



Signed off by	Head of Legal and Governance
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To	Council
Date	Thursday 18 January 2024
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 2024/25
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Recommendations – Members’ Allowances for Reigate and Banstead Borough Council by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), Annex 1	
<p>(i) That Recommendations 1 to 8, listed on page 5 of the Independent Remuneration Panel report at Annex 1 be adopted;</p> <p>(ii) That the Managing Director be authorised to make any necessary changes to the Members’ Allowance Scheme for 2024/25 (approved under Recommendation 1 above) arising from any amendment or non-adoption of the IRP’s recommendations;</p> <p>(iii) That the effective date of any changes for all allowances is 1st April 2024; and</p> <p>(iv) That the IRP be thanked for its report.</p>	
Reasons for Recommendations	
<p>The recommendations of the IRP are considered to support the objectives for the Council’s Members Allowances Scheme of allowing people to become an elected Member without risk of undue financial hardship, and of allowing existing councillors to fulfil their role to the best of their ability.</p>	
Executive Summary	

This report sets out proposals on the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25 following a review by the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

The IRP's report contains eight recommendations for Council to consider, as detailed on page 5 of their report. The Financial Implications section of this covering report sets out the budget implications for 2024/25 of the recommendations.

The IRP recommend that adopted changes apply from 1 April 2024, except for any changes to the Mayoral Allowance which is changed in line with the Municipal Year.

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 report has undergone initial consideration by the Council's Management Team and Group Leaders and is now before the Council to consider.
3. The authority for determining the Scheme of Members' Allowances is reserved to the full Council.

Key Information

4. This report to Council comprises the following:
 - (i) This covering report; and
 - (ii) Annex 1 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) *Reigate and Banstead Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme*.
5. The IRP's report comprises the following:
 - Appendix 1 – A profile of the Members of the IRP.
 - Appendix 2 – Terms of reference of the IRP.
 - Appendix 3 – Methodology, detailing the general principles of the review, interviews conducted, and evidence considered.
 - Appendix 4 – Commentary on changes, detailing the IRP's rationale.
 - Appendix 5 – Evaluation of the Member drop-in session and South East Employers' data.
6. The Report of the IRP at Annex 1 contains 8 recommendations on page five. These relate to the following matters:
 1. The Basic Allowance be increased from £5,956 to £6,135 (3%).
 2. The Leader of the largest Opposition Party should be paid an SRA based on a percentage of the Leader's SRA £3,130 to replace the 'per member'

model within the Group Leaders' allowance for the Opposition Group Leader only.

3. The Leaders of the Minority Parties continue to receive the per member allowance.
4. The Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Leader of the Council be increased to £15,800, inclusive of the 'per member' Group Leaders' allowance for the Leader.
5. The Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget Scrutiny Review Panel be combined and be increased from £3,162 + £441 to £3,603.
6. The Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chair of the Licencing Committee be increased from £441 to £1,500.
7. Dependent Carers' Allowances. ~The minimum age for carers be raised to 18.
8. That the Scheme of Allowances be reviewed in 12 months' time. Page 7 at appendix 1 sets out the Panel's future work plan.

Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25

7. Should Council agree to adapt or amend the IRP recommendations, then the Members' Allowances Scheme will need to be updated. Delegation of this matter to the Managing Director is proposed (Recommendation 2 of this report).

Legal Implications

8. 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

9. The budget for Member Allowances in 2023/24 is £422,800, comprising £400,700 for Allowances and £22,100 for other costs (e.g. travel and subsistence expenses claims).
10. Approval of the Panel's recommendations will result in a budget growth requirement of £11,511. This can be accommodated in the Draft Budget proposals for 2024/25.
11. The revised budget for Member Allowances (excluding travel and subsistence) will comprise:

	£
Basic Allowance (increased, see recommendation 1)	276,075
Leaders of Political Groups (increased, see recommendations 2 & 3)	816
The Leader of the largest Opposition Party (changed) - to be paid an SRA based on a percentage of the Leader's SRA £3,130 to replace the 'per member' model within the Group Leaders' allowance for the Opposition Group Leader only. (increased, see recommendations 2 & 3)	3,130
Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Leader of the Council (increased, see recommendation 4)	15,800
Deputy Leader (unchanged)	11,557
Portfolio Holders (unchanged)	66,038
Mayoral Allowance (unchanged)	5,700
Chair of Planning (unchanged)	5,442

The Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget Scrutiny Review Panel (combined, see recommendation 5)	441 + 3,162
Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny (unchanged)	957
Chair of Audit Committee (unchanged)	3,162
Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chair of the Licencing Committee (increased, see recommendation 6)	1,500
Chair of the Licensing Sub-Committee (unchanged)	1,540
Members of the Planning Committee (unchanged)	11,256
Total Budget Requirement	406,576

12. The budget includes provision for travel and subsistence costs and ancillary expenses. These historically been claimed at a relatively low rate and are not expected to increase in 2024/25. If such claims exceed projections, this may lead to a small budget overspend, which can be accommodated within the service's other approved budgets.
13. 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

14. 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:
- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - c. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
15. 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).
16. 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.

Environmental Sustainability Implications

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

Communication Implications

18. 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.
19. 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.

20. 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.

Risk Management Considerations

21. 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.

Human Resource Implications

22. There are no Human Resource implications.

Consultation

23. Appendix 3 (Methodology) of the IRP Report details the consultation methodology used by the IRP in the forming of its recommendations. This included:
- (i) An all-Member drop-in consultation with the IRP in Nov 2023; and
 - (ii) Interviews with Group Leaders and senior officers in Nov 2023.

Policy Framework

24. There are no policy framework implications.

Background Papers

25. None

Annexes

1. Report of the Independent Remuneration panel on Members' Allowances for 2024/25