

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2022 at 6pm

CIVIC SUITE

COVID SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN THE CIVIC SUITE

When visiting the Civic Suite we encourage you to continue practicing the 'hands, face, space, fresh air' guidance and follow the measures below:

- Undertake Lateral Flow Testing twice a week and preferably before attending a Council building to minimise the risk of bringing COVID-19 into the building. If you do test positive after being in a Council building, you must report this to enable appropriate action to be taken.
- Support the NHS Test and Trace by using the QR Code
- Where possible, open windows, doors and vents to allow fresh air to circulate.
- If using equipment in Group Rooms or on the Members floor please clean workspace after use including your desk, chair, phone, keyboard, mouse, monitor and any shared spaces such as photocopiers.
- We recommend you consider all colleagues and wear face coverings in all general communal areas and when walking around the building.
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Disclosing Pecuniary Interests - What Must You Do?

(a) You must complete a declaration of your disclosable pecuniary interests, including those of your spouse/civil partner (or someone with whom you are living as such) and send it to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of your election or appointment to the Council.

(b) When you attend a meeting of the Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny Board, Committee, Sub-Committee or Joint Committee etc, and a matter arises in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, unless you have been granted a dispensation, **you must:**

- Declare the interest if you have not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

(c) If you are the Leader or a Cabinet Portfolio Holder you may not exercise any of your delegated powers as a single member in relation to a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest or take any other step except to give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of your becoming aware of the interest, or arrange for another person or body to deal with the matter.

Disclosable Interest	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain by you or your partner.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within 12 months of your declaration of interests in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.
Contracts	Any contract between you or your partner (or a firm or body corporate in which you or your partner is a partner or a director, or in the securities of which you or your partner has a beneficial interest) and the Council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the Council and which gives you or your partner a right to occupy the land or receive income.
Licences	Any licence held by you or your partner (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest i.e. a firm or body corporate in which you or your partner is a partner or a director, or in the securities of which you or your partner has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest held by you or your partner in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class. “securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

To:
Councillors R Sleight OBE (Chairman),
I Courts, M Carthew, T Diccico,
A Mackiewicz, M McLoughlin, S Rymer and
Ms M Hurt

NICK PAGE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Date 4 November 2022

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2022

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS**
To answer questions, if any, asked by any resident of the Borough pursuant to Standing Orders
4. **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 8)
To consider for approval the draft minutes from the Remuneration Committee held on 6 July 2022.
5. **SEVERANCE CASES APPROVED 2021/22** (Pages 9 - 12)
To inform the Committee of the Severance cases approved during 2021/22.
6. **SPECIAL SEVERANCE PAYMENTS** (Pages 13 - 20)
The purpose of the report is to inform Remuneration Committee of the new Statutory Guidance that sets out the obligations placed on Local Authorities when making Special Severance Payments (SSPs).
7. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**
The meeting is likely not to be open to the press or public during discussion of the following items because the reports contain exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
8. **SEVERANCE CASES 2021/22** (Pages 21 - 22)
The appendix is referenced in the public report item 5 on the agenda.

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Public Document Pack

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE - 6 July 2022

Present: Councillors R Sleigh OBE (Chairman), I Courts, T Dicicco, A Mackiewicz, M McLoughlin, S Caudwell, M Carthew

Officers: A Cattell - Head of Human Resources
P Rogers - Democratic Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor S Rymer, for whom Councillor S Caudwell was substituting, and Ms. Maggie Hurt (Co-Opted Member).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

No questions or deputations were received.

4. MINUTES

The Remuneration Committee:

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 21st March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

5. TRADE UNION FACILITY TIME PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The report informed the Remuneration Committee of the 2021-22 Trade Union Facility Time information in respect of the Council and schools. The Head of Human Resources presented the report.

Members were informed that the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) came into force on 1st April 2017. Trade Union officials include employees who undertake their Trade Union role on a full-time basis, apt-time and those who have a substantive job but also undertake a Trade Union role. Those employees who were Trade Union representatives and recognised by the Council were permitted reasonable time off during working hours to perform certain trade union duties.

Different Trade Union roles entailed different roles and responsibilities, for example, negotiations with the employer side and accompanying trade union members at disciplinary hearings.

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE - 6 July 2022

Paid trade union activities were calculated regarding the undertaking of such activities as attending trade union conferences, attending trade union branch meetings and similar activities. Whilst calculating the associated costs involved with trade union representation, factors such as National Insurance and pension costs must be included in the calculation.

