

Brentwood Borough Council

Members Allowances 2018/19

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

May 2018

Introduction

1. This report presents the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and our recommendations for the scheme for 2018/19.

Background

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 Chief Executive.

The Independent Remuneration Panel

5. The Independent Remuneration Panel 2018/19 comprised of
 - Mr Michael Hawkins
 - Mr Steve Marsh
 - Mr John Boylin

Existing Scheme

6. At the meeting of Annual Council on the 17th May 2017 it was resolved that revised Members Allowances be approved, being no more than £269,662.94.

Political Structure

7. The Council consists of 37 members.
8. The current committee structure of the council consists of the following:
 - Full Council
 - Audit Committee
 - Community, Health & Housing Committee
 - Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee

- Environment & Enforcement Committee
- Planning & Licensing Committee
- Policy, Projects & Resources Committee

9. The proposed Committee Structure of the Council is as follows:-

- Full Council
- Audit and Scrutiny Committee
- Community, Health & Housing Committee
- Regulatory and Governance Committee
- Environment & Enforcement Committee
- Planning & Licensing Committee
- Policy, Projects & Resources Committee

Our Approach and considerations

10. The deliberations of the IRP were informed by:

- The Council's changes in Committee structure 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and those proposed for 2018.
- Decision on BBC Member Allowances for 2012/13 – 2017/18
- Desktop research and contextual information regarding the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Previous reports and recommendations from the IRP and Annual Council.

11. 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 the previous four 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 hindrance.

12. Additional factors considered by the IRP in preparing its report to Annual Council 2018 included:

- Budget pressures on the Council

13. The options considered by the IRP included:

Option	Analysis
That members allowances for 2018/19 remain unchanged. However, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members Allowances had increased by 1% in 2014/15, the first increase since 2011/12. There had been an overall reduction in 2015/16 of £4,618.71. • New Committee arrangements had been adopted in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. • There was proposed to be the same number of committees in 2018/19.
That members allowances for 2018/19 be reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been an overall reduction in 2015/16 of £4,618.71. • There was one less committee in 2016/17.
That members allowances for 2018/19 be increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was one less committee in 2016/17. • Staff received a one off 1% pay award in 2017/18 due to the break-even financial outturn achieved for 2016/17.

Other Matters

14. The IRP also considered the timing and process for their annual review and agreed that it would be more productive and useful if they undertook their review alongside the council's budget setting process. This would enable Members to scrutinize and consider the IRP's recommendations as part of their budget deliberations and decisions.

15. The IRP also discussed what Childcare/Maternity Policies were available to Members and was this for the IRP to review.

Recommendations

16. After careful consideration of all the information provided the Independent Remuneration Panel recommend the following:

- (i) That members allowances for 2018/19 remain unchanged.

<u>Members Allowances 2018-19</u>	Recommendation 2018-19
Basic Allowance	5,950.80
Leader	13,086.25
Deputy Leader	6,317.50
Leader of Main Opposition	5,318.75
Leader of Minority Opposition	2,658.92
Committee Chair(s) – Audit/ Regulatory and Governance will be halved	3,545.83
Committee Vice(s) - Audit/ Regulatory and Governance will be halved	967.15

- (ii) It was recognised that Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral duties incur significantly more personal expenses than the present allowances cover. On the principle that no Councillor should be precluded from allowing their names to be considered for election to these posts on cost grounds, the following modest increases are recommended.

<u>Members Allowances 2018-19</u>	Recommendation 2018-19
Mayor	3,500
Deputy Mayor	1,000

- (iii) That a £500 contingency budget is provided for the Mayor/Deputy, should the increase in allowance does not cover their Mayoral activities for 2018/19.