

Chichester District Council

CABINET

7 March 2023

Members Allowances Scheme - Report of Independent Remuneration Panel

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

2.1 That Cabinet considers the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and advises the Council as to their recommendations.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has a scheme of members' allowances, which is normally reviewed in the first year after the election of a new Council. Concerns were raised at the last meeting of full Council that it was unhelpful that members should make a decision as to the allowances payable to themselves, even allowing for the fact that it would consider a report from independent panel. This report is therefore being presented prior to the impending election to provide a further degree of separation to decisions on adoption of the scheme. The review is due for implementation from 1 April 2023.
- 3.2 The process is governed by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Regulations provide that it is for each local authority to decide its scheme and the amounts to be paid under that scheme. Because it is difficult for councils to consider these matters objectively, they are required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to provide them with advice on their scheme. Local authorities must have regard to this advice, but are not required to follow it another factor which led to the decision to present this report to this Council.
- 3.3. As the Government's guidance explains: "The approach, therefore, is one where questions as to the amounts payable to members are matters for local determination. In this way, councils can take full account of their particular circumstances, including the precise form of their new constitution, and be directly accountable to their electorate. This accountability is sharpened through each council being advised on its own allowances scheme by a local panel whose members are required to be independent."
- 3.4 The report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) dated January 2023 is appended to this report.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

- 4.1. The scheme of allowances should conform to Government regulations and guidance, and be fair to both the councillor and the council taxpayer. It should ensure that councillors are not out-of-pocket, and that their allowances reflect a fair recognition for the time devoted to the various roles they fulfil. The allowances should, therefore, be set at levels that do not impose financial penalties on members for their time and effort or impose an unreasonable burden on council taxpayers.
- 4.2. The regulations require the Council to give public notice of the adoption of a scheme of members' allowances, and then annually publish the total sum paid to each member.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 Commentary on the proposals are set out in detail in the appendix 4 of the full panel report. In outline it recommends a 5% increase in basic allowance, with further increases in line with officer pay until the next review. It further recommends that arrangements for parental leave for members should be made to match that for officers, a small allowance for co-optees and increase in the SRA paid to the leader of the opposition but otherwise that allowance scheme remains unchanged.

6. Alternatives that have been considered

- 6.1 As indicated by the national guidance explained in the introduction, the Cabinet may recommend, and Full Council may adopt, alternatives to the IRP recommendations but should state its full reasons for doing so. If amendments from the independent panel recommendations were to occur the Monitoring Officer would need to advise as to the legality of those reasons.

7. Resource and legal implications

- 7.1 Budget implications are set out in the report. If the recommendations are adopted in full the base budget will generate a net cost of £10,240 being 3.4%. In following years changes to allowances that are linked to staff rates will be changed with those rates.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The IRP consulted members during the course of their work as explained in the report. A detailed questionnaire was sent to all members, and interviews with a large pool of members was undertaken across various levels of experience and across the parties.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

- 9.1 The decision as to remuneration will have an impact upon Council taxpayers and having a fair and clear process of remuneration for members is positive to community views of the members.

10. Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following? If you tick "Yes", list your impact assessment as a background paper in paragraph 13 and explain any major risks in paragraph 9		
	Yes	No
Crime & Disorder: The Council has a duty "to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area". Do the proposals in the report have any implications for increasing or reducing crime and disorder?		No
Climate Change and Biodiversity: Are there any implications for the mitigation of/adaptation to climate change or biodiversity issues? If in doubt, seek advice from the Environmental Strategy Unit (ESU).		No
Human Rights and Equality Impact: You should complete an Equality Impact Assessment when developing new services, policies or projects or significantly changing existing ones. For more information, see Equalities FAQs and guidance on the intranet or contact Corporate Policy.		No – changes are not considered so significant as to required EIA.
Safeguarding and Early Help: The Council has a duty to cooperate with others to safeguard children and adults at risk. Do these proposals have any implication for either increasing or reducing the levels of risk to children or adults at risk? The Council has committed to dealing with issues at the earliest opportunity, do these proposals have any implication in reducing or increasing demand on Council services?		No
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR): Does the subject of the report have significant implications for processing data likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals? Processing that is likely to result in a high risk includes (but is not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systematic and extensive processing activities and where decisions that have legal effects – or similarly significant effects – on individuals. • large scale processing of special categories of data or personal data relation to criminal convictions or offences. • Any larger scale processing of personal data that affects a large number of individuals; and involves a high risk to rights and freedoms e.g. based on the sensitivity of the processing activity. • large scale, systematic monitoring of public areas (including by CCTV). Note - If a high risk is identified a Privacy Impact Assessment must be provided to the Data Protection Officer.		No
Other (Please specify): eg health and wellbeing		

11. Appendices

11.1 Report of the Remuneration Panel

11.2 Appendix one of report : Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel

11.3 Appendix two of the report : Methodology

11.4 Appendix three of the report : Terms of Reference

11.5 Appendix four of the report : Commentary on changes by the panel.

11.6 Appendix five of the report : Summary of feedback from SE employers

12. Background Papers

None