

**A Review  
of  
Members' Allowances  
for  
Wigan Council**

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**A Report by the  
Independent  
Remuneration Panel**

**Dr Declan Hall (Chair)  
Susan Giles  
Angela Harrison  
Martin Honor**

**April 2025**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wigan MBC IRP Recommendations: Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances 21st May 2025					
Post	Max No SRAs Rec'd	Basic Allowance	SRAs	Total per Member	SRA Totals
<b>Basic Allowance</b>					
All Members (75)		£14,822		£14,822	
<b>SRAs</b>					
Leader Total	1	£14,822	£56,153	£70,975	£56,153
Wigan Leader			£44,466		
Wigan Leader GMCA			£11,687		
Deputy Leader	1	£14,822	£28,905	£43,727	£28,905
Other Executive Members	6	£14,822	£20,037	£34,859	£120,222
Lead Members	8	£14,822	£6,612	£21,434	£52,896
Chair Licensing & Regulation Committees	1	£14,822	£13,355	£28,177	£13,355
Vice-Chair Licensing & Regulation Committees	1	£14,822	£3,476	£18,298	£3,476
Chair Planning Committee	1	£14,822	£13,355	£28,177	£13,355
Vice-Chair Planning Committee	1	£14,822	£3,476	£18,298	£3,476
Chairs Overview & Scrutiny Committees	4	£14,822	£8,905	£23,727	£35,620
Chair Audit, Governance & Standards Committee	1	£14,822	£8,905	£23,727	£8,905
Chairing a Standards Hearing	NA		£157 p/meeting		NA
<b>Opposition SRAs</b>					
Leader Main Opposition Group	1	£14,822	£8,905	£23,727	£8,905
Deputy Leader Main Opposition Group	NA	£14,822	£50 per Member > 14 Members	NA	
<b>Sub Totals</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>£1,111,650</b>			<b>£345,268</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>£1,456,918</b>

**The IRP also recommends that:****Where there are two Main Opposition Groups of equal size**

If there are two Main Opposition Groups of equal size then each Main Opposition Group Leader should be able to receive a Main Opposition Group Leader's SRA based on the following formula, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years:

- Main Opposition Group Leader's SRA (£8,905) ÷ by two = £4,453
- Plus £250 per Group Member

**SRAs considered but not recommended**

The following posts are not paid an SRA

- The Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- Leaders of Other Opposition Groups

**Maintaining the 1-SRA only rule and exceptions**

The Wigan Council Members' Allowances scheme maintains the one-SRA only rule, with the exception of when a Member chairs a Standards Hearings – not applicable to the Chair of the Audit, Governance and Standards Chair.

**The Co-optees' Allowance – the Parish (Standards) Co-optees (2)**

The two Parish Members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee continue to be able to claim a Co-optees' Allowance of £59 per half day or £118 per full day, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years

**The Audit Co-optees (2)**

The Co-optees' Allowance for the two (Independent) Co-opted Audit Members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, is reset at £1,500 per year, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.

**The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)**

The DCA should be maintained and claimable at the following maximum rates:

- Childcare: maximum hourly rate claimable at the National Living Wage
- Other care: maximum rate hourly claimable at the rate charged by the Council for the employment of a personal assistant for care for elderly or people with disabilities.

**Travel and Subsistence Allowances - Within the Authority**

The Basic Allowance continues to be deemed to cover all in-authority travel and subsistence costs.

**Travel and Subsistence Allowances - Outwith the Authority**

The current rates and terms and conditions for claiming Travel and Subsistence Allowances outwith the Authority are maintained.

**Other Issues – The Mobile Phone Allowance**

There is no change to the current Mobile Phone Allowance of £10 per month (net).

**Other Issues – Remuneration paid to Tenant Representatives appointed the Council's Housing Advisory Panel (HAP)**

The payment made to Tenant Representatives appointed to HAP is reset at £1,080 per year, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.

**Other Issues – Payments to Members of School Appeals Panels**

The remuneration for Members of School Appeals Panels are reset as follows:

- School Admissions Appeals Members £50 per day
- School Exclusions Appeals Members £75 per day

This recommended payment is inclusive of all expected preparatory work and travel unless an Appeals Panel Member travels from outwith the Council area in which case they should be able to claim travel expenses on the same basis as elected Members..

**Indexation**

The following indices are applied to the remuneration and allowances paid to Members of Wigan Council and other roles from the Council's Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years, up to the end of the municipal year 2028/29, the maximum length permitted by the 2003 Allowances Regulations:

- i. **Basic Allowance, SRAs (including those paid in accordance with the GMCA Order), Co-optees' Allowances and remuneration paid to the Tenant Representatives on HAP:**
  - 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; to be implemented from the start of the municipal year, for which it is applicable.
- ii. **Mileage Allowance (Outwith only):**
  - Members' mileage allowances rates indexed to HMRC AMAP rates.
- iii. **Subsistence Allowances (Outwith only):**

- The subsistence allowances should continue to be indexed to the same rates that are applicable to Officers.

iv. **The Dependants' Carers' Allowance:**

- Childcare rate: maximum hourly rate claimable indexed to the National Living Wage.
- Other care rate: maximum hourly rate claimable indexed to the hourly rate charged by the Council for the employment of a personal assistant for care for elderly or people with disabilities

**Implementation**

The new scheme of allowances based on the recommendations contained in this report is adopted from the date of the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025.

# **Independent Remuneration Panel:**

## **Review of Members' Allowances**

### **For**

### **Wigan Council**

**March 2025**

#### **The Regulatory Context**

1. This report is a synopsis of the deliberations and recommendations made by the statutory Independent Remuneration Panel (the IRP) appointed to provide advice to Wigan 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, arising out of the relevant provisions in the *Local Government Act 2000*, require all local authorities to maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (also known as an IRP) to review and provide advice to their respective Councils on Members' allowances.
3. Councils retain powers to determine their own Members' allowances, but they are required to convene their respective IRP and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their Members' Allowances scheme. Councils must 'pay regard' to their IRP's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances scheme.
4. In particular, the IRP has been reconvened under the 2003 Regulations [10. (5)], which states:

Where an authority has regard to an index for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances it must not rely on that index for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel established in respect of that authority on the application of an index to its scheme.

5. It is this mechanism, known as the '4 year rule', that ensures IRPs are convened at least every four years if a Council wishes to continue indexing their allowances. It provides an opportunity for IRPs to publicly scrutinise their Council's allowances schemes and enhance public accountability.

## Terms of Reference

6. The IRP was convened in accordance with the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations [10.(5)]. This Regulation requires Wigan Council to meet at least every four years to refresh authority for indexation. As per the previous review (March 2021) the following terms of reference were given to the IRP:

- I. The IRP is to make recommendations to the Council, following a review of Leader, Elected and Co-opted Member remuneration as to the appropriate level of remuneration. In its deliberations the IRP is required to make recommendations regarding:
  - i. The Basic Allowance to all Councillors and if applicable any expenses it should include;
  - ii. The scope and levels of Special Responsibility Allowances;
  - iii. The scope and level(s) of Co-optees' Allowances;
  - iv. The scope and levels of Travel and Subsistence Allowances, including applicable rates and terms and conditions by which they may be claimed;
  - v. The scope and levels of the Dependants' Carers' Allowance, including applicable rates and terms and conditions by which they may be claimed;
  - vi. Any applicable indices for allowances and how long they are to run for; and
  - vii. Any other issues that are brought to the IRP's attention.
- II. The IRP has also been asked to consider any appropriate SRAs payable in accordance with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Order 2011 (as amended 27 March 2015) which states (1.[2])

A Constituent Council may, in accordance with its own scheme of allowances, pay a special responsibility allowance to any member appointed by it to the GMCA in respect of duties and responsibilities undertaken as a member of the GMCA

- III. In reaching its recommendations, the IRP is asked to take the following in to account:
  - a. The size and standing of the Authority;
  - b. Remuneration of the 10 Greater Manchester Metropolitan Councils or public bodies within the region or nationally which the IRP believes to be comparative;
  - c. Interviews with a cross section of Members via personal interviews;
  - d. Written views of Members; and
  - e. Factual briefings on the Council from appropriate Officers.
- IV. The IRP has also specifically been asked to make recommendations on the following:
  - a. The SRA paid to Lead Members
  - b. The remuneration paid to Tenant Representatives appointed to the Council's Housing Advisory Panel
  - c. The Mobile Telephone Allowance
  - d. Independent Members appointed to School Appeals Panels/Exclusion Hearings