The Council was reliant on the respective Trade Unions to provide information on time spent on certain trade union activities. Four specific areas of information were required to be provided to the Council under the Facility Time Publication Requirements, which related to *Relevant Trade Union Officials*, *Percentage of Time Spent on Facility Time*, *Percentage of Pay Bill Spent on Facility Time* and *Paid Trade Union Activities*. These categories apply to both the Council side and schools.

The Head of Human Resources advised Members of the Committee that the overall percentage of the pay bill for 1st April 2021-31st March 2022 was comparable to the previous year, with a slight increase reported. The school's pay bill had increased by 0.016% compared to the previous year, which was attributable to the total pay bill reducing, but the total cost of facility time increasing. It was reported to the Committee meeting that across the West Midlands Region, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council had reported the second lowest figures regarding expenses for core Council costs.

Having received the introduction to the report from the Head of Human Resources, Members of the Committee raised further pertinent questions in relation to the report, which in summary included the following matters:

Councillor McLoughlin noted that regarding appendices A and B to the report, as a percentage of time spent on trade union activity a difference existed, whereas the total pay spent on time allocated to trade union activity did not converge. Councillor McLoughlin queried whether this was due to more trade union representatives present in schools combined with lower trade union representation in the core Council representation, or a case of simply less trade union activity being required within the core Council.

The Head of Human Resources advised the Committee that the proportion of time spent on trade union activity was dependent upon how good employer relationships were with the workforce. Members were informed that in the case of the Council the relationship between the Council and workforce was strong and largely delivered through partnership working. Trade Union representation in the Core Council was through Unison and GMB Trade Unions, with representation also cutting across schools which, therefore, led to a proportion of school related costs being paid to those trade unions.

Councillor Diccio noted that it was positive to hear that there were good trade union relations within the Core Council, which presumably if it were not the case then the percentage of time allocated to trade union activities would increase leading to attributable higher costs.

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE - 6 July 2022

The Head of Human Resources clarified that an increase in required trade union activity and representation would not necessarily mean that the Trade Union Branch Secretary would be able to address most of those issues. If more workplace issues did arise it would likely lead to greater involvement of trade union workplace representatives and therefore the proportion of their time on trade union duties would rise accordingly.

Councillor Diccio stated his appreciation for the good work the Trade Union Representatives undertook on behalf of their members and for their positive interactions with the Council side in undertaking their duties.

Having considered the report, the Remuneration Committee:

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the publication of the information contained within Appendix A and Appendix B in accordance with legislative requirements.

The Remuneration Committee meeting closed at 6:17 p.m.

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Meeting date: 14 November 2022

Report to: Remuneration Committee

Report title:

Report from: Severance Cases Approved 2021/22

Report author/lead contact officer: Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

Julie Cooper: Head of Financial Operations 0121 704 8277
jjcooper@solihull.gov.uk

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
-

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: N/A

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the Severance cases approved during 2021/22.

2. Decision(s) Recommended

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the report.

Report Title: Severance Cases Approved 2021/22

3. Matters for Consideration

- 3.1 The Council's severance scheme has been developed in recognition of the additional costs for redundancy and early access to pension.
- 3.2 The Severance Reserve is only utilised when there are significant costs, either arising from large scale restructuring and change programmes or where the service cannot be expected to fully fund these costs. Funding from the Severance Reserve has to be approved by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).
- 3.3 Services funded by grant (including the Dedicated Schools Grant) are expected to fully fund all costs relating to any early leavers.
- 3.4 A breakdown of each Severance case, including the total costs can be found in Appendix A. This has been circulated separately to Members, within the private section of the agenda on the grounds that there would be the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 Schedule A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 3.5 2021/22 saw a number of operational and legislative changes, as well as transformation of services within the Council. The majority of the 33 severance cases in the financial year resulted from service changes in the following areas:
- Childrens Services & Skills – The costs predominantly related to the restructuring of a number of services as part of the Education Management of Change process.
 - Economy and Infrastructure – A review of the management structure for Customer Services, Libraries and Arts resulted in the deletion of a post. The changes to the structure were cost neutral and supported greater integration between the services which were historically separate.
 - Resources - A small number of posts were deleted during 2021/22 within the Catering Service to achieve operational efficiency.
 - In addition to the above Core Council cases, 2021/22 saw a number of redundancies take place at schools, the cost of which totalled £152,000.
- 3.6 The total cost of the 33 cases was £799,913, £53,881 of which was funded from the Severance reserve and £746,032 from individual Directorate/School budgets.
- 3.7 Twelve of these cases also resulted in additional employer's national insurance contributions totalling £22,000. This is a further cost that has been charged on termination payments over £30,000 since 6 April 2020, as a result of a change to legislation. This is excluded from the total cost included in Appendix A as this is a cost paid to the government rather than to the employee.

