

A Review of
Special Responsibility Allowances
For
Members Appointed to The Greater
Manchester Transport Committee
And
Payments to Tenants Representatives on the
Housing Advisory Panel
And
The Mobile Phone Allowance
For
Wigan Council

**A Supplementary Report by the
Independent Remuneration Panel**

**Marion Andrews
Dr Declan Hall (Chair)
Martin Honor**

November 2019

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Wigan Council Members Appointed to the
Greater Manchester Transport Committee**

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The Regulatory Context

1. This supplementary report is a synopsis of the proceedings and recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) for Wigan Council to advise the Council on its current Members' allowances scheme, with reference to Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for Wigan appointees to the new Greater Manchester Transport Committee (GMTC), one of whom has been appointed Chair, as well as consider the Mobile Telephone Allowance and payments to Tenant Representatives appointed to the Housing Advisory Panel (HAP).
2. On this occasion the Panel was convened as a virtual Panel under *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)* (the 2003 Regulations). These regulations require all local authorities to set up and maintain an

Independent Members' Remuneration Panel to periodically review and provide advice on Members' allowances. All Councils are required to convene their Remuneration Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their allowances scheme and they must 'pay regard' to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme.

3. In particular, the Panel has been reconvened under the *2003 Regulations [19. (1)]*, (the duty to have regard to recommendations of Panels clause) which states:

Before an authority referred to in regulation 3(1) (a), (b), or (c) makes or amends a scheme, the authority shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an independent remuneration panel.

4. As the Council is seeking to amend its allowances scheme it is required to seek independent advice from the Panel in accordance with Regulation 19.1 as outlined above.

Terms of Reference

5. The Panel was given a specific term of reference, namely, to make recommendations on the following:
- i To consider the appropriateness of an SRA for the Chair of the new Greater Manchester Transport Committee, if the post is deemed to merit an SRA then to recommend the level payable considering the defined duties and whether the second (Mayoral) appointee merits an SRA
 - ii An appropriate uplift of the telephone allowance considering that it has never been indexed
 - iii Payments to Housing Advisory Panel Tenant Representatives

The Panel and Process

6. The Council reconvened its Panel consisting of the following members:
- Marion Andrews:
Former employee of Halifax PLC and on leaving the Halifax was employed as a Branch Manager and now retired.
 - Dr Declan Hall (Chair):
A former academic at the Institute of Local Government, The University of Birmingham, currently an independent consultant specialising in Members' Allowances and support.
 - Martin Honor:

Formerly Community Banking National Relationship Manager at the Co-Operative Bank PLC now retired.

7. The Panel carried out this supplementary review as a “virtual” Panel as it was asked to consider a couple of minor amendments rather than a fundamental change to the Members’ Allowances scheme. It is within the spirit of the 2003 Regulations for the Panel to consider the evidence and agree its recommendations via electronic means where an amendment rather than full review of the scheme is being sought. To physically convene the full Panel would incur disproportionate costs on the part of the Council in relation to the resulting marginal changes that may be required and would not be an efficient use of Council resources.
8. Consequently, the Chair of the Panel took a lead in the review in that he visited the Council on Wednesday 4th September 2019 to interview
 - Cllr Mark Aldred Chair of the Greater Manchester Transport Committee (GMTC)
 - Cllr David Molyneux Executive Leader of Wigan Council and Member of Greater Manchester Combined Authority with responsibility for Resources
9. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the nature of the new GMTC, place the role and duties of the Chair in context of Greater Manchester and the relationship with the GMCA and elected Mayor.
10. The Chair also met with
 - Tom Dalton Housing Advisory Panel Tenant Representative
11. Similarly, the purpose of meeting Tom Dalton was to discuss the role of a Tenant Representative appointed to the Wigan Housing Advisory Panel.
12. In addition, the Chair received factual briefings from the following Officers
 - Tony Clarke Assistant Director of Finance, Wigan Council
 - Christine Charnock-Jones Democratic Services Manager Wigan Council
13. The Chair of the Panel, after considering the issues raised and further written evidence and relevant material (see Appendix One) then took the lead in formulating recommendations and writing the first draft of the report for comment and further amendment by the other Panel members. The other Panel members were also sent the relevant information on the roles and issues under consideration. When all Panel members agreed on the recommendations it was only then that the report was submitted to the Council for decision.