## The IRP

7. The IRP for this review the following were appointed to the IRP:
- Susan Giles:  
Independent Member of Standards for York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, employment background in NHS Corporate Governance, including advisor to remuneration panels at the NHS, is on the board of a number of charities, and a Co-optee on the Joint Audit Committee of the West Lancashire Police and Fire Commissioner
  - Dr Declan Hall:  
An independent consultant specialising in members' allowances and support and a former academic (political science) at the Institute of Local Government, The University of Birmingham.
  - Angela Harrison:  
Has 30 years' experience working in local authorities, a lawyer in the North West, formerly Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and the office of the Lancashire Police & Crime Commissioner and Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer at Preston City Council
  - Martin Honor:  
Retired, formerly employed by The Co-operative Bank as Community Banking National Relationship Manager; a board member of Douglas Valley Community Ltd.
8. The IRP was supported by Rachel Gibbons, Senior Democratic Services Officer, who was the organisational lead in facilitating the work of the IRP and generally supporting the IRP proceedings.

## The Review Process and Methodology

9. The IRP met at Wigan Town Hall on the following occasions:
- 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025
  - 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025
10. The meetings were in closed session to enable the IRP to meet with Members and receive factual briefings from Officers and conduct its deliberations in confidence.
11. A representative range of Members were invited to meet with the IRP and any Member not invited, but who wanted to meet with the IRP was accommodated. 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. There were 11 written submissions from Members received by the IRP. The questionnaire also had the methodological advantage of ensuring that all Members were being asked a common set of questions. The main point being was that all Members had at least one opportunity to exercise their voice during the review.



12. In compliance with the terms of reference the IRP met with a number of Officers for factual briefings on the Council and constitutional changes since the last review and to obtain an overview on the challenges facing the Council. For benchmarking purposes the IRP was cognizant of the range and levels of allowances paid in comparable local authorities, namely all 10 of the Greater Manchester Councils.
13. The full range of written information received and considered by the IRP is listed in the appendices as follows:
  - **Appendix 1:** List of information and evidence that was included in the Information Pack for IRP Members
  - **Appendix 2:** Members/Tenant Representative/Independent School Appeals Member who met with the IRP
  - **Appendix 3:** Officers who provided a factual briefing to the IRP
  - **Appendix 4:** Summary of benchmarking – all 10 Greater Manchester Councils

### **Key Messages: A more complex Local Government Environment**

14. A key theme that emerged from the representation received and the Officer factual briefings on the nature of the Council and the roles of Members was that the operating environment for local government is becoming more complex. Increasingly, the GMCA is impacting on the work of Members, particularly at the senior Member level but the wider membership not only now regularly sits on GMCA Committees and Panels but they also are feeling the impact of the GMCA at a local level as the GMCA continues to evolve. Devolution continues apace, which will also impact on the working relationships of all Members. Local government reorganisation will in all likelihood add to this complexity.
15. It is particularly noticeable that the new Labour national government has led to an enhanced dialogue with local government that particularly impacts on the work of leading Members. But all Members now need to engage in wider stakeholders and partners. Local government is no longer simply about the direct delivery of local services, there are a wider set of factors involved.
16. Another development that makes the working environment more complex is the rise and ubiquity of social media. It means that Members are more contactable and are contacted in many different ways as well as 24 hours per day. Unlike traditional contact with constituents, via letter and at Councillor Surgeries, contact by social media inherently requires almost an immediate response, or at the very least a prompt response. It also means that Members are more exposed to personal abuse and criticism.
17. The main observation drawn from the above discussion is that Members are doing more, in a more complex environment. In the representation received there was a strong view that the current level of allowances payable does not recognise these new realities.

### **Function of Allowances – An Enabler**

18. Representations were made to the IRP that argued that the current Basic Allowance and some (mainly executive) SRAs were on the low side. In particular, the Basic Allowance is not at a level that enables most people to be a Member without incurring personal sacrifice nor is it sufficient to 'attract' a wider range of people to stand for Council.
19. The IRP recognises that where a Member is in full time employment they either have to have a very understanding and flexible employer or work reduced hours. The Basic Allowance is not a substitute for a full time salary. The prime function of an allowances scheme is to provide support to Members (current and prospective) to enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. In English local government backbench Members are not designed to be full time roles. The Basic Allowance should allow those who are in employment to compensate for most of the unpaid time off work they have to take to fulfil their Councillor duties, although it is recognised that it does impact on future pension provision and in most cases career progression in an employed role. For leading Members the Basic Allowance and SRAs payable should enable them to serve as more or less full time Members without necessarily being financially attractive.
20. Nor does the IRP accept that allowances should be at such a level that they "attract" candidates for Council. Aside from the ethical issue of whether it is appropriate to attract people to be Members of the Council for the money, the reality is that if allowances did 'attract' people to stand and remain on the Council they would be at such a level that not only would they be difficult for the public to accept, but for Members themselves to accept.

### **Function of this Review – to address anomalies**

21. Regardless, even those representations received arguing that there was a case to increase the Basic Allowance and some SRAs also acknowledged that now was not the appropriate time to do so, with the economic pressures on the citizens of the Borough. It was simply not appropriate for the Members to receive increased allowances at this juncture.
22. Furthermore, it was recognised that the wider local government environment will continue to evolve. The full effects of continuing Devolution and local government reorganisation and its impact on increasing demands on Members are yet to be fully realised. Consequently, despite the codicils, the vast majority of the representations and other evidence received supported the view that the current level and scope of allowances paid to Members of Wigan Council do not require fundamental revision at this juncture. However, they will in all likelihood need a fundamental revision in the near future.
23. Thus, the main function of this review has been to address anomalies arising rather than undertake a fundamental revision of the allowances scheme. Consequently, the financial impact of the recommendations if accepted in full will be marginal.

### **The evidence considered: The Basic Allowance**

24. As a checking mechanism the IRP undertook a three-pronged process to test out the current Basic Allowance (£14,822) that consists of three points, namely:
- Recalibrating the Basic Allowance in accordance with the methodology set out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance
  - Benchmarking the current Basic Allowance against all the Greater Manchester Metropolitan Councils
  - Taking into account the representation received

### **Recalibrating the Basic Allowance for 2025/26**

25. The methodology used to arrive at the Basic Allowance is set out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance (paragraphs 67-69) which draws IRP's attention to the three variables that it is required to consider in arriving at a recommended Basic Allowance, namely:
- Time required to fulfil the roles associated with the Basic Allowance
  - The voluntary element of that time as not all work as a Member is remunerated, often known as the 'Public Service Discount' (PSD)
  - The rate for remuneration, in other words the worth of a Members' time.
26. The IRP did not receive any strong evidence supporting a revisiting of the Basic Allowance, but as a further check it 'recalibrated' the Basic Allowance by using the most recent data<sup>1</sup> available in assigning a value to the three variables utilised in arriving at the Basic Allowance.

#### The expected time input

27. The current Basic Allowance is based on an expected time input of 130 days per year. This is now out of date. The most recent data available, from the Councillors' Census 2022 by the Local Government Association (LGA) shows that Members of Metropolitan Councils who hold no positions of responsibility put in on average 23.3 hours per week, this translates into 150.8 days per year based on an eight hour working day. For recalibration purposes the IRP has adopted this figure of 150.8 days per year as it is in line with the average reported in the 2022 Councillor Census and the feedback received from Member representation.

#### The Public Service Discount

28. The applicable 'public service discount' (or PSD) was assessed at 35% going back to 2006; in other words 35% of the expected annual workload is not paid. The PSD is often conceptualised as the work that Members do on behalf of their ward and representing local communities and citizens. For a metropolitan Council a 35% PSD is in line with the normal range which is 30% - 35%. On this basis, the IRP has for recalibration purposes maintained the PSD at 35 per cent. Thus of the 150.8 days per year expected workload 35 per cent (or 52.8 days) is deemed voluntary leaving 98 remunerated days per year.