- 3.8 In addition to the severance cases detailed in Appendix A, there were also twelve cases where discretion was applied, under the LGPS regulations 2013 and LGPS transitional provisions and savings regulations, to allow staff members aged 55 or over to reduce their hours and/or grade and access accrued benefits from their pension.
- 3.9 In one of these cases, there was a nominal cost to the Council of the staff accessing these benefits, which was funded from individual Directorate budgets. All of these cases were approved by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive under his delegated authority.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

4.1 N/A

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

5.1 N/A

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive. 	<p>The budget and MTFs considerations address all of the Council's priorities.</p> <p>The severance scheme and process, alongside the severance reserve facilitates the Council in making decisions around its staff, ensuring it does not jeopardise the services it provides to the wider community.</p>
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable. 	<p>See above</p>
<p>Environment:</p>	<p>See above</p>

Priority:	Contribution:
8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions.	
9. Promote employee wellbeing	See above

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1. This report has not been presented to a Scrutiny Board

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1. The balance of the Severance Reserve at 31 March 2022 was £2.260 million. This includes the budgeted annual contribution of £469,000 made in 2021/22.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1. None

6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

6.5.1. Based on the information provided, it is the officers' opinion that the significant risks have been identified, assessed and arrangements are in place to manage them effectively.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1. There are no direct equality or diversity implications as a result of this report.

6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

6.7.1. None

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix A (in private)

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None

9. List of Other Relevant Documents

9.1 None



Meeting date: 14 November 2022

Report to: Remuneration Committee

Report title: Special Severance Payments

Report from: Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

Report author/lead contact officer: Adrian Cattell (Head of Human Resources)
acattell@solihull.gov.uk

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
-

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph:

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Remuneration Committee of the new Statutory Guidance that sets out the obligations placed on Local Authorities when making Special Severance Payments (SSPs).
- 1.2 The SSP Guidance, issued under section 26 of the Local Government Act 1999, came into effect in May 2022.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Guidance is to
- 1.3.1. set out that SSP's do not usually represent value for money and should only be considered in exceptional circumstances
 - 1.3.2. outline the criteria to be considered in the exceptional circumstances in which it may be appropriate to make a SSP
 - 1.3.3. clarify the disclosure and reporting requirements for SSP

1.4 In the exceptional circumstances where it is decided that a SSP should be paid, it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure the SSP is fair, proportionate, lawful and provides value for money for the taxpayer.

2. Decision(s) Recommended

2.1 The Remuneration Committee is asked to note the contents of the report, including the revised approval arrangements as detailed in paragraph 3.5, in advance of receiving an updated Pay Policy Statement for consideration at its meeting on 19 January 2023.

Report Title: Special Severance Payments

3. Matters for Consideration

- 3.1 In May 2022 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) issued Statutory Guidance regarding the making of Special Severance Payments (SSPs).
- 3.2 The guidance, issued under section 26 of the Local Government Act 1999, came into effect on 12 May 2022, and sets out the following:

3.3 What is a Special Severance Payment (SSP)?

SSPs are described as payments made outside of statutory, contractual or other requirements when leaving employment in public service.

The key to whether such exit related payments are SSPs will be whether they **exceed** statutory, contractual, or other requirements.

The following types of payments are likely to constitute SSPs:

- a) any payments reached under a settlement agreement to discontinue legal proceedings without admission of fault
- b) the value of any employee benefits or allowances which are allowed to continue beyond the employee's agreed exit date
- c) loan write-offs
- d) honorarium payments
- e) hardship payments
- f) any payments to employees for retraining related to their termination of employment
- g) pension strain payments where the employer is exercising its discretion to enhance pension benefits, rather than acting in accordance with another existing commitment to enhance pension
- h) pay or compensation in lieu of notice where there is no contractual obligation to pay in lieu and where the payment is greater than the salary due in the notice period

In reviewing the guidance in the context of the Council the only payments that are most likely to be considered, and only in exceptional cases are those in a) above.

The following are not SSPs:

- a) statutory and contractual redundancy payments
- b) severance payments made under the authority's policy under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006
- c) pension strain payments for those who leave by reason of redundancy or business efficiency aged 55 or over (see Regulation 30(7) LGPS Regulations), or where the employer waives the reduction on a flexible retirement (see 30(6) and (8) LGPS Regulation).

- d) payment for accrued but untaken annual leave
- e) payments ordered by a court or tribunal or agreed as part of a judicial or non-judicial mediation
- f) payments made as part of the ACAS Early Conciliation process
- g) payments made to compensate for injury or death of the worker
- h) payments made in consequence of the award of ill-health retirement benefits under Regulation 35 of the LGPS Regulations

It is noted that depending on the terms of the contract, relevant statutory provisions, any non-statutory applicable schemes and other relevant terms and conditions, there may be other types of payments that may constitute a SSP.

