

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council 28 February 2013
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director, Corporate Services / Legal and Democratic Services Manager

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2013/14

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in respect of Members' allowances levels for the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Recommendations

2. Council is requested to consider and agree the recommendations for the Members' Allowances Scheme 2013/14, contained in the Independent Remuneration Panel's report attached as **Appendix A** to this report and set out below:
 - (a) That the allowances be increased by the equivalent % amount as the Council agrees to apply to the pay rates of Council staff, to become effective from 1 April 2013.
 - (b) To amend the current Members' Allowances Scheme on the principles contained in the IRP's report and proposed in **Appendix D**, to take effect from 24 May 2013, the day following the Annual Council meeting.
 - (c) Remove from the current Members' Allowances Scheme the paragraph stating that 'No councillor may receive more than one special responsibility allowance' and replace with 'Councillors may receive more than one special responsibility allowance, with the exception of the Cabinet members responsible for Planning and Licensing if they become voting members on those particular committees'.
 - (d) That current arrangements for paying expenses remain unchanged for 2013/14.
 - (e) Requests that further consideration be given by the IRP to make recommendations for amendments to Schedule 2 of the Members' Allowance Scheme for the period 2014/15 in January 2014.
 - (f) That Councillors' subsistence allowances are increased in line with those payments made to staff (as detailed in para 11 of the IRP's report) and the reference to a sandwich allowance be deleted from the Scheme.

Reason for Recommendations

3. Council is required under Article 2.05 to adopt a Members' allowances scheme and review it annually.

Background

4. The Independent Remuneration Panel, comprising Simon Harris, Graham Jagger and Kevin McIntyre, has undertaken an annual review of Members' Allowances levels. The panel has met several times during 2012/13 to consider relevant information and make recommendations.

Considerations

5. The Panel's report is attached at **Appendix A**. The Panel's recommendations are reproduced in paragraph 2 above.

Options

6. Before it makes any amendment to the allowances scheme, Council must have regard to the recommendations made to it by the Independent Remuneration Panel. It is not, however, bound to accept those recommendations.
7. The options are to:
 - (a) Accept in full the Panel's recommendations;
 - (b) Reject the Panel's recommendations and retain the existing scheme of allowances; or
 - (c) Make variations to specific elements of the recommendations.

Implications

8. Financial	None.
Legal	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.
Staffing	None
Risk Management	None
Equality and Diversity	Members' Allowances levels should reflect the public service element associated with the role of District Councillor, but should not discourage nominations from standing as Councillors because of unmitigated financial loss and reduced career advancement opportunities.

Consultations

9. All members of the Council were invited to make representations to the Panel.
10. As required by regulation, a notice of receipt of the report from the Panel will be published in the press.

Consultation with Children and Young People

11. None at present, however, this is a subject that could be explored in the future with the recently formed Youth Council.

Effect on Strategic Aims

12. 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 and career development 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.

Conclusions

13. Council is the only body that can decide on the Members' Allowances Scheme. The recommendations of the Panel are set out in Appendix A, however they may be varied if Members so wish.
14. Members are reminded that,
 - (a) under the present Allowances Scheme, they may, by notice in writing given to the Chief Executive, elect to forgo any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under this scheme, and
 - (b) a councillor not wishing to receive his/her allowance(s) may nominate a charity to which they may be paid.

Background Papers: None

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