



ANNUAL COUNCIL

17th MAY 2023

REPORT TITLE:	Members Allowances 2023/24
REPORT OF:	Tim Willis, Director – Resources & Section 151 Officer

REPORT SUMMARY

The Council operates a Members' Allowances Scheme which is reviewed annually by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The Members' Allowance Scheme is Chapter 6 of the Council's Constitution, the IRP have reviewed the current scheme and have made recommendations for the 2023/24 Municipal Year and is attached in Appendix A.

The recommendation is for all allowances to stay the same. Although, the IRP report had recommended that member allowances for 2023/24 be increased by 2% (rounded down to the nearest £100) for the basic allowance only. Other allowances were recommended to be remain unchanged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked:

R1. That the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel at Appendix A be noted.

R2. That the Members Allowances at Appendix C be agreed, and delegated authority is given to the Monitoring Officer to amend the constitution.

SUPPORT ING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Authorities (members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require that before Council can determine its Members Allowances for the forthcoming Municipal Year, it must consider a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The IRP held a meeting on the 12th December 2022 to discuss the Member's Allowance Scheme which is reviewed annually and set out in Chapter 6 of the constitution.

The meeting was held in November so any proposals can be in line with the budget cycle.

The analysis of options by the IRP is set out in detail in Sections 10 to 13 of their report as attached at Appendix A.

The IRP were mindful of the function which Councillors perform in protecting and enhancing local democracy by providing representation on issues of local concern and ensuring that the Council remains accountable to the community which it serves. Accordingly, the IRP followed the same principles as in previous years:

- the need for Councillors to come from a wide range of backgrounds
- the necessity to ensure some recompense for the time and effort spent in serving the community, whilst recognising that the work of Councillors should include a substantial voluntary contribution
- recognition of the time and resource demands of training and development, as well as other activities: and
- whilst recognising that individual Members could choose not to take their allowance in whole or part, the IRP were keen to ensure that the scheme should encourage and support local democracy by ensuring that personal financial constraints would not be a bar to office.

Additional factors considered by the IRP in preparing its report to Annual Council 2023 included:

- Budget pressures on the Council and the need for affordability.
- The impact of the cost of living and inflation on the Council and its staff and Members.
- Increasing responsibilities of Local Government
- The Rochford/Brentwood Partnership

Various options were discussed, keeping in mind the principles above. The key options were for member allowances to:

- a. Remain unchanged
- b. Increase by 2% in line with provisional staff increases for 2023/24 (per the draft MTFP. The final MTFP included 4%)
- c. Increase by 7% in line with the average staff increases for 2022/23
- d. Increase basic allowances only by 2%, with other allowances remaining unchanged

It was agreed that the preferred option was a) Remain unchanged. The final proposed Member Allowances and Mayor and Deputy Mayor Allowances are included within Appendix C.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require councils to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council cannot alter or update its existing Scheme of Members Allowances without first considering a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Local authority elected Members are entitled to receive allowances to compensate them for the role that they do and the responsibilities they assume on behalf of the communities they serve. A 'Basic Allowance' is paid to all Members of the authority to reflect the roles that they undertake. A 'Special Responsibility Allowance', is paid to those Members that have particular responsibilities within the Council's constitutional arrangements.

No additional subsistence or travel allowances are paid. However, Annual Council 2013 resolved that 'reasonable expenses' for external training and conferences are reimbursed, as required, and only with advance agreement of the Head of Paid Services.

The timing and process of the IRP's annual review was discussed in 2017/18. It was agreed that it would be more productive and useful to undertake the review alongside the Council's budget setting process in order to enable Members to scrutinise and consider the IRP's recommendations as part of their budget deliberations and decisions. This timing and process was put into place during 2018/19 has continued since then.

The IRP reviewed parental leave and carers allowances and was subsequently included within the members allowance scheme in 2019/20.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel re. 2023/24

Appendix B: Schedule of proposed 2% Members Allowances for 2023/24

Appendix C: Schedule of unchanged Members Allowances for 2023/24

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual reports of the Independent Remuneration Panel to Brentwood Borough Council are publicly available at www.brentwood.gov.uk

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Annual Council	18.05.2022
Annual Council	19.05.2021