#### The rate of remuneration

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<sup>1</sup> The Basic Allowance is being recalibrated for 2020/21 rather than for 2021/22 as the most recent data on the rate for remuneration available is no later than November 2020.

29. In deciding the rate of remuneration the IRP originally adopted what was known as the 'Local Government Association (LGA) daily session' rate. Each year the LGA sent out an advisory circular to all Council Chief Executives and IRP Chairs that put a monetary value to the rate of remuneration. It had no legal standing but was issued as guidance to Panels by the LGA as part of their wider services and support to Councils. The LGA day rate at the time of the 2012 review was £152.77.<sup>2</sup>
30. However, for reasons primarily relating to changes in how average earnings are published and the fact that many IRPs felt it was too high, the LGA discontinued publishing the LGA day in 2012. In lieu of this advice IRPs have turned to a local rate for remuneration, typically the mean earnings of the residents of a Council. In other words, the common approach is now to base the calculation of the Basic Allowance on the mean earnings of those whom Members represent. For the purposes of recalibration the IRP has done the same and adopted £152.50 per day as the appropriate rate for remuneration. This figure is the mean gross daily earnings wage of all full time employees resident within Wigan.<sup>3</sup>

#### The formula for the recalibrated Basic Allowance

31. By applying the values at which the three variables have been assessed it produces a 'recalibrated' Basic Allowance as follows:
- (150.8 days per year workload minus 52.8 voluntary days+ = 98 remunerated day  
X £152.50 per day  
= £14,945
32. The recalibrated Basic Allowance suggests that the current Basic Allowance (£14,822) is not in need of revision. The difference between the current Wigan Council Basic Allowance and recalibrated Basic Allowance is so marginal as not to make a substantive difference.

#### **Benchmarking the Basic Allowance**

33. Benchmarking shows the current Wigan Council Basic Allowance (£14,822) is somewhat above the mean/median Basic Allowance of £13,284 and £12,083 respectively in the comparator Councils. As might be expected from the largest GM Council in the benchmarking group Manchester pays the highest Basic Allowance (£20,061), with the next highest being Tameside (£17,927).
34. It has long been the case that the benchmarking group mean Basic Allowance is somewhat lower than that paid in Wigan; it is one the larger GM Councils. Benchmarking does not present a compelling case to marginally reduce the Wigan Basic Allowance so it is on nearer to the mean/median for the following reasons:
- Wigan is the ninth largest metropolitan council.

<sup>2</sup> See LGAlert 62/10 "Members Allowances" 23 June 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Based on mean gross weekly salary for all full time employees resident in Wigan of £762.50 Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings (ASHE), Table 8.1a, Home Geography November 2024, when divided by five working days equals £152.50 per day

- Wigan pays few SRAs (currently a maximum of 24 out of 75 Members, not including GMCA related SRAs) compared to other Councils. The Wigan Basic Allowance includes duties for which an SRA is often paid elsewhere. Where a comparator Council pays a 'low' Basic Allowance more SRAs are typically paid, e.g. all Committee or Panel Vice-Chairs (such as in Rochdale and Trafford), sitting on licensing sub committees, area committees and adoption panels (such as in Oldham and Tameside), and Opposition Spokespersons and party group posts (such as in Bury and Trafford), thus enabling Members to 'top up' their Basic Allowance for what can be marginal additional workload and responsibilities.
- The current Basic Allowance is inclusive of all in-authority travel (see below)
- From 1 April 2014 all Members of English Councils were no longer permitted to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which is in effect a small pay cut for those elected Members who had joined the LGPS.<sup>4</sup>

### The Representation received

35. As a final check the IRP took cognisance of the representation received. As noted above, there was strong representation that argued the current Basic Allowance may well undervalue Members and the work they do. However, again noted above, this representation came with the codicil that now was not the time to revise the Basic Allowance, a more apt time to do it would be when the further impacts of Devolution and local government reorganisation became clear.

### The recommended Basic Allowance

36. **Bearing in mind the recalibrated Basic Allowance, benchmarking and the representations received the IRP recommends that the current Basic Allowance (£14,822) remains unchanged going forward subject to any annual indexation applied from date of the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### The Leader's SRA

37. Currently the Leader receives a combined SRA of £56,153 that is made up of two parts:
- Wigan Leader SRA £44,455
  - GMCA Board Member SRA £11,687

### The Wigan Leader SRA

38. The Leader's SRA (as Wigan Leader) £44,455 has been set at a multiple of three times the Basic Allowance in accordance with a methodology set out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 76). Benchmarking shows that the mean multiple (of the mean Basic Allowance) is also three. In other works the mean Leaders SRA is three times the mean Basic Allowance. Thus methodologically the current SRA for the Leader is exactly in line with peers. In terms of the mean SRA actually paid, which is £40,455, it shows

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<sup>4</sup> Ironically by devolving the local government function to the Scottish Parliament and Northern Irish and Welsh Assemblies councillors in these other UK nations continue to be members of the LGPS.

that the current SRA for the Leader is noticeably above the average, although it is not highest, which is Salford where the elected Mayor receives an SRA of £61,276, followed by Manchester Leader who receives an SRA of £50,061.

39. The IRP is not unduly concerned that the Leader's SRA is higher than the mean SRA for Leaders in the benchmarking group; the size of the authority, the additional workload of the Leader since the last review and the national dimension that the Leader brings to the role does more than justify such a difference. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, Wigan is one of the larger Metropolitan Councils thus it is only appropriate the Leader is remunerated appropriately.
40. The IRP has always been clear that being Leader of Wigan Council requires a full time commitment and certainly precludes employment in the normal sense. The Leader attends the Town Hall most days and even when not at the Council Offices the Leader has to be available to talk to or email Officers and other Members from early morning until late evening.
41. What has also changed since the previous review is the work of the Leader at a national level, partly driven the national/local government dialogue that is now being undertaken by the new national Labour government. The Leader is now in contact on an almost weekly basis to discuss such issues as the Local Government Settlement or on how to proceed on the Government's target for more social housing, which also has a GMCA angle.
42. Yet the IRP has not chosen to increase the Leader's SRA in Wigan. The increased workload is balanced by the benchmarking and the representation received that mainly argued that there was not a compelling case to increase the Leader's SRA at this juncture
43. **As such the IRP recommends that the Leader's SRA (as Wigan Leader) remains at £44,466 subject to any annual indexation applied from the date of the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **Recommendations under the GMCA Order 2011 – Leader's GMCA SRA**

44. In accordance with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Order 2011 as amended in March 2015 the IRP considered whether SRAs should be recommended to any Wigan Members appointed to the GMCA or its committees. It is the agreed policy of the GMCA as set out by the Order that any remuneration paid to GM Council appointees should be delivered via their home council allowances scheme, unless it can be paid directly. Previously, the IRP made recommendations for when a Wigan Member was appointed Chair of the GMCA Transport Committee, an appointment which was traditionally the case. This is no longer the case – so the IRP is not making a recommendation in this regard.

