

24th June 2022

WLGA MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME & SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL GROUPS

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is for the WLGA Council to note the Members' Allowances Scheme for WLGA Senior Office Holders and the provision of support to WLGA political groups.

Background

2. The WLGA provides a scheme of Members' Allowances Scheme for WLGA Senior Office Holders, in line with the constitution:

“25.1 The Association may provide a scheme for the payment of allowances and expenses to members appointed to agreed Association roles, in recognition of duties carried out on behalf of the Association (Scheme of Allowances).

The WLGA Executive Board or Council may establish an Independent Panel to review the Scheme of Allowances and to make recommendations for decision by the Executive Board or Council. An independent review of the Scheme should be carried out at least every 4 years. The membership of the Panel shall comprise of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 members. The Chair of the Panel must be independent of the Association and may not be a serving democratically elected local representative. The remaining Panel members may be serving democratically elected local representatives, but must not hold an Association role whilst a member of the Panel.”

3. The WLGA Members' Allowances Scheme is applied on an annual basis, effective from the date of each Annual General Meeting.
4. The Scheme is voluntary, and members can choose whether to receive their allowance. In line with local authorities' own practices the WLGA Scheme is made publicly available via the WLGA's website.
5. Members will note that the WLGA Members' Allowances Scheme is not within the remit of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
6. It has previously been agreed that, although not within the remit of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, future annual changes to the WLGA Members' Allowances Scheme should be linked to the Panel's determinations for any annual changes for councillors' salaries in Wales. The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has determined a 16.9% increase for councillors'

salaries from 2022-23, which will be reflected in the WLGA Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022-23.

7. The WLGA Members Allowances Scheme has not been reviewed since 2005-06. The role of WLGA senior leaders and spokespersons has however changed significantly in recent years, particularly in terms of time commitments and responsibility.
8. The WLGA Council therefore previously agreed that the WLGA Members' Allowances Scheme should be reviewed to reflect the changing roles. Although it was originally proposed that this should be undertaken ahead of the new term, subsequent discussions suggested this should be undertaken early in the new term to follow the changes introduced by the Independent Remuneration Panel and to reflect any changes to senior leadership roles and remits agreed at the AGM. It is proposed this review commences during the summer and is considered by WLGA members in the autumn.
9. Pending any review, the WLGA Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022-23, incorporating the IRP's changes for 2022-23, will be:

	2022-23 (inclusive of IRP uplift)
Leader	£6,497.65
Presiding Officer	£6,497.65
Deputy Leader	£5,198.12
Deputy Presiding Officer (Majority Group)	£2,599.06
Group Leader (Independent)	£2,599.06
Group Leader (Plaid Cymru)	£2,599.06
Total	£25,987.10

10. The above table is based on information received in advance of the AGM that there will be 3 Political Groups within the Association (Labour, Plaid Cymru and Independent).
11. The WLGA's Member Expenses budget for 2022-23 is £45,000, which allows some flexibility to accommodate any recommendations of a future review of Members' Allowances.

Other Member Allowances

12. Some WLGA nominated positions on LGA Boards may be entitled to receive remuneration separately through the LGA's Members' Allowances Scheme¹. The LGA's Members Allowances Scheme will be reviewed for the coming term, but the 2021-22 allowances were as follows:
 - LGA Executive Advisory Board (WLGA Representative) £2,919

¹ [LGA Scheme of Members' Allowances | Local Government Association](https://www.local.gov.uk/legislation/wlga-members-allowances-scheme)

- Employers' Side Bodies (WLGA Member) £328 Day Rate

13. Furthermore, Welsh local authority members may be appointed to a range of LGA Boards. These members are appointed as representatives of the LGA Political Groups and not on behalf of the WLGA. Members appointed to LGA Boards will be entitled to receive allowances ranging from £2,919 (member), £8,755 (vice chair) to £17,511 (chair).

Support for Political Groups

14. Section 24 of the Constitution confirms that support may be provided for political groups

“24.1 Political groups on the Council recognised by the Association under Article 8 for the purposes of representation on Committees may seek support to enable them to fulfil their role.

24.2 Political groups recognised by the Association shall be entitled to reasonable support from the Association to enable them to play their part in influencing parties on behalf of Member Councils.”

15. WLGA Group leaders have previously discussed and agreed the need to provide adequate support to WLGA Groups for the 2022-27 term, in the furtherance of WLGA business and policy development, and in line with the support provided to political groups within the LGA. The matter was also raised with new leaders at a meeting on 10th June 2022.

16. The WLGA has budgeted for the equivalent of 1 FTE officer (SCP 30) from 2022-23, to be shared on a proportionate basis between the WLGA Groups. It is therefore proposed that the Labour Group would receive equivalent of 3 days per week support, and the Plaid Cymru and Independent Groups 1 day per week each. Arrangements re. the recruitment and appointment of Political Group Support (which could include dedicated part/time officers or joint arrangements with LGA Political Groups) will be discussed with newly elected Group Leaders following the AGM.

Recommendations

17. The WLGA Council is invited to:

17.1 Note the WLGA Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022-23 and that a wider review will be commissioned during the summer for consideration by WLGA members in the Autumn.

17.2 Note the provision of Support for Political Groups for the current term (paragraphs 14-16).

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