980	£9,689	£2,942	£7,860

Summary of Benchmarking Information – Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) – Committees, Panels and Co-optees

Authority	Planning Chair	Planning Deputy Chair	Licensing Chair	Licensing Deputy Chair	Ethics/ Standards Cttee Chair	Ethics/ Standards Deputy Chair	Fostering Panel Member	Adoption Panel Member	Audit Chair	Audit Deputy Chair	Co-optee of Scrutiny
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West Midland Metropolitan Councils:

Coventry	£7,673	£3,071	£7,673	£3,071	£1,191		£3,071	£3,071	£7,673	£3,071	£556
Birmingham	£16,973		£16,973		£1,093				£5,658		£909
Dudley	£11,898	£5,574	£10,181	£4,909					£10,181	£4,909	
Sandwell	£11,434	£5,716	£11,434	£5,716	£9,519	£2,858			£9,519		
Solihull	£8,456		£4,229				£3,171				
Walsall (2021-22)	£11,006		£10,478		£5,348				£8,551		
Wolverhampton	£11,000	£5,000	£12,500	£5,000	£10,000	£2,500			£10,000	£2,500	
Average	£11,206	£4,840	£10,495	£4,674	£5,430	£2,679	£3,121		£8,597	£3,493	£733

CIPFA Nearest Neighbours for Coventry (2023):

Coventry	£7,673	£3,071	£7,673	£3,071	£1,191		£3,071	£3,071	£7,673	£3,071	£556
Blackburn with Darwen	£5,367	£1,971	£5,149	£1,863	£1,643	£822			£1,643	£822	
Bolton	£8,321		£7,875	£2,565							
Bradford MBC	£12,970		£12,970		£3,706		£2,965	£2,965	£12,970		£597
Bristol			£7,174		£7,174				£7,174		£626
Derby	£9,109	£4,554	£9,109	£4,554					£6,377		
Kirklees	£6,927		£5,543				£1,384	£1,384	£2,770		
Leicester (2021-22)	£10,483	£2,620	£10,483	£2,620	£3,116				£6,406		
Newcastle Upon Tyne	£6,900	£3,450	£4,600	£2,300	£2,300	£1,150			£3,450	£1,725	£460
Medway	£13,769	£5,737			£4,016				£8,032		
Oldham MBC	£9,462		£9,462						£2,325		
Rochdale	£11,172				£8,379		£1,676				
Salford (2021-22)	£8,910		£8,910						£8,910		£408
Sandwell	£11,434	£5,716	£11,434	£5,716	£9,519	£2,858			£9,519		
Sheffield	£7,803	£5,202	£7,802	£5,202					£7,803		£809
Wolverhampton	£11,000	£5,000	£12,500	£5,000	£10,000	£2,500			£10,000	£2,500	
Average	£9,420	£4,147	£8,620	£3,655	£5,104	£1,832	£2,274	£2,473	£6,789	£2,029	£576

Appendix D

Updated to reflect 3.88% Pay Award for 2023/24 agreed in November 2023

Roles for which Coventry pays an SRA, level of SRA and ratio to basic allowance

Role	SRA	Ratio to Basic Allowance
Basic Allowance	£15,935	
Leader of the Council	£28,680	1.80
Deputy Leader of the Council	£20,710	1.30
Leader of the Opposition Group	£5,879	0.37
Deputy Leader of the Opposition Group	£2,940	0.18
Cabinet Member	£12,749	0.80
Deputy Cabinet Member	£4,333	0.27
Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee	£12,749	0.80
Chair of Scrutiny Boards	£7,971	0.50
Deputy Chair Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee	£3,190	0.20
Chairs of Planning Committee, Licensing and Regulatory Committee, and Audit and Procurement Committee	£7,971	0.50
Deputy Chairs of Planning Committee, Licensing and Regulatory Committee, and Audit and Procurement Committee	£3,190	0.20
Member of the Fostering Panel and the Adoption Panel	£3,190	0.20
Chair of Ethics Committee	£1,237	0.08
Co-opted member	£578	-
Lord Mayor	£36,919	-
Deputy Lord Mayor	£16,286	-