### Leader's SRA as a GMCA Board Member

45. Currently, the only other SRA (£11,687) paid to a Wigan Member on the GMCA is that paid to the Leader. The Leader is a full voting Member of the GMCA and while no longer chairing the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) does sit on its executive board. The Leader also has a Portfolio (Resources & Investment) at the GMCA, and it is an area of work that has increased since the last review as Devolution continues apace. Local government reorganisation will also in all likelihood enhance the role but the full impacts of this aspect are as yet unknown.
46. The IRP anticipated the continued roll out of the work of the Leader at the GMCA by recommending an SRA at the 2016 review. It further noted that only three other GM Councils pay such an SRA to their Leader for GMCA related duties as follows:
- Bury: £6,000
  - Rochdale: £5,879
  - Trafford: £10,634
47. It is further noted that the allowances schemes in Manchester and Oldham specifically state that the Leader's SRA takes into account their role on the GMCA. The fact that other allowances schemes in GM Councils do not mention a remuneration for their Leader on the GMCA may be down to the fact that they have not considered it as much as a deliberate omission.
48. The Leader's GMCA SRA has been set at 25 per cent of their SRA as Wigan Leader, albeit on a small benchmarking group the mean ratio in this regard is just over 21 per cent, so methodologically it is broadly in line with peers, albeit the highest SRA actually paid for being a GMCA Member.
49. Regardless, the work of the Leader on the GMCA has grown since the last review and will continue to do so, that much is sure. Yet again, no representation was received to suggest the GMCA SRA paid to the Leader of Wigan Council merited revision at this juncture. It was generally felt a ratio of 4:1(Wigan's Leader SRA: GMCA SRA) was appropriate.
50. **The IRP recommends that the SRA payable to the Leader under the amended GMCA Order is maintained at £11,687, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**
51. **These two recommendations give the Leader a combined SRA of £56,153.**
52. The IRP is making no other recommendation for SRAs under the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Order 2011. It is noted that the GMCA now has the powers to directly remunerate GM Council Members appointed directly to the GMCA Scrutiny and Audit Committees

### **Arriving at other SRAs - the Deputy Leader**

53. In recommending SRAs the IRP has always followed the approach laid out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 76) which states:

A good starting point in determining special responsibility allowances may be to agree the allowance which should be attached to the most time consuming post on the Council (this maybe the elected mayor or the leader) and pro rata downwards for the other roles which it has agreed ought to receive an extra allowance.

54. This is known as the 'pro rata' approach. The IRP has chosen to maintain this approach and adjusted the ratio for SRAs where there is a demonstrable case to do so.
55. Currently, the Deputy Leader receives an SRA of £28,905, which has been set at 65% of the (Wigan) Leader's SRA. Benchmarking shows that the mean SRA paid to Deputy Leaders in comparator Councils is £22,078, with a mean ratio of almost 55 per cent. Thus, in the comparative context the Deputy Leader's SRA is noticeably high both in the level payable and methodologically.
56. The Deputy Leader retains a portfolio (for Adult Social Care and Health) that requires the post holder to be one of the Council appointees to the Integrated Care Partnership. As such it is one of the largest portfolios. The Deputy Leader also has all the powers of the Leader in their absence, a function the Deputy Leader regularly fulfils.
57. The Deputy Leader is also the Leader's Deputy at the GMCA. No evidence was received to suggest the Deputy Leader's role at the GMCA merits remuneration under the GMCA Order. Whilst the Leader has had to concentrate on his policy remit at the GMCA and the devolution agenda in general, the Deputy Leader has had to step in to fill the gaps more than in the past. This is not to say that the workload and responsibility of the Leader has diminished in the Wigan context rather that between Wigan, the GMCA and the broader Northern Devolution agenda the demands on the Leader have increased to the extent so the Deputy Leader has had to handle some of the 'overflow.' To a large extent most Deputy Leaders of the Greater Manchester metropolitan Councils, at least will also have had to do this to a greater or lesser extent.
58. Nonetheless, based on the benchmarking and the representation received the IRP concluded that there was no compelling evidence to change the SRA for the Deputy Leader.
59. **The IRP recommends that the Deputy Leader's SRA remains at 65% of the Leader's (Wigan) SRA (£44,466) and paid at £28,905 subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **The Other Executive (Portfolio Holders) Members (6)**

60. The IRP considered whether there was merit in differentiating between the SRAs paid to Portfolio Holders according to the size of the Portfolios. In other words pay a higher SRA to those with the larger remits.
61. The IRP noted that as an almost universal rule other IRPs do not make this distinction and in the main Executive Portfolio Holders are paid an equal SRA. The reasons are both two-fold; first, is the problem of meaningful metrics - how to measure distinctions in between Portfolios? A Portfolio may have a large budgetary responsibility to deliver services but much of the spend could be routine while another Portfolio may have a smaller budgetary responsibility, but that spend may be more driven local priorities



rather than national directive which gives the 'smaller' Portfolio Holder greater discretion within their remit. Secondly, there is now a mechanism to even out glaring distinctions between Portfolios. The remit of a particular Portfolio is now the responsibility of the Leader and they can rebalance Portfolios if it was felt necessary. Consequently the IRP is not making a recommendation to pay differential SRAs to Executive Portfolio Holders.

62. The current SRA (£20,037) for the Executive Portfolio Holders has been set at 45% of the Leader's (Wigan) SRA. Benchmarking shows that the mean SRA paid to other Executive Members in the comparator Councils to be somewhat lower at £17,389, with a mean ratio of 43 per cent. However, this does not take into account those Councils that pay the maximum number of other Executive Members which is eight thus paying a higher total for the other Executive Members than is the case in Wigan. Finally there was no representation received that argued the SRAs paid to Portfolio Holders needed to be revised.
63. **Consequently the IRP recommends that the Executive Portfolio Holders' SRA remains at £20,037 subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **The Lead Members (8)**

64. The SRA for the Lead Members was established following a Supplementary Review in June 2017. Currently, they are paid an SRA of £6,612, that has been set at 33 per cent of the Executive Members SRA. Benchmarking shows the equivalent post is paid in eight out of the 10 GM Councils, with a mean SRA of £7,375 and a mean ratio of just over 42 per cent (of the mean SRA paid to other Executive Members).
65. There was some representation received questioning the merit of this SRA and whether it was justifiable. There is no statutory authority to appoint deputies to Executive Members with decision making powers. The IRP is still convinced of the significance of the role of Lead Member in that it merits an SRA. While they have no formal executive responsibilities and the role can be variable they do provide an important supportive role in that they are asked by their relevant Portfolio Holder to investigate on a particular issue within their remit and it is seen very much as a development role for future Executive Members. They can also chair Cabinet Working Groups. Their primary responsibility is to the Leader and respective Portfolio Holder. As such, the IRP received no representation or evidence that this SRA was not merited nor did it require revision.
66. **Consequently the IRP recommends that the Lead Members' SRA is maintained at 33 per cent of the Executive Member's SRA (£20,037) and paid at £6,612, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **Regulatory Committees: Chair of the Planning Committee**

67. The current SRA (£13,355) for the Chair of the Planning Committee has been set at 30% of the Leader's SRA. The mean SRA for Chairs of Planning Committees in the benchmarking group is £10,544, with a mean ratio of just over 26 per cent. Although Wigan pays the Chair of Planning the highest SRA to equivalent posts in the

benchmarking group, it is broadly on a par with that paid to Chairs of Planning in the other large GM Councils: Manchester (£12,646) and Trafford (£11,357).

68. Nonetheless, the Planning Committee remains an active one with 11 scheduled meetings per year, and depending on demand more meetings can be scheduled. It is a statutory committee exercising a quasi-judicial function that deals with what are often sensitive and occasionally high profile issues. The Chairman needs to understand planning legislation and be able to chair what can be raucous meetings. They are also subject to a much higher degree of public accountability and exposure than most other Chairmen and can be subject to a great deal of lobbying. The IRP received no evidence to suggest the current SRA required revisiting.
69. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Planning Committee remains at £13,355, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **Vice Chair of the Planning Committee**

70. Currently the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee receives an SRA of £3,476, that was originally set at 25 per cent of their Chair's SRA.<sup>5</sup> Benchmarking shows a mean SRA of £3,575 for Planning Vice Chairs and a mean ratio of just over one third, although only five out of the 10 GM Councils in the benchmarking group remunerate Planning Vice Chairs.
71. The IRP was content that this post did merit an SRA - regulatory committee timetables are driven by statute and in the main cannot be postponed or cancelled and the Vice Chairman is required to step in the absence of or where a conflict of interest arises for the Chairman. It is why the highest incidence of Vice-Chairs SRA in the benchmarking group is for the regulatory committees. Moreover the IRP received no evidence to suggest that the current SRA required revisiting for the Vice Chair of Planning.
72. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee remains at £3,476, subject to any annual indexation applied from Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committees**

73. The Licensing and Regulation Committees are two separate committees each with their own remit and schedule of meetings, but the membership of each committee is the same, they also have the same Chair and Vice-Chair. This would be the case regardless of the individuals who were Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

#### The Licensing Committee

74. The Licensing Committee deals with matters relating to the Licensing Act 2003 (which came into force on 24 November 2005) and essentially deals with the sale of alcohol and premises from which alcohol is sold, including any appeals against applications to vary licensing conditions, etc., e.g., extended licensing hours. The full committee meets

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<sup>5</sup> The current ratios may differ slightly due to differential rounding up/down through indexation

no more than once per year these days. Most of this work is actually carried out via Licensing Sub-Committees which has met on average three times a year over the past two years. The Chair of the Licensing Committee is always asked to chair these sub-committees in the first instance and in fact does actually chair the vast majority of them, with the Vice Chair stepping in when required, which is on average at least once a year over the past two years.

