

**FULL COUNCIL
26 FEBRUARY 2020**

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT – FEBRUARY 2020

Responsible Officer: Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer), Kathryn Tebbey

Reason for Report: Following a fundamental review of the Member Allowances Scheme, the report sets out the Independent Remuneration Panel's views for consideration by Council to set a Scheme of Allowances from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

- a. The Basic Allowance to be paid to all Councillors remains at the current level of £5112.15 p.a., with any increases being linked to but not greater than the staff pay award.
- b. Special Responsibility Allowances ("SRA") be paid to the following Members at the levels indicated:

Position	Weighting basic	x	SRA
Leader of the Council	3.00		£15,336
Deputy Leader	1.50		£7668
Cabinet Member	1.25		£6390
Scrutiny Committee Chair	1.25		£6390
PDG Chair	0.75		£3834
Audit Committee Chair	0.75		£3834
Planning Committee Chair	1.25		£6390
Licensing/Regulatory Chair	0.25		£1278
Standards Chair	0.25		£1278
Chairman of the Council	0.50		£2556

- c. No Member should be entitled to claim more than **one** Special Responsibility Allowance.
- d. Carers' allowances be calculated on the current basis namely, the actual expenditure up to the national living wage of a person over 25.
- e. That travel allowances be linked to HMRC rates and calculated at the national levels indicated, currently:
 - 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles
 - 25p per mile thereafter
 - 5p per mile per passenger carried (up to a maximum of 4 passengers, payable to the driver)
 - 20p per mile for push bikes
 - 24p per mile for motorcycles

NB: To be increased in line with HMRC rates from 1 April 2020 once known.

- f. That subsistence allowances only be paid when councillors are conducting approved duties outside of the Mid Devon District Council area (where refreshments are not provided by the host) and that they be linked to those of the staff, currently these are as follows in each case up to a maximum of:

• Breakfast	£7.70
• Lunch	£10.63
• Tea	£4.18
• Dinner	£13.15

NB: To be increased in line with HMRC rates from 1 April 2020 once known.

- g. That all claims for travel and subsistence reimbursement be accompanied by an appropriate receipt.
- h. That an annual digital allowance of £150 continues to be paid to Members using digital devices only.
- i. The Council considers the removal of the digital allowance by the time of the next District Council election.
- j. That the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer may consider the payment of any additional claims or support arrangements that fall outside the scope of the scheme to support Members with additional needs.
- k. That Members of the Authority are not entitled to pensions and neither the basic allowance nor SRA be treated as an allowance in respect of which pensions are payable.

Financial Implications: The recommendations do not propose any financial increase - there are no additional financial implications for the Council other than the creation of an additional Cabinet Member post and a consequential payment of an additional SRA.

Budget and Policy Framework: No implications.

Legal Implications: The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 require that an Independent Remuneration Panel reviews Members' Allowances and makes recommendations to Council.

Risk Assessment: Failure to follow the Members' Allowances Regulations could leave the Council open to challenge.

Equality Impact Assessment: No equality issues identified for this report.

Impact on Climate Change: No impacts identified for this report.

1.0 Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel are required to meet each year to recommend a Members Scheme of Allowances for the following financial year. Accordingly, the Panel have met on several occasions over the last twelve months to consider not only recommending a scheme for the following year, but also to conduct a fundamental review of the entire scheme.
- 1.2 The Panel considered comments made by Members themselves via a questionnaire and conducted a number of face to face interviews with Cabinet Members, Committee Chairmen, the Chairman of the Council, Policy Development Group Members and Planning Committee Members. In addition to this, the Panel conducted a benchmarking exercise with similar councils across the South West and analysed comments made by 'retiring' Members in an exit survey conducted following the election in May 2019. The results and conclusions drawn from these sources of evidence are detailed in the Panel's report.

2.0 The Panel's Recommendations

- 2.1 The Panel do not consider that there is evidence available to them to support a finding of a significant change in the workload of Members since the last time