Considering the Evidence – the TfGMC and the GMTC

14. Under the provisions of The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order Local Government Act 2019 Number 793 confers to the Greater Manchester elected Mayor all operational bus powers, thus completing the process that began with the establishment of the GMCA and the election of the GM Mayor in 2017.
15. The GMTC replaces the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee (TfGMC); the TfGMC had a great deal of delegated powers regarding operational transport decisions for Greater Manchester. The GMTC is a discretionary committee in that the GM Mayor is enabled to enter into joint arrangements with the GMCA and the 10 constituent districts in relation to the transport functions of the Mayor, GMCA and the constituent councils. They have chosen to exercise this power by establishing the GMTC in July 2019.
16. The GMTC is a joint committee of the Mayor, GMCA and 10 Districts comprising of members from all these bodies. There are 23 members in total with each district appointing a single member, except for Manchester which appoints two members. The Mayor who is also a member and further appoints another 10 members from the districts to broadly reflect the political balance across the districts. The Mayor also appoints the Chair of the GMTC.
17. The Mayor and GMCA continue to undertake all strategic decision-making in relation to policy, strategy (including the Local Transport Plan), funding and scheme decision-making. The prime roles of the GMTC are in relation to operational oversight and performance monitoring of all transport modes (including highways) and scheme delivery. The GMTC has been refocused as transport user champion – scrutinise performance, management of all transport modes and highway network, holding operators to account, oversight on delivery (e.g. capital and other schemes) and helping to ensure the integration of transport policy within the parameters set by the Local Transport Plan and existing policy.
18. There are three separate key areas for the GMTC as follows:
 - i. Accountability – active and regular monitoring of the performance of the transport network, including holding the service operators, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM, responsible for delivery) highway authorities and infrastructure providers to account.
 - ii. Implementation – oversight of the delivery of the agreed Local Transport Plan commitments.
 - iii. Policy Development – undertaking policy development on specific issues, as may be directed by the Mayor and/or the GMCA.
19. Furthermore, the Mayor has delegated to the GMTC decisions on subsidised bus services within the policy context and funding parameters as determined by the Mayor.

20. This has created a clearer distinction where major transport decisions are taken (Mayor and GMCA) and where transport performance and operational delivery is monitored, and operators are held to account (GMTC).
21. The significance that the Mayor and GMCA places on transport is illustrated by their choice in establishing the GMTC. The fact that the Mayor/GMCA and districts have chosen to set up a GM Transport Committee (unlike the old GM Fire Committee which was abolished last year) indicates the importance of the transport agenda across GM and that the key decision makers welcome the support and user champion advocacy that the GMTC can provide.
22. Indeed, the GMTC has agreed to have monthly scheduled meetings with the agenda divided into two sections – reviewing higher level policy items and the other half covering operational issues. The GMTC has also agreed not to set up any sub committees with all business conducted through the full GMTC although this number of meetings of the full GMTC and how it operates will be reviewed in six months' time (see GMTC Minutes 12 July 2019). The GMTC has also developed a draft work programme up to the summer of 2020 with each item clearly delineated as to whether it comes under the accountability, policy development or implementation remit

The role of the GMTC Chair

23. Clearly, the GMTC has a great deal of potential in relation to both improving transport services for users and supporting the Mayor in developing transport policy. However, this potential, particularly regarding being proactive in supporting the new governance model through policy development, is yet to be demonstrated. It is early days regarding the new governance arrangements; how the roles and relationships develop in the future is an unknown quantity at present. It is unlikely that the office of Mayor will have the capacity to discharge all statutory duties and therefore will have to rely on the expertise and knowledge that will in all likelihood come from the GMTC and the Chair to give informed advice on its statutory responsibilities. A key relationship will be that between the GMTC Chair and the Mayor and the wider GMCA, a successful working relationship is crucial to the improvement of transport in both an operational and policy context. If this relationship develops to full fruition the role of GMTC Chair will be a significant one. An early indication of this developing relationship is regular meetings (about once a fortnight) with the Mayor on transport related issues and reporting to the GMCA on transport when required and attending GMCA Transport Board meetings about once every six weeks.
24. The Chair of the GMTC also has other meetings to attend such as the GM Community Transport Forum when required. The GMTC Chair also attend Polis meetings held in Brussels on a regular basis. Polis, of which TfGM is a member, is a network of

European cities and regions working together to develop innovative technologies and policies for local transport.