### The Regulation Committee

75. The Regulation Committee deals with other regulatory issues, entertainment, and other general licensing issues. It has 11 scheduled meetings per year but the majority of these are cancelled due to lack of business. The Regulation Committee can establish Sub-Committees to hear appeals but over the past two years there have not been any held.
76. Currently, the Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committee receives an SRA of £16,494, which has been set at 37 per cent of the Leader's (Wigan) SRA, which was arrived at by amalgamating the previous SRAs paid the respective separate Chairs of each committee with an efficiency or synergy discount applied, this explains the anomalous ratio of the SRA being 37% of the Leader's SRA. It is also the highest non-executive role within the Council. Benchmarking shows that the mean SRA paid to Chairs of Licensing Committees is substantially less at £10,003, with a mean ratio of just under 25 per cent. In fact, the Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committees is the highest paid equivalent role in the benchmarking group and the most out of line when benchmarked.
77. The original reason why it was set so high originally was to recognise the dual nature of the role. Moreover, at the time there was a greater workload with the full Regulation Committee meeting on most of its scheduled dates. Moreover, there were more Licensing Sub-Committees, meeting on average 8-10 times per year with a couple of Regulation Sub-Committees per year. This is no longer the case.
78. The IRP concluded that this level of SRA for the Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committee is now an anomaly. In fact, over recent years the Chair of this Committee is not chairing the same amount of meetings (including Sub-Committees) as the Chair of the Planning Committee. However, the potential remains that there could be an uplift in the number of Sub-Committee meetings albeit not on the level as when the SRA was originally set as the work of the Sub-Committees under the 2003 Licensing Act has now settled down.
79. Nonetheless, the IRP could see no reason why the SRA for the Chair of Licensing and Regulation Committee should be any higher than that paid to the Chair of the Planning Committee (£13,355). Moreover, in the representation received this view was generally supported. This SRA would still leave the Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committee the highest paid equivalent role across the 10 GM Councils.
80. **Consequently the IRP recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committees is reset at 30 per of the Leader' (Wigan) SRA (£44,455) and on a par with the Chair of Planning, which is £13,355, subject to any annual indexation applied from Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

## The Vice Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committees

81. Currently the Vice Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committee receives an SRA of £4,123, which has been set at 25 per cent of their Chair's current SRA. Benchmarking shows a mean SRA for this role of £3,233, with a mean ratio of just over 32 per cent. However, it is also noted that only seven out of the 10 GM Councils remunerate such a role. Where it is not remunerated it is typically because the Licensing Vice Chair is not necessarily expected to have a role in chairing Licensing Sub-Committees, which is the case in Wigan.
82. The IRP received no evidence to alter the ratio (in relation to the recommended SRA (£13,355) for the Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committee, they are expected to Chair Licensing Sub-Committees when the Chair is unable to and in fact they do so at least once a year, with the potential to chair more if there is an uplift in Licensing Sub-Committee hearings. By maintaining the SRA at this ratio and setting it on a par with the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee, it equates to £3,476.
83. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Vice-Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committees is reset on a par with the recommended SRA for the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee and paid at £3,476, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

## Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (4)

84. Currently, the Chairs of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees each receive an SRA of £8,905, which has been set at 20% of the Leader's (Wigan) SRA. Benchmarking shows that the mean SRA for equivalent posts is £9,192, with a mean ratio of just over 22 per cent. Thus in terms of the level payable and the methodologically the current SRA is generally on a par with peers.
85. The IRP was informed that Overview and Scrutiny will in the future make use of Task and Finish Groups which the Overview and Scrutiny Chair may well be expected to take a leading role. However, that point is yet to be reached. The IRP received no evidence or representation to suggest that their current SRAs required revisiting.
86. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Chairs of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees remains at £8,905, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

## The Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

87. Currently, the Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees do not receive an SRA. The IRP received some representation that they may merit one, largely on the grounds that an SRA is paid to the Vice Chairs of the Planning and Licensing and

Regulation Committees so it should be the same for the Vice Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

88. The IRP views the roles of the Vice Chairs of the Planning and Licensing and Regulation Committees differently, they either are expected to chair Licensing Sub-Committees or regularly have to stand in for the Planning Chair. This is not the case for the Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The IRP was informed that the Vice Chairs might be expected to have a role in future Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups, but that point has yet to be arrived at and experience of actual practice is yet to be gained.
89. **The IRP is not recommending that an SRA is paid to the Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

### **The Chair of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**

90. Currently the Chair of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee receives an SRA of £8,905, which was set at 20% of the Leader's (Wigan) SRA at the time of the 2016 review. It was done in advance of the merger of the Audit and Governance and Standards Committees.
91. The benchmarked mean SRA for the equivalent post is £7,755, with a mean ratio of just over 19 per cent, thus while the level payable is slightly above peers it is methodologically in line comparatively. However, it is noted that two GM Councils (Oldham and Trafford) separately pay an SRA to their Chair of Standards, which puts the slightly above average SRA for the Wigan Council Chair of Audit, Governance and Standards in more comparable context.
92. Nonetheless, the IRP is content with the current SRA for the Chair of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee as the standards aspect of the work of the committee is not significant these days. Moreover, there was no representation to suggest this SRA required revision.
93. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee remains at £8,905, subject to any annual indexation applied from Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **Chairing a Standards Hearing**

94. Currently, when a Member chairs a Standards Hearing, they are paid an SRA of £127 per meeting. It is paid on an ad hoc basis as Standards Hearings occur so infrequently. In fact there have been no Standards Hearings in the past three year. Nevertheless, the potential to chair a Standards hearing does exist so this provision is appropriate. A Standards hearing Chair can be involved with not insignificant preparation/reading beforehand.
95. However, the IRP noted that this SRA has remained the same since it was introduced in 2021 and was based on the rate of remuneration that it was utilised in arriving at the recalibrated Basic Allowance at that time. Namely the average daily earnings of all £127 which was based on the mean gross daily earnings wage of all full time employees resident within Wigan. Consequently, the SRA concluded that it was only equitable to

reset this SRA at the 2024 equivalent which is £156.50 per day, which the IRP has rounded up to £157.

96. **The IRP recommends that when a Member chairs a Standards Hearing that the SRA they are paid is reset at £157 per meeting, subject to any annual indexation applied from Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years. This SRA is also intended to recognise reading and preparation time so should be paid regardless of the length of meeting. This SRA should also not be subject to the 1-SRA only rule and can be paid if and when in the unlikely event a Standards Hearings is not chaired by the Chairman of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.**

### **Main Opposition Group Leader**

97. Currently, the SRA for the Main Opposition Group Leader is based on two elements. A standard SRA of £2,226 (5% of the Leader's – Wigan – SRA) plus £540 per Group Member. At present the Main Opposition (Independent) Group has six members so the variable element is £3,240, which when added to the standard element (£2,226) equates to the current SRA of £5,466 that is paid to the Leader of the Main (Independent) Opposition Group. This equates to 23 per cent of the Leader's (Wigan) SRA.
98. Benchmarking shows that the mean SRA paid to Main Opposition Leaders is £11,925, with a mean ratio of 29.5 per cent. The higher mean SRA is largely a function of larger Main Opposition Groups elsewhere. Regardless, the SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group is wildly out of line of comparable peers.
99. The IRP concluded that the current methodology in arriving at the SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group was outmoded. It received representation that there is a role for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group regardless of the size of the group. The onus is on them to provide the principal challenge to the controlling group. As such, the IRP concluded that a fixed SRA was more appropriate. In settling upon an appropriate SRA the SRA felt that it should be the equivalent of the recommended SRA for the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which is £8,905. This level of SRA would still leave the Leader of the Main Opposition Group on Wigan Council the lowest paid Main Opposition Group Leader in the benchmarking group.
100. **The IRP recommends that the method used in arriving at the SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group is discontinued. It should be reset at a fixed amount on a par with the recommended SRA for the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which is 20 per cent of the Leader's (Wigan) SRA, and equates to £8,905, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group – with 15 Group Members**

101. Currently the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group does not receive an SRA. However, in the 2016 review the IRP in order to future proof the scheme it recommended that if the size of the Main Opposition Group was to dramatically increase in size, set at a minimum of 20% of the Council membership or 15 Members, then the Main Deputy

Opposition Deputy Group should receive an SRA. It is at this point the group management and council business roles become significantly larger rather than the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition simply supporting their Group Leader. If the qualifying criteria is met then the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would receive £50 per group Member. The IRP received no evidence or representation to change this approach.

