

REPORT TO: Council

20 February 2020

LEAD OFFICER: Interim Director of Corporate Services

Follow-up Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel – Scheme of Members’ Allowances 2019/20

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in respect of the Special Responsibility Allowances, relating to the Scheme of Members’ Allowances 2019/20 paid to:
 - The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee
 - The Chairman of the Joint Development Control Committee

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that Council:
 - (a) Consider the Independent Remuneration Panel’s recommendations on proposed revisions to the Scheme of Members’ Allowances 2019/20, as set out in Appendix A to this report.
 - (b) Agree revisions to the Scheme of Members’ Allowances for 2019/20 and, if adopting the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, to approve the implementation of the amendments to Special Responsibility Allowances from the date of adoption of the revised scheme (ie: 20 February 2020).
 - (c) Authorise the Interim Director of Corporate Services to implement and advertise any revisions to the scheme and to make any consequential amendments required to the Scheme of Members’ Allowances in Part 6 of the Constitution.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. Article 2.05 of the Constitution provides for Council to adopt a Scheme of Members’ Allowances. The Council is required, by virtue of Regulation 19 of The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, to have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel before making or amending its Scheme of Members’ Allowances. Council on 26 September 2019 agreed the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the Scheme of Members’ Allowances 2019/20, but requested that it consider increasing the

Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and also consider paying a Special Responsibility Allowance to members of the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee. The Panel's recommendations are set out at Appendix A to this report.

Details

4. Members will recall that the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) reviewed the Scheme of Members' Allowances 2019/20, which were considered by Council at its meeting on 26 September 2019.
5. Council agreed the Panel's recommendations, but requested that the Panel consider increasing the Special Responsibility Allowances for both the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and awarding an allowance to members of the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee.

Options

6. 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

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

Financial

8. If the Panel's recommendations are agreed from 20 February 2020, the total 2019/20 allowances will increase by £277 (taking account of the provision that no Member shall receive more than two Special Responsibility Allowances). The allowance proposed for the Chairman of the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee will only apply when one of our Councillors is Chairman and this position rotates between this authority and Cambridge City Council. This means that the estimated annual increase of these recommendations in a full year would be:
 - £1,025 in 2020/21
 - £3,530 in 2021/22
 - £1,025 in 2022/23 etc.

Legal

9. The Council, in setting its Members' Allowances levels, is obliged, by virtue of Regulation 19 of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, to have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel established for this purpose.

Risks/Opportunities

10. There is a risk that low allowance levels could act as a disincentive to recruiting councillors to the positions under review.

Equality and Diversity

11. Members' Allowances levels should reflect the public service element associated with the role of a District Councillor, but should not discourage candidates from any sector of society from standing as councillors because of unmitigated financial loss. Schemes should also not present barriers to becoming a councillor, for example, by ensuring that allowances are in place to cover the costs of care for dependents.

Consultation responses

12. The Chairman of the Panel met the Chairmen of the both Scrutiny and Overview Committee and the Joint Development Control Committee on Monday 18 November 2019.
13. As required by the relevant regulations, a notice of the receipt of the report from the Panel will be placed in the local press.

Effect on Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

14. 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

Appendices

- Appendix A: Supplement Report of the South Cambridgeshire District Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

Report Author:

Kathrin John – Democratic Services Team Leader
Telephone: (01954) 713030