

Signed off by	Head of Legal and Governance
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To	Council
Date	Thursday, 7 April 2022
Executive Member	Leader of the Council

Key Decision Required	N
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Subject	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members Allowances for 2022/23.

Recommendations
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Recommendations 1 to 7, listed on page 3 of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) report (Annex 1), be adopted. 2. That the Head of Paid Service be authorised to make any necessary changes to the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2022/23 (approved under Recommendation 1 above) arising from any amendment or non-adoption of the IRP's recommendations. 3. That the effective date of any changes for all allowances, is 1 April 2022. 4. That the IRP be thanked for its report.
Reasons for Recommendations
These recommendations comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 and government guidance for the Council to have a Members' Allowances Scheme

recommended by an Independent Remuneration Panel. The recommendations of the IRP are considered to support the objectives for the Council's Members Allowances Scheme of allowing people to consider becoming an elected Member without risk of undue financial hardship, and of allowing existing councillors to fulfil their role to the best of their ability.

Executive Summary

This report sets out proposals on the Members Allowances Scheme for 2022/23 following a "light touch" review by the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel. The IRP's report contains 7 recommendations for Council to consider, as detailed on page 3 of Annex 1. Page 3 of this report sets out the budgetary implications for 2022/23 of the recommendations. The IRP recommend that adopted changes apply from 1 April 2022.

Council has authority to approve the above recommendations.

Statutory Powers

1. In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and guidance from the government, the Council is required to have a Members Allowances Scheme recommended by its Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The IRP has undertaken a review of the Authority's Members' Allowances and its report is attached at Annex 1.
2. The IRP's report on the outcome of its review has undergone initial consideration by the Council's Management Team and Group Leaders and is now before the Council to consider.
3. Under the Constitution, this issue is reserved for full Council. This means that it has not previously been the subject of debate by any other decision-making body.

Key Information

Report of the IRP

4. The Report of the IRP contains 7 recommendations. These relate to the following matters:

The following changes to the Scheme:

- The Basic Allowance be increased from £5,670 to £5,783
- Special Responsibility Allowances remain unchanged.
- All other allowances remained unchanged.
- The programme of work for the Panel until 2025

Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022/23

5. Should Council agree to adopt, or amend and adopt, the IRP's recommendations, then the Members Allowances Scheme will need to be amended. Delegation on this matter to the Head of Paid Service is proposed (Recommendation 2 of this report).

Legal Implications

6. The Local Government Act 2000 requires each local authority to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel for the purpose of considering a scheme for the payment of Members' Allowances.

Financial Implications

7. The Council's revenue budget for 2022/23 includes £415,800 for Member Allowances.
8. The proposals set out in this report will result in an increase of £5,103 in the basic allowance for 2022/23. The revised budget will therefore comprise:
 - Basic Allowance - £260,235
 - Special Responsibility Allowances - £131,583
 - Mayoral Allowance - £5,700
 - Total cost for this element of Member Allowances for 2022/23 - £397,518
9. The budget also includes provision for travel and subsistence costs and ancillary expenses. These historically been claimed at a relatively low rate and are not expected to present a significant budgetary pressure. In the event that they exceed projections, this may lead to a low level of overspend in 2022/23, which it can be accommodated within other approved budgets.
10. It should be noted that the cost of the Members' Allowance scheme cannot be forecast with complete certainty because some Members choose not to claim allowances to which they are entitled.

Equalities Implications

11. The Council is asked to have regard to their duties under the Equality Act 2010. This requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
12. The Panel considered these duties in relation to the nine protected characteristics (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage/civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion; sex; and sexual orientation).
13. During the review, it was highlighted that the role of a Councillor was not a salaried one. However, the payment of allowances is generally expected to allow and encourage people from the widest possible range of backgrounds to serve as councillors. The Panel considered how their recommendations to the Scheme would enable all persons to be able to serve as a Councillor.

Communication Implications

14. The Local Authorities' (Members' Allowances) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations place certain duties on local authorities in connection with publicising the recommendations made by their Independent Remuneration Panel, their scheme of allowances and the actual allowances paid to Members in any given year.
15. The Regulations require that as soon as reasonably practicable after receiving a report, setting out the IRP's recommendations, local authorities must ensure copies of the report are available for inspection at their principal office. Local authorities must also publish a notice giving details of the availability of the report and the Panel's recommendations. Local authorities are also required to repeat this process as soon as reasonably practicable after determining a scheme of allowances.
16. The Guidance states that all of these publicity requirements are statutory minimum requirements, and that local authorities should publicise more widely the report from their Panel, their scheme of allowances and the sums paid to each Member.

Environmental Sustainability Implications

17. There are no direct environmental sustainability implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Considerations

18. The determination of allowances is a sensitive subject both from the perspective of Councillors themselves and the public who elect them. In view of this it is important that any scheme adopted is objectively reasonable and based upon a logical and fair mechanism.

Consultation

19. Appendix 2 of the IRP Report details the consultation methodology by the IRP in the forming of its recommendations.