102. **The IRP recommends that the allowances scheme continues to include provision for an SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group if the Group has a minimum of 15 Members. The SRA is to be paid at £50 per Group Member subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **Leaders of Other Opposition Groups**

103. At the time of writing, there is currently one Other Opposition Group, the Independent Network consisting of four Members. This Group Leader does not receive an SRA. No evidence or representation was received for the IRP to alter this situation.
104. **The IRP is not making a recommendation for an SRA in regards to the Leaders of the Other Opposition Groups.**

### **Where there are two Main Opposition Groups of equal size**

105. **The IRP further recommends that if there are two Main Opposition Groups of equal size then each Main Opposition Group Leader should be able to receive a Main Opposition Group Leader's SRA based on the following formula, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years:**

- **Main Opposition Group Leader's SRA (£8,905) ÷ by two = £4,453**
- **Plus £250 per Group Member**

### **Maintaining the 1-SRA only rule and exceptions**

106. Currently, the Wigan Council allowances scheme specifies that a Member can only be paid one SRA regardless of the number of remunerated posts they may hold. The exception to this is where a Member (except the Chair) chairs a Standards Hearing. It does not apply to the Leader's remuneration as they are paid a single SRA made up of two parts. The 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations do not limit the number of SRAs a Member may receive.
107. Nevertheless, it is common for authorities to have a 'One SRA only' rule set out in their allowances scheme. The prime reason for this rule is that it can create a lack of transparency in the allowances scheme. If a Member receives more than one SRA, the public are unable to ascertain their true level of remuneration by a reading of the Members' Allowances scheme. It can also lead to (and in some councils has led to) a

situation whereby the highest remunerated Member is not necessarily the Leader, an anomalous situation which does not meet the 'feel fit and fair' test.

108. In general, in the representation received there was support to continue the one-SRA only. As such the IRP concluded that it should be maintained and set out in the Members' Allowances scheme. **The IRP recommends the Wigan Council Members' Allowances scheme maintains the one-SRA only rule, with the exception of when a Member chairs a Standards Hearings – not applicable to the Chair of the Audit, Governance and Standards Chair.**

### **The Co-optees' Allowance – Audit, Governance & Standards Committee Co-optees (2+2)**

#### The Parish (Standards) Co-optees (2)

109. There is provision for two Parish Council Co-opted Members on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, who sit on a Standards Hearing panel if it deals with a complaint against a Parish Councillor. They are eligible to claim £59 per half day or £118 per full day. The IRP received no evidence or representation to revise this Co-optees' Allowance.
110. **The IRP recommends that the two Parish Members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee continue to be able to claim a Co-optees' Allowance of £59 per half day or £118 per full day, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years**

#### The Audit Co-optees (2)

111. The Council also appoints two Co-optees to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee specifically in relation to assist with the Committee's Audit function. They are recruited and appointed on the basis that they have particular financial and audit skills and knowledge. They are full members of the committee. Currently, they each are paid a Co-optees' Allowance of £1,336 per year.
112. The IRP heard that there have been issues recruiting these Audit Co-optees. The recruitment issues may not necessarily down to the level of Co-optees' Allowance payable but nonetheless the IRP concluded that these Co-optees merited an increase, which may go some way to ease recruitment of those with the relevant knowledge and expertise required. In settling upon an appropriate level the IRP was guided by the setting it as a proportion of the recommended Basic Allowance (£14,822), namely at 10 per cent and rounding it up to £1,500 per year.
113. **Thus, the IRP recommends that the Co-optees' Allowance for the two (Independent) Co-opted Audit Members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, is reset at £1,500 per year, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)**



114. There was general acceptance in the representation received that the DCA should be maintained. It is also almost universally paid in other local authorities. While no issues were raised with the Panel regarding the DCA it is noted that it has not been claimed for a number of years despite a number of Members being eligible to claim it. The IRP understands that there may be reluctance on the part of eligible Members to claim the DCA as it appears as a published expense against a Members' name in the annual statutory publication of remuneration and reimbursements received by each Member.
115. The IRP takes this opportunity to point out that this allowance was given recognition in statute and is specifically designed to reduce a potential barrier to being an elected Member for those with caring responsibilities. The IRP suggests that if it is known that a Member has caring responsibilities then the DCA is specifically brought to their attention. It should be also pointed out that the approved duties for which this allowance may be claimed is governed by statute.
116. **The IRP recommends that the DCA should be maintained and claimable at the following maximum rates:**
- **Childcare: maximum hourly rate claimable at the National Living Wage**
  - **Other care: maximum rate hourly claimable at the rate charged by the Council for the employment of a personal assistant for care for elderly or people with disabilities.**

#### **Travel and Subsistence Allowances - Within the Authority**

117. At the time of the 2016 review the IRP recommended that the right of Members to claim in-authority travel and subsistence be discontinued with the Basic Allowance being deemed to be sufficient to cover the largely marginal expenses involved vis-à-vis the administrative cost. Representation was received that this discriminated against those Members who lived at the extremities of the Borough and/or had more in-authority meetings to attend than others.
118. While the IRP had some sympathy to this view it also noted that the Basic Allowance and SRAs were generally above the benchmarked mean and that accounts for a large part of the marginal cost involved by attending in-authority meetings. It further noted that it is almost the universal practice amongst the benchmarked councils to include in-authority travel and subsistence within the Basic Allowance. Also, some of the meetings cited in the representation received would not have met the definition of an approved duty thus not eligible to be able to claim travel allowances. Finally, it is noted that some meetings are now held in Leigh so the need to travel for Leigh Members has been lessened.
119. **Therefore, the IRP recommends that the Basic Allowance continues to be deemed to cover all in-authority travel and subsistence costs.**

#### **Travel and Subsistence Allowances - Outwith the Authority**

120. It is a different context when a Member has to travel outwith the Authority to represent the Council at regional and national meetings or attend conferences. In these cases Members are incurring expenses that are beyond 'incidental' and are not typically incurred through a Member's routine work. The IRP received no evidence to change the current rates and conditions by which the Travel and Subsistence Allowances may be claimed outwith the Authority.
121. **The IRP recommends that the current rates and terms and conditions for claiming Travel and Subsistence Allowances outwith the Authority are maintained.**

### **Other Issues – The Mobile Phone Allowance**

122. Similarly, in the supplementary review (November 2019) the IRP recommended that the Council discontinue the direct provision of mobile phones and in its stead Members should receive a Mobile Telephone Allowance of £10 per month (net) for use of their own personal mobile phones for Council related calls. The IRP said it would revisit this issue.
123. The IRP received some representation that £10 per month was now on the low side. However, the IRP noted that these days an acceptable package can be purchased and thus concluded that there was not a strong case to alter the current Mobile Phone Allowance of £10 per month.
124. **The IRP is recommending no change to the current Mobile Phone Allowance of £10 per month (net).**

### **Other Issues – Remuneration paid to Tenant Representatives appointed the Council's Housing Advisory Panel (HAP)**

125. In a supplementary review (November 2019) the IRP recommended that the Tenant Representatives appointed the Council's Housing Advisory Panel (HAP) should be paid an allowance of £600 per year, increased to £900 per year at the time of the 2021 Review. It was by no means designed to provide a recompense for the meetings/training sessions that Tenant Representatives are required to attend but more of a means to attract candidates as there were issues in getting tenant representatives to put themselves forward. It was an issue the IRP said it would revisit.
126. The IRP was informed that by and large the payment of £900 per year had addressed the issue of recruitment. It did however affect particular benefits that some Tenant Representatives received but this is an issue outside the remit of the IRP apart from pointing out that it is the choice of any individual Tenant Representative whether to claim the payment or not.
127. More pertinently for the IRP there was representation that the £900 current payment is a long way short of recognising the time commitment required from the Tenant Representatives appointed to HAP. In particular, the HAP continues to evolve and develop with a corresponding increase in tenants voices and that they are doing more work than ever such as getting involved in focus groups and individual representatives taking on thematic issues. Their role has also become more important now that the

Council has taken back control of social housing. There was general agreement in the representation received that the contribution of HAP Tenant Representatives was important. Finally, the IRP noted that their remuneration has remained the same since 2021.