25. On one level this makes the role more complex than the Chair of TfGMC, rather than make decisions and be the pivotal post holder vis-à-vis GM transport policies and services, the GMTC Chair will be required to act as an advocate for the GMCA transport functions and work across the ten GM constituent councils as well as with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and other relevant stakeholders. There is also a regional role as the Chair is also appointed to partnership bodies such as the Transport of the North Scrutiny and Audit Committee. The time commitment in terms of meetings the GMTC Chair will attend is not insignificant but the level of responsibility exercised is yet to be demonstrated. The central dilemma for the Panel is that the GMTC is so new the actual nature of the role of the Chair is yet to be known, particularly in absence of a role description and experience of the GMTC and its Chair operates in reality can only be revealed over time..
26. Nonetheless, the Chair of the GMTC does merit an SRA as there is demonstrably a significant role to undertake. However, determining the actual level of the Chair's SRA is more difficult considering the conclusions outlined in the above paragraph. Benchmarking is of very limited value as there is no other comparable role that is remunerated in any of the other Combined Authorities or even within the GMCA. In fact, while the GMCA can remunerate Chairs and Members of their own statutory committees it is illuminating that it has chosen not to do so.
27. Another approach is to draw an analogy with an equivalent post within the Council. One suggestion was that the role of GMTC Chair was at least equal to if not greater than that of a Cabinet Member. This view has not been accepted as the Chair of GMTC has no executive powers and is not a statutory post.
28. On the face of it the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees (who receive an SRA of £7,689 In Wigan) would appear analogous. But the Wigan Council Scrutiny Committees are statutory while the GMTC is not. Moreover, there are also statutory Scrutiny Committees at the GMCA; including the Housing, Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee which has transport as part of its remit. It has the prime responsibility to scrutinise Mayoral and GMCA decisions including a power of Call-in regarding any Mayoral decisions. In exercising call-in powers, the GMCA Housing, Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee can require Members (including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor) or Officers of the GMCA to attend to answer questions. The Chair of the Housing, Planning and Environment Committee as well as being a statutory committee exercising statutory functions appoints its own Chair. In effect the Housing, Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a more corporate and governance focus while the GMTC has a more outward, operational and performance related focus.

29. A more pertinent comparison is to be made with the Wigan Council Lead Members. The role of Lead Member is a non-statutory post, do not have decision making powers, are appointed at the discretion of the Leader and they are expected to support their respective executive member, act as a sounding board and provide advice and feedback when appropriate as well as undertake discrete tasks as directed. At present the Lead Members on Wigan Council receive an SRA of £5,139. At this juncture the Panel has taken the view that is the most appropriate comparison for the Chair of the GMTC.
30. **The Panel recommends that when a Wigan Councillor is appointed the Chair of the GMTC that they are paid an SRA of £5,139.**
31. This recommendation is not the definitive view of the Panel in that it will revisit the recommended SRA for the Chair of the GMTC when the Panel is required to convene in the autumn 2020 under the 4-year rule. At this review the Panel will look once more at the role of the Chair of the GMTC in light of experience of how the GMTC and the role of the Chair has developed, particularly in relation to its policy development role which may well have potential to contribute greatly to the work of the GMCA vis-à-vis transport.

Wigan Councillors as Other/Ordinary Members of the GMTC

32. To ensure political balance the Mayor appoints 10 further members of the GMTC. These appointees are from the 10 GM Councils and generally will come from each constituent council, although on occasion a Council may not have the additional Mayoral appointee depending on the strength of party groups across the 10 GM Councils. Nonetheless, it is expected that typically Wigan Council will have a second 'political balance' appointee to the GMTC. No evidence was received to suggest that this post should be remunerated. Insofar as they have considered the issue none of the other GM Councils do not pay their ordinary or political balance Members appointed to the GMTC and the GMCA does not remunerate any members appointed to its committee or panels. Additionally, Wigan Council does not remunerate any of its Members appointed to the same GMCA committees or panels.
33. **The Panel does not recommend that the Wigan political balance appointee to the GMTC is paid an SRA.**
34. The GMTC has also appointed two Vice Chairs. Although both Wigan appointees are not a Vice Chair of the GMTC (one being the Chair and the other being the political balance appointee) to future proof the scheme the Panel considered the situation if one of the Wigan appointees was to be appointed a Vice Chair of the GMTC. Again, it is not known how the role of a Vice Chair of the GMTC will be in actuality.

