

Brentwood Borough Council

Members' Allowances 2016/17

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

May 2016

Introduction

1. This report presents the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and our recommendations for the scheme for 2016/17.

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 Head of Paid Services.

The Independent Remuneration Panel

5. The Independent Remuneration Panel 2016/17 comprised of
 - Mr Mike Hawkins
 - Mr Noel Otley
 - Mr John Boylin

Existing Scheme

6. At the meeting of Ordinary Council on the 10th June 2015 it was resolved that revised Members Allowances be approved, being no more than £274,175.92.

Political Structure

7. The Council consists of 37 members.
8. The current committee structure of the council consists of the following:
 - Full Council
 - Audit, Scrutiny & Transformation Committee
 - Community & Health Committee
 - Economic Development Committee
 - Environment & Housing Management Committee
 - Planning & Licensing Committee
 - Policy, Finance & Resources Committee

Our Approach and considerations

8. The deliberations of the IRP were informed by:
 - The Council's changes in Committee structure 2013, 2014, 2015 and those proposed for 2016.
 - Benchmarking information from Shire Districts in Essex.
 - Desktop research and contextual information regarding the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
 - The Council's decision to provide no salary increase for employees.
 - Previous reports and recommendations from the IRP.
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 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 bar to office.

10. Additional factors considered by the IRP in preparing its report to Annual Council 2016 included:

- The current proposals in Essex for devolution
- Budget pressures on the Council

11. The options considered by the IRP included:

Option	Analysis
That members allowances for 2016/17 remain unchanged	<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 and were proposed for 2016/17. • There was proposed one less committee in 2016/17.
That members allowances for 2015/16 be reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been an overall reduction in 2015/16 of £4,618.71. • There was proposed one less committee in 2016/17.
That members allowances for 2015/16 be increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no proposed annual increase in salary for employees. • There was proposed one less committee in 2016/17.

Other Matters

12. 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.

Recommendations

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

- (i) That members allowances for 2016/17 remain unchanged as follows

<u>Members Allowances 2016-17</u>	Recommendation 2016-17
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)	3,545.83
Committee Vice(s)	967.15
Mayor	3,300.00
Deputy Mayor	750.00