128. As such, the IRP concluded that the Tenant Representatives on HAP merited an increase in their remuneration. In settling upon an appropriate level the IRP decided that if it had have been indexed from 2021 it would now have increased from £75 per month to at least £90 per month, or £1,080 per year.
129. **The IRP recommends that the payment made to Tenant Representatives appointed to HAP is reset at £1,080 per year, subject to any annual indexation applied from the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years.**

### **Other Issues – Payments to Members of School Appeals Panels**

130. The IRP has been asked to make recommendations on the payments made by the Council to the (independent) appointees it is required to make to its School Appeals Panels. The IRP notes that this function formally falls with the remit of statutory IRPs. The School Admission Appeals Code (1<sup>st</sup> October 2022), which sets out the mandatory requirements and statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities and admission appeals panels states:

The rate of payment for community and voluntary controlled schools is set by the local authority which must have regard to the recommendations of its independent remuneration panel.

131. Currently a Member who sits on a School Appeals Panel receives £25 per day in lieu of being able to claim expenses, regardless of which type of Panel they sit on. There are two different types of School Appeals Panels:

- School Admission Appeals:  
These deal with appeals against Council decisions on school admissions decisions. They mostly take place around the time of year that school admission decisions are made.
- School Exclusion Hearings:  
These deal with appeals against pupils who have been excluded from a particular school. They can take place throughout the year.

132. The IRP heard that there are some problems recruiting independent Members for the School Appeals Panels. Moreover, it also heard that School Exclusions Hearing Panels were more in-depth and involved than School Admissions Appeals Panels. Consequently, the IRP has decided to reset this remuneration on a differential basis, namely, £50 per day for School Admissions Appeals Panel Members and £75 per day for School Exclusion Appeals Members, inclusive of preparatory work and travel expenses unless a Member travels from outside the area of Wigan Council.
133. **The IRP recommends that the remuneration for Members of School Appeals Panels are reset as follows:**

- **School Admissions Appeals Members** £50 per day
- **School Exclusions Appeals Members** £75 per day

134. **This recommended payment is inclusive of all expected preparatory work and travel unless an Appeals Panel Member travels from outwith the Council area in which case they should be able to claim travel expenses on the same basis as elected Members..**

## **Indexation**

135. Historically, the IRP has always recommended that the main allowances are indexed to the same annual percentage cost of living increase that Officers receive. It is known as the 'NJC' index, as it is based on the annual cost of living percentage increase as agreed each year by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Staff. However, an issue in recent years has arisen in that the NJC has agreed a flat rate across the board salary increase for all job grades. This has resulted in differential percentage uplifts depending on the particular Spinal Column Point (SCP) assigned to a specific job grade. The Council has addressed this in the past three years by specifically linking the indexation of allowances to SCP 43 (the highest grade). In the context of an across the board flat rate increase the percentage uplift at SCP 43 will always be the lowest. As such, utilising SCP 43 as the reference point for indexation it will ensure that Members are not getting a higher uplift than any staff and as the lowest percentage uplift it is robust as it cannot be seen as excessive.
136. It is also the most common index that is utilised across UK local government. It is noted that all the GM Councils index their allowances to the NJC index, with six of them specifying that the relevant reference points is SCP 43. The IRP received no evidence to change this situation.
137. **The IRP recommends that the following indices are applied to the remuneration and allowances paid to Members of Wigan Council and other roles from the Council's Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for the next 4 years, up to the end of the municipal year 2028/29, the maximum length permitted by the 2003 Allowances Regulations:**
- v. **Basic Allowance, SRAs (including those paid in accordance with the GMCA Order), Co-optees' Allowances and remuneration paid to the Tenant Representatives on HAP:**
    - 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; to be implemented from the start of the municipal year, for which it is applicable.
  - vi. **Mileage Allowance (Outwith only):**
    - Members' mileage allowances rates indexed to HMRC AMAP rates.
  - vii. **Subsistence Allowances (Outwith only):**
    - The subsistence allowances should continue to be indexed to the same rates that are applicable to Officers.

viii. **The Dependants' Carers' Allowance:**

- Childcare rate: maximum hourly rate claimable indexed to the National Living Wage.
- Other care rate: maximum hourly rate claimable indexed to the hourly rate charged by the Council for the employment of a personal assistant for care for elderly or people with disabilities

**Implementation**

138. **The IRP recommends that the new scheme of allowances based on the recommendations contained in this report is adopted from the date of the Councils' Annual Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025.**

## APPENDIX ONE - Information reviewed by the IRP

1. IRP Terms of Reference
2. Wigan Council Members' Members Allowances Scheme 2024/25
3. Wigan Council Statutory Publication of Members' Allowances & Expenses received 2023/24
4. Independent Remuneration Panel, Review of Allowances, March 2021 Report
5. Council Report and Minutes on March 2021 Report, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021
6. IRP, Review of SRAs for Members appointed to the Greater Manchester Transport Committee, to Tenants Representatives on the Housing Advisory Panel and the Mobile Phone Allowance – A Supplementary Report, November 2019
7. Council Report and Minutes, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – Supplementary Report
8. Wigan Council Committee Structure Diagram including political makeup of Council
9. Schedule of Council Meetings 2024/25
10. Extracts from Wigan Council Constitution, including terms of reference
  - a. Role and Function of the Mayor
  - b. Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee
  - c. The Executive
  - d. Regulatory and other Committees
11. Committee Membership and who chairs them
12. Copy of Questionnaire sent to all Councillors, including all replies (X 12)
13. New Council Constitution: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances, Department of Communities and Local Government, May 2006
14. Local Government Association, summary of hours worked (Mean Per Week/Type of Council) by Councillors, Census of Councillors 2022
15. NJC for Local Government Services Pay Increase 2024/25, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024
16. Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 1021, *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations* 1st May 2003
17. Office of National Statistics (ONS), Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Wigan Mean Weekly Pay - Gross (£) - for all full time employees November 2024, (£676.600), Table 8.1a Home Geography

18. List of Meetings (2022/23 and 2023/24) Licensing Sub Committees and Standards Hearings and who chaired them
19. Role Profile, Tenant Representatives on the Housing Advisory Panel
20. Admission Appeals and Exclusion Hearings Panel – Member role profile, terms of reference and number of meetings 2022/23 and 2023/24
21. Benchmarking data - Allowance Schemes 10 Greater Manchester Metropolitan Councils
22. List of Wigan Council, outside appointments for Members
23. Copy of presentation by Declan Hall (Chair of Panel): Reviewing Allowances: The Wigan Council remuneration model, regulatory requirements, issues and approaches
24. The School Admission Appeals Code (1<sup>st</sup> October 2022)

