

**TO: COUNCIL
28 FEBRUARY 2018**

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME
REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
Director of Resources – Democratic & Registration Services**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) which will broadly have the functions of providing the local authority with advice on its scheme and the amounts to be paid. Local authorities must have regard to this advice.
- 1.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by the Council met in February and September 2017 at the Council's invitation. The Panel's report and recommendations are appended to this report at Annex B. The Council is asked to consider the Panel's recommendations and to decide whether to make any changes to the current Scheme.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members consider their response to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, summarised in section 5 below and set out in full in the Panel's report and Executive Summary.
- 2.2 That the list of approved conferences, set out in Annex A, is approved for insertion in the Scheme.
- 2.3 That the Council notes that Neil McGregor has resigned from the Panel and thanks him for the contribution he has made.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council must have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel's reasons for their recommendations are set out in their report.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 PANEL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Panel's report, including its findings and recommendations is appended to this report as Annex B. The recommendations are set out in bold in that report and summarised in the Executive Summary (i) to (iv). The information reviewed by the Panel, listed in Appendix 1 to the Panel's report, is available from Member Services.

The main findings and recommendations of the Panel are:

(i) **Co-optees' Allowances**

That the following additional Co-optees' Allowances are paid:

- Governance & Audit Committee Co-optee:
 - £291 per year
- Co-optee preparing for and attending a Code of Conduct Panel meeting:
 - £30.14 for meetings not exceeding 4 hours
 - £59.10 for meetings over 4 hours

(ii) **Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)**

- That the DCA is amended to change the age of carer from "18 or over" to "16 or over"
- That a clarification is made to the maximum amount claimable per approved duty, which currently reads "*The total Dependents' Carers' Allowance is capped at £51.52 per approved duty and at a maximum of 40 hours per week*" **to add** "*regardless of the number of dependants a Councillor may have. The DCA is a contribution to the care of dependants it is not designed to reimburse the cost of all dependants' care for all approved duties.*"
- That under paragraph 10.2 (1) Childcare, the following is inserted at the end of the second sentence: "*subject to the cap set out* ".

(iii) **Indexation of allowances**

That allowances are indexed as follows:

- Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, Co-optees' Allowance, DCA, Subsistence & Overnight Accommodation Allowances
 - will be adjusted for inflation by the amount of the percentage increase in the nationally agreed pay increase for local government employees (linked to Spinal Column Point 49 of the NJC Scheme) on 1 April (commencing 2018)
 - rounded up to the nearest pound (£).
- Travel Allowance – Out of Borough Mileage Rates
 - continue to be indexed to HMRC AMAP mileage rates

(iv) **Implementation of recommendations**

That the recommendations are implemented from 1 April 2018 with the exception of the proposed changes to the Co-optees and Dependents' Carer's Allowances which should be implemented from the date Council agrees the changes.

6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Statutory Guidance

6.1 In its deliberations the Independent Remuneration Panel has had regard to the Members Allowances Statutory Guidance 2006.

Background

6.2 This review arose out of the requirement under paragraph 10.5 of the 2003 Regulations that Panels must convene at least every four years (known as the '4 year rule') to renew authority for any allowances that have an automatic index applied to them and/or reconsider whether it is applicable to recommend indexing the main allowances. In addition the Panel considered the overall level of allowances; the remuneration package as a whole; and any other issues that had been drawn to their

attention by councillors. The terms of reference for the review are set out in paragraph 5 of the Panel's report.

Panel Membership

- 6.3 Since the Panel last convened in 2014 two new Panel members were appointed in January 2017 to fill vacancies that had arisen; John Murtagh, an Immigration Enforcement Officer and Bracknell Forest resident, and Andrew Stone, a local businessman and resident.
- 6.4 Neil McGregor, the longest serving member of the IRP advised the Panel of his intention to stand down once the review was concluded. Neil's contribution has been highly regarded and the skills, knowledge and expertise he has brought to the role will be difficult to replace.
- 6.5 A training and refresher session was held in February 2017 and the full review was undertaken in September 2017. The final report was received by the Council in January 2018. This meeting is the first opportunity that Council has had to consider the IRP's proposals.

Publicity Arrangements

- 6.6 In accordance with the Regulations, copies of the Panel's report are available at the Council's offices and via the Council's website. In addition a notice has been published in a local newspaper stating that the Council has received recommendations from an Independent Remuneration Panel about its scheme of allowances and describing the main features of the Panel's recommendations. Another notice will be published after the Council has considered the Panel's recommendations, setting out the changes to the Scheme.

Approved Conferences

- 6.7 The list of approved conferences which Members are able to attend has been reviewed and updated where the name of the conference has changed or no longer takes place. Members are asked to confirm the current list for inclusion in the Scheme as set out in Annex A to this report.

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The legal considerations arising from the recommendations are set out in the Independent Remuneration Panel report.

Borough Treasurer

- 7.2 No specific provision has been made at this stage in the Council's proposed budget being considered elsewhere on the agenda for any change in the current levels of Member allowances. Should the Panel's recommendation to increase allowances to allow for indexation be supported, the additional cost would be £11k which could be accommodated within the overall 2018/19 budget by allocating this sum from the Corporate Contingency.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 One of the purposes of reviewing the Members' Allowances Scheme is to ensure that financial considerations are not a barrier to any person entering public office or assuming a particular role on the Council. By the same token the levels of allowances should be such that financial gain is not seen as an incentive for taking up public office.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4 There are no strategic risk management issues relevant to this report.

Other Officers

- 7.5 None

8 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 8.1 Not applicable

Method of Consultation

- 8.2 Not applicable

Representations Received

- 8.3 Not applicable

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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APPROVED CONFERENCES

<u>Conference</u>	<u>Delegate</u>
Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference	Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission
Chartered Institute of Housing South East Region Conference	Relevant Executive Member
CIPFA	Leader or relevant Executive Member
Institute of Licensing Conference	Licensing & Safety Committee Chair
LACORS Environmental Health and Trading Standards Year Ahead Conference	Relevant Executive Member
LGA Annual Conference	Leader, Leader of the Opposition and one other majority group Member
LGA / ADASS – the National Children's and Adult Services Conference	Executive Members for Adult and Children's Services and Chairmen of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing and Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panels
LGA Annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference	Relevant Executive Member
LGA Group Improvement and Innovation Conference and Exhibition	Relevant Executive Member
Regional Health & Safety Partnership Conference	Relevant Executive Member
SOCITM annual IT conference	Relevant Executive Member