3.4 **Exceptional Circumstances & Value for Money**

Severance terms in the public sector are viewed to be significantly better than the minimum statutory redundancy entitlement and are often higher than those made in the private sector. The guidance explains that paying additional, discretionary sums on top of these entitlements (SSP) do not usually provide good value for money and so, should only be considered in exceptional cases.

This could include, for example, a case to settle a dispute where it can be demonstrated that all other alternatives have been fully explored and exhausted and appropriate legal advice has been obtained.

Whilst there may be exceptional circumstances, the guidance does require that such consideration must be given as to whether a SSP would be a proper use of public money. This should be determined through scrutiny of the economic rationale, as well as the impact on efficiency, such as the prospects of successfully defending a claim and likely costs; and effectiveness, ensuring for example that payments are not used to avoid management action.

The Council has the responsibility to ensure that SSPs are only made when there is a clear, evidenced based justification and where it can be demonstrated that all relevant internal policies and procedures have been fully explored and excluded and all alternative actions have been fully considered and documented.

3.5 **Approvals**

A business case and all supporting evidence including, where appropriate, the attempts taken to resolve a dispute should be provided to those approving a SSP.

The guidance sets out the approval process for SSPs as follows:

- payments of £100,000 and above must be approved by full council,
- payments of £20,000 and above, but below £100,000, must be personally approved and signed off by the Head of Paid Service; with a clear record of the Leader's approval and that of any others who have signed off the payment
- payments below £20,000 must be approved according to the local authority's scheme of delegation. As outlined in the Pay Policy Statement, this is the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources.

Where the proposed SSP is to the Head of Paid Service, to avoid a conflict of interest the payment should be approved by a panel including at least two independent persons. The guidance does not prescribe a definition of an independent person. It is the discretion of each authority to find appropriate independent persons who have not been previously involved in the situation.

3.6 Clarifies the disclosure and reporting requirements for SSPs

Under the guidance the existing requirements placed on local authorities to publish information on pay and exit payments are set out in detail.

As well as following existing guidance on reporting exit payments, the SSP guidance provides that local authorities should also disclose in their annual accounts all severance payments, pension fund strain costs and other SSPs made in consequence of termination of employment or loss of office (but excluding payments on death or ill-health retirement).

Work is currently being undertaken to ensure that the Council meets the revised reporting requirements.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 A statement by Government in response to the draft statutory guidance set out that further discussions were being undertaken as to whether the guidance will apply to local government staff employed in a maintained school. Whilst that position is confirmed, we are advised that at the present time this guidance does not apply.
- 4.2 In exceptional cases where SSP type payments are made by the Council, such considerations and governance set out in the guidance are already established practice where alternative options are explored and exhausted and the necessary legal advice taken before making the payment. Therefore, this part of the guidance is unlikely to lead to any significant change in practice.
- 4.3 The guidance states that those approving a SSP should be provided with evidence of the attempts to resolve a dispute before they escalated to a legal claim. In relation to frivolous or vexatious claims, even where the costs of defending that claim will exceed the likely costs of settling it, the guidance provides that it may be more desirable to defend the claim as that will discourage future similar claims. This practice reflects the Councils existing approach where SSP type payments are considered.
- 4.4 A revised Pay Policy Statement which will incorporate the SSP guidance will be presented to the Remuneration Committee on 19 January 2023 and then Full Council on 7 February 2023 for approval.
- 4.5 A review of current procedures that the SSP has implications for, such as approvals process, is in progress.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 NA

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
People and Communities: 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive.	NA
Economy: 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable.	NA
Environment: 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions.	NA
9. Promote employee wellbeing	NA

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1. NA

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1. In the exceptional circumstances where it is decided that a SSP should be paid, it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure the SSP arrangements are fair, proportionate, lawful and provide value for money for the taxpayer; as is the Councils current practice.

6.3.2. In line with the Councils approvals process, monitoring and reporting obligations of any exit payments, including SSPs, paid by the Council are in line with requirements set out in the guidance.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1. A legally compliant Pay Policy Statement will be presented to the Remuneration Committee on 19 January 2023.

6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

6.5.1. No significant risks have been identified in respect of the SSP guidance that has been implemented.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1. No equality implications have been identified in respect of the SSP guidance that has been implemented

6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

6.7.1. NA

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 NA

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 Statutory guidance on the making and disclosure of Special Severance Payments by local authorities in England.

9. List of Other Relevant Documents

9.1 NA

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 2, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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