**APPENDIX TWO - Members who met with the IRP**

Cllr K. Anderson:	Chair of Licensing & Regulation Committees (Labour)
Cllr D. Anderton:	Portfolio Holder for Police, Crime & Civil Contingencies (Labour)
Cllr P. Blay:	Vice Chair of Committee Licensing Committees Member (Labour)
Cllr A. Bullen:	Backbencher (Labour)
Cllr M. Callaghan: <sup>6</sup>	Vice Chair Confident Council Scrutiny Committee (Labour)
Cllr K. Cunliffe:	Deputy Leader of Council/Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care (Labour)
Cllr J. Fish:	Backbench Member (Community Independents Alliance)
Cllr J. Harding:	Vice Chair of Planning Committee (Labour)
Cllr Y. Klieve:	Lead Member for District Centres & Night Time Economy (Labour)
Cllr D. Molyneux (MBE):	Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Regeneration & GMCA Board Member for Resources & Investment
Cllr P. Prescott:	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environmental Services & Transport (Labour)
Cllr C Rigby:	Chairman of the Audit, Governance & Standards Committee (Labour)
Cllr E. Smethurst:	Chair of Confident Council Scrutiny Committee (Labour)
Cllr J. Watson:	Group Leader Independent Network Opposition Group

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<sup>6</sup> Prior to interviewing Cllr M. Callaghan, Martin Honour made a declaration of interest as they both serve on Board of Douglas Valley Company LTD



## **Other Representatives**

In accordance with the IRP terms of reference the IRP was interviewed:

Tom Dalton: Tenant Representative on Housing Advisory Panel

Isobel MacDonald- Davies School Admission Appeal Panel Member

**APPENDIX Three - Officers who provided factual briefing to the IRP**

Alison McKenzie-Folan:	Chief Executive
James Winterbottom:	Director – Strategy
Sarah Johnston:	Director – Finance & Legal
John McDonald:	Assistant Director – Finance
Diane Adshead:	Democratic Services Manager
Nick Higham:	Member Development Manager

## APPENDIX Four - Benchmarking

BM1 Wigan BM Group - 10 GM Mets: BA + Exec + Scrutiny SRAs (2024/25 unless indicated)									
Comparator Council	Basic Allowance	Leader or Elected Mayor	Leader Total	Deputy Leader(s)	Executive Members	Assistant or Deputy Execs	Chair Main O&S	Chairs/Lead Scrutiny	V/Chairs Scrutiny
Bolton (23/24)	£11,848	£31,989	£43,837	£19,104	£8,665			£6,089	
Bury	£11,954	£35,862	£47,816	£18,828	£16,138	£2,421	£8,965	£8,965	
Manchester	£20,061	£50,061	£70,122	£21,056	£21,056	£8,426		£12,646	
Oldham	£12,212	£43,188	£55,400	£25,645	£21,982	£9,159		£10,991	
Rochdale (21/22)	£11,349	£33,516	£44,865	£16,758	£15,082	£3,016		£8,379	
Salford (23/24)	£12,478	£61,276	£73,754	£25,897	£16,550	£12,078		£10,068	£3,263
Stockport (23/24)	£10,717	£32,151	£42,868	£17,683	£16,075			£6,430	
Tameside	£17,927	£39,588	£57,515	£25,812	£22,081	£9,176	£11,577	£10,526	£3,509
Trafford (23/24)	£10,467	£32,448	£42,915	£21,091	£16,224	£8,112		£8,923	£2,677
<b>Wigan</b>	<b>£14,822</b>	<b>£44,466</b>	<b>£59,288</b>	<b>£28,905</b>	<b>£20,037</b>	<b>£6,612</b>		<b>£8,905</b>	
Mean	£13,384	£40,455	£53,838	£22,078	£17,389	£7,375		£9,192	£3,150
Median	£12,083	£37,725	£51,608	£21,074	£16,387	£8,269		£8,944	£3,263
Highest	£20,061	£61,276	£73,754	£28,905	£22,081	£12,078		£12,646	£3,509
Lowest	£10,467	£31,989	£42,868	£16,758	£8,665	£2,421		£6,089	£2,677
Mean Ratios	Leader = 3 X BA	100%		54.6%	43.0%	42.4%		22.7%	34.3%
Wigan Ratios	Leader = 3 X BA	100%		65%	45%	33%		20%	

BM2 Wigan BM Group - 10 GM Mets: Regulatory SRAs (24/25 unless indicated)								
Comparator Council	Chair of Planning	V/Chair of Planning	Chair of Licensing	V/Chair Licensing	Chairs Liquor Licensing Panels/Subs	Chair of Audit &/or Governance	V/Chair Audit	Chair Standards
Bolton (23/24)	£8,321		£7,875	£2,565				
Bury	£8,965		£8,965			£8,965		
Manchester	£12,646	£4,218	£12,646	£4,218				
Oldham	£10,991		£10,991			£2,415		£762
Rochdale (21/22)	£11,172		Inc in Planning	£2,521		£8,379		
Salford (23/24)	£10,068	£3,263	£10,068	£3,263		£10,068	£3,263	
Stockport (23/24)	£8,038		£4,823		£3,858	£3,858		
Tameside	£10,526	£3,509	£6,809	£2,536	£6,809	£10,526	£3,509	
Trafford (23/24)	£11,357	£3,407	£11,357	£3,407		£8,923	£2,677	£2,434
<b>Wigan</b>	£13,355	£3,476	£16,494	£4,123		£8,905		Inc in Audit
Mean	£10,544	£3,575	£10,003	£3,233	£5,334	£7,755	£3,150	
Median	£10,759	£3,476	£10,068	£3,263	£5,334	£8,914	£3,263	
Highest	£13,355	£4,218	£16,494	£4,218	£6,809	£10,526	£3,509	
Lowest	£8,038	£3,263	£4,823	£2,521	£3,858	£2,415	£2,677	
Mean Ratios	26.1%	33.9%	24.7%	32.3%		19.2%	40.6%	
Wigan ratios	30%	26%	37%	25%		20%		

BM3 Wigan BM Group - 10 GM Mets: Opposition & Other & GMCA SRAs (2024/25 unless indicated)								
Comparator Council	Main Opposition Leader	Main Opposition Deputy Leader	Other Opposition Group Leaders	Area Chairs	CA Leader's SRA	CA Transport Committee	CA SRA - Other	Other SRAs/Comments
<b>Bolton (23/24)</b>	£10,741	£4,833	£2,991				GM Pension Fund Mbr £1,460	Chair Bolton Cares Steering Committee £85,494
<b>Bury</b>	£11,834	£4,734	£5,917		£6,000	£3,000	GM WDA Mbr £1,500	Deputy Leader Minor Opposition Group £2,072
<b>Manchester</b>	£17,706	£5,060	£5,060		Inc in SRA			Mbr on Adoption Panel £6,785, City Centre Spokesperson + Mbr on Fostering Panel £8,426, Mbrs Licensing £635
<b>Oldham</b>	£18,318	£7,327	£5,495	£7,327	Inc in SRA	£4,392		Chairs H&WB + Oldham Care & Support Company £10,991, Deputy Area Chair £1,465
<b>Rochdale (21/22)</b>	£11,731		£1,676	£8,379	£5,879	£4,182	Mbrs WDA £4,162	Chair Employment Committee £8,379, Mbrs Adoption & Fostering Panels £1,676
<b>Salford (23/24)</b>	£10,068		£10,068	£3,240				Bee Network Representatives £5,847
<b>Stockport (23/24)</b>	£9,645		£2,093	£4,823				Chairs Scrutiny W/Gs £1,286, ICT Allowance £338
<b>Tameside</b>	£12,381		£2,536	£10,526		£3,825	Mbr GM WDA £2,100	Chair Council Business £12,382, V/Chairs Licensing Subs £2,536, Area V/Chairs £3,509, Standards Committee £110 p/meeting > 5 attended, ICT allowance £250
<b>Trafford (23/24)</b>	£11,357	£3,407	£3,264		£10,634			Chair + V/Chair Employment Committee £8,112/£2,434, Opposition Shadow Exec Mbrs £2,272, DCC Mbr Travel Allowance £499
<b>Wigan</b>	£5,466				£11,687			
<b>Mean</b>	£11,925	£5,072	£4,344	£6,859	£8,550	£3,850		
<b>Median</b>	£11,544	£4,833	£3,264	£7,327	£8,317	£4,004		
<b>Highest</b>	£18,318	£7,327	£10,068	£10,526	£11,687	£4,392		
<b>Lowest</b>	£5,466	£3,407	£1,676	£3,240	£5,879	£3,000		
<b>Mean Ratios</b>	29.5%	43%	10.7%	17.0%	21.1%	9.5%		
<b>Wigan Ratios</b>	12%				26%			