

**REPORT TO:** Council

27 September 2018

**LEAD OFFICER:** Executive Director

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## **Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel - Scheme of Members' Allowances 2018/19**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in respect of the Scheme of Members' Allowances 2018/19.

### **Recommendations**

2. Council is invited to:
  - (a) Consider the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations on the Members' Allowances Scheme as set out in Appendix A to this report (which the Panel estimates will result in savings in the order of £26,736 if approved).
  - (b) Agree a revised Members' Allowances Scheme for 2018/19 with effect from 8 May 2018.
  - (c) Authorise the Executive Director to implement and advertise the new scheme and make any consequential amendments to the Members' Allowances Scheme in Part 6 of the Constitution.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

3. Article 2.05 of the Constitution provides for Council to adopt a Members' Allowances Scheme and review it annually.

### **Background**

4. The Independent Remuneration Panel has undertaken a review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances. The panel met several times during 2017/18 and met again following the elections in May 2018 to consider relevant information and make recommendations.
5. The Panel reviewed the Scheme of Members' Allowances having regard to the implementation, with effect from the May 2018 elections, of the reduction in Council size from 57 to 45 councillors and the revised ward boundaries. This followed a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

### **Considerations**

6. The Independent Remuneration Panel has undertaken a review of the Members'

Allowances Scheme. The Panel's report is attached at Appendix 1. Council is requested to consider the recommendations set out in the report and agree a scheme of allowances to run from 8 May 2018, the date on which Councillors elected on 3 May 2018 came into office.

7. If the Panel's recommendations, including the proposal to award a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) to all Planning Committee members, are adopted this would result in 23 Councillors being entitled to receive SRAs. The Panel is also recommending that the number of SRAs that any one Member may receive should be limited to two, rather than one as at present. If this proposal is agreed, under the current structure, 7 Councillors would be entitled to receive two SRAs.

### **Options**

8. Council must have regard to the recommendations made to it by the Independent Remuneration Panel. However, it is not bound to accept those recommendations.

The options are to:

- (a) Accept in full the Panel's recommendations;
- (b) Reject the Panel's recommendations;
- (c) Make variations to specific elements of the recommendations;
- (d) Seek further information or request the Panel to undertake additional work if required.

### **Implications**

9. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

#### ***Financial***

10. The Panel is recommending an increase in the basic allowance as there will be fewer councillors to undertake the workload. Although the Panel is recommending an increase in the basic allowance from £4,863 to £5,300 per annum, the total cost of basic allowances reduces from £277,191 to £238,500. The Panel is also recommending revisions to SRAs which result in an increase from £100,140 to £112,095.
11. The Panel indicates that its recommendations, if adopted by Council, will achieve a full year saving of £26,736.

#### ***Legal***

12. The Council, in setting its Members' Allowances levels, is obliged to have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel established for this purpose.
13. Whilst the Panel is recommending implementing the changes for the 2018/19 Municipal Year (rather than financial year as normally would be the case), if the Council is minded to accept the changes it may be appropriate to implement the revised scheme from 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018 (the date on which councillors came into office after the election).

### ***Equality and Diversity***

14. Members' Allowances levels should reflect the public service element associated with the role of a District Councillor, but should not discourage candidates from standing as councillors because of unmitigated financial loss.

### **Consultation responses**

15. A questionnaire was sent to all Members of the previous Council and Group Leaders and Members of the previous Council were also given the opportunity to make representations to the Panel.
16. As required by regulation, a notice of receipt of the report from the Panel has been published in the local press.

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

17. The Council should seek to have in place an allowances scheme which both reflects the voluntary public service element of the councillors' role and prevents low allowance levels from acting as a disincentive to potential new councillors through loss of earning opportunities. In achieving this balance, the Council will encourage the continuing recruitment and retention of councillors of sufficient calibre to ensure all its strategic aims are achieved.

**Background Papers:** None

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