

Council: Annual Council	Date: 18 May 2022
Subject: Members Allowances 2022/23	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Corporate Director (Finance and Resources)	Public
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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 2022/23 Municipal Year and is attached in Appendix A.

Following the IRP meeting held on 29th November 2021, the IRP report has recommended that member allowances for 2022/23 remain unchanged.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked:

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

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

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The IRP reviewed a Parental Leave Policy and conditions for a carers allowances scheme and was subsequently included within the members allowance scheme in 2019/20.

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

6. The IRP held a meeting on the 29th November 2021 to discuss the Member's Allowance Scheme which is reviewed annually and set out in Chapter 6 of the constitution.
7. The meeting was held in November so any proposals can be in line with the budget cycle.
8. 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.
9. 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.

10. Additional factors considered by the IRP in preparing its report to Annual Council 2022 included:

- Budget pressures on the Council and the need for affordability.
- The impact of Covid-19 on the Council and its staff and Members.
- The Rochford/Brentwood Partnership

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

- Remain unchanged
- Increase by 2% in line with provisional increases for staff

12. Following debate and discussion It was agreed that the preferred option was that all allowances a) remain unchanged.

13. Subsequently following the elections on the 5th May, it has been proposed to amend the Committee structure, by changing the terms of reference to two of the Committee. The number of the Committees has not been changed to ensure the member allowance budget still remains within £275,800 as suggested by the IRP. The proposed Committee structure for 2022/23 is as follows:

- Full Council (Annual, Ordinary & Extraordinary)
- Planning & Licensing Committee
- Audit & Scrutiny Committee
- Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee
- Community, Environment & Enforcement Committee
- Housing Committee

14. The final proposed Member Allowances 2022/23 including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Allowances, along with the amended Committee structure is attached within Appendix B.

Reasons for Recommendation

15. 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

Consultation

16. The Independent Remuneration Panel held a meeting on the 29th November 2021 with officers and the leader. Minutes were taken, and the Panel considered a series of contextual information which is set out within their report.

References to Corporate Plan

17. Meets objective of the corporate plan by ensuring the Council is managed efficiently and effectively.

Implications

Financial Implications

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18. The proposed Members Allowances as outlined in Appendix B has been included within the 2022/23 budget.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer

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19. The statutory requirements on the Council are set out in the body of the report and the recommendations sets out the necessary steps to ensure compliance.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director (Planning and Economy)

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20. There are no direct economic implications from this report.

Background Papers

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

Appendices to this report

Appendix A: Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel re. 2022/23

Appendix B: Schedule of proposed Members Allowances for 2022/23