35. **The Panel recommends that in a case where a Wigan appointee to the GMTC is a Vice Chair the committees that no SRA is payable.**
36. As with the role of the Chair the Panel will revisit these recommendations in light of actual experience of the how the GMTC operates and where benchmarking against schemes in the other GM Councils that have considered the role of their appointees to the GMTC.

Tenant Representatives on the Housing Advisory Panel (HAP)

37. While the issue of paying Tenant Representatives on the Council's Housing Advisory Panel (HAP) is technically outside the formal remit of the Panel it has been asked to consider the current situation in the absence of any other formal external evaluation. The Council has set up a Housing Advisory Panel to provide challenge around the housing services delivered to Wigan Council and Wigan and Leigh Homes' tenants. The prime role of the HAP is to act as a sounding board and source of advice for the Cabinet on issues of concern to the tenants. It also provides feedback via its members from other engagement forums and groups. It has six elected Members and six Tenant Representatives but at present there are four vacancies in the Tenant Representative category.
38. Although most meetings are in the evening with an average length of about two hours (except for conferences) there are at least 32 meetings per year
 - Housing Advisory Panel (HAP) – bi-monthly (6 per year)
 - HAP training sessions – bi-monthly (6 per year)
 - Tenant Voice Meetings – bi-monthly (6 per year although can be more)
 - Meetings related to Scrutiny – approximately monthly (12 per year although could be more when pulling together reports)
 - Tenant Assembly/Conferences – 2 per year
39. In addition, there have been some ad hoc sessions such as when a tenant representative attended the annual Tenants Conference (national) in June 2019 that was two full days.
40. The Council has decided to pay Tenant Representatives £600 per year (in addition to being able to claim travel allowances) as a recognition for their commitment. This comes out of the Housing Revenue Account rather than the Democratic Services budget as the payment is outwith the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations.
41. The Panel firmly endorses this payment and recommends that it should be maintained; if anything, it represents value for money particularly as candidates must pass an interview assessment and considering the number of meetings per year. It

is noted that the Housing Advisory Panel has only recently instituted this payment partly in the hope that it encourages more tenants to put themselves forward and the Panel will review if this payment to see if it has had an impact on recruitment and whether there may be a case to adjusted it accordingly.

42. **The Panel recommends that the payment of £600 per year to Tenant Housing Representatives on the Housing Advisory Panel is maintained and that it continues to be paid out of the Housing Revenue Account.** The Panel will revisit this payment in the next scheduled review in the autumn of 2020. In particular, the Panel will consider whether this payment has had any impact on the recruitment and retention of Tenant Housing Representatives on HAP.

The Mobile Telephone Allowance

43. Currently the Wigan allowances scheme provides for a Telephone Allowance of £7.30 net per month. Historically, all Members have been offered a Council provided mobile phone to make Council related calls, which are also paid by the Council. Alternatively, where a Member wishes to use their own mobile phone for Council related calls rather than have a second mobile phone provided and paid for by the Council, they have received the Mobile Telephone Allowance. Due to the life spans of the models being offered the new intake of Members were not offered a mobile phone. Moreover, most Members who have chosen to accept a Council provided mobile phone will soon have them recalled due to end of life. This policy and the amount have not been updated or reviewed for several years.
44. The direct provision of mobile phones is an out dated and expensive approach to ensure Members are contactable by colleagues, Officers and the public. It made sense to provide mobile phones when they were relatively uncommon but that is no longer the case, by 2019 approximately 95% of the adult UK population owned a mobile phone.¹ Moreover with dual sim phones and multiple numbers linked to single phones the need to maintain a second phone for Council related calls has been made redundant. Secondly, the direct provision of telecommunications equipment and minutes is expensive as the Council must purchase and support the phones. Thirdly, all Members are now provided with iPads which enables them to receive emails and other Council-related papers and information thus making direct provision of smart phones redundant. Finally, mobile phone companies now offer all-inclusive packages that provide plenty of capacity for marginal costs.
45. It is more efficient for Members to use their own mobile phones and for the Council to contribute to the running costs by a monthly payment. A suitable uplift that takes

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/289167/mobile-phone-penetration-in-the-uk/>

into account the current Mobile Telephone Allowance has remained static for the past 10 years would be to £10 (net)

46. **As such, the Panel recommends that from 2019 AGM (22nd May 2019) that all Members who use their personal Mobile Phones for council related calls are paid a monthly telephone allowance of £10 per month (net). In addition, that the Council does not offer Council provided mobile phones going forward and when the current Council provided mobile phones come to the end of their life span those Members are switched to the monthly Telephone Allowance.**

Indexation

47. Although one of main tasks of the 2020 review will be to consider the refreshing of the authority of the Council to index allowances the Panel has made recommendations on indexation for the allowances under consideration in this review for the sake of completeness. While it is noted that the recommended SRA for the Chairman of the GMTC would be indexed anyway there is no provision to index the Telephone Allowance and the payments to the Tenant Representatives on the Housing Advisory Panel. The Panel can see no reason why these two allowances should not be indexed on the same basis as the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances. Although the Council's authority to index allowances runs out at the end of Municipal Year 2020/21 it is only equitable that the recommended allowances in this review have indexation applied for the last year of this four-year indexation period. The relevant applicable index is annual percentage increase for staff as agreed each year by the National Joint Committee for Local Government Staff.
48. **The Panel recommends that the following allowances are indexed for 2020/21 as follows:**
- **SRA for the Wigan Member appointed as Chair of the GMTC**
 - **Payments to the Tenant Representatives on the Housing Advisory Panel**
49. **Furthermore, the Panel confirms that these allowances are uplifted in 2020/21 in line with the annual percentage pay increase given to Wigan Council staff as agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Staff.**
50. The Panel is not recommending that the Mobile Phone Allowance is indexed at this juncture as it is a competitive and fluid market and the general trend is to drive prices down. Therefore, **the Panel recommends that for 2020/21 the Mobile Telephone Allowance is not indexed.** Again the Panel will revisit this in more depth at the next scheduled review in the autumn of 2020.

Implementation

51. It is recommended that the recommendations are implemented as follows:

- **SRA for the Chair of the GMTC – backdated to when the Chair took up the position on 12th July 2019 at the first Annual Meeting of the GMTC**
- **Mobile Telephone Allowance – backdated to the 2019/20 Wigan Council Annual Meeting on 22nd May 2019**
- **Payments to Tenant Representatives on the Housing Advisory Panel – backdated to the 2019/20 Wigan Council Annual Meeting on 22nd May 2019**

APPENDIX ONE: Information Considered by the Panel

1. Wigan Council Members' Allowances Scheme 2019/20, including SRA schedule for Wigan Members
2. New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances May 2006
3. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 No. 1021
4. A Review of Special Responsibility Allowances for Lead Members for Wigan Council, A Supplementary Report by the Independent Remuneration Panel June 2017
5. Wigan Council, appointment of Committees 2019/20
6. Wigan Council Dates and times of meetings 2019/20
7. Local Authority Greater Manchester Nominations Table
8. Terms of Reference for Transport for Greater Manchester Committee (TfGMC)
9. Report to Wigan Council AGM, Greater Manchester Transport Committee – Role and Responsibilities, 22 May 2019
10. New Terms of Reference for Greater Manchester Transport Committee, as approved on 28 June 2019 by GMCA
11. Table of previous TfGM payments by other authorities:
12. Terms of Reference for GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committees, GMCA Constitution 2018
13. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2019 No. 793, including explanatory memorandum
14. Greater Manchester Transport Committee – Draft Work Programme 2019 – July 2019
15. Minutes of the Greater Manchester Transport Committee 12 July 2019
16. Greater Manchester Transport Committee Agenda 9 August 2019

17. Cllr R. Jones (Salford) Greater Manchester Transport Committee Vice Chair, email to chair of Panel on role of Chair of Greater Manchester Transport Committee, 12 September 2019
18. Wigan Council Housing Advisory Panel - Tenant Representatives Role Summary
19. Wigan Council Housing Advisory Panel - Tenant Representatives AS advert
20. Number of meetings that a Tenant Rep is expected to attend
21. Written briefing on the Mobile Phone Allowance and current provision of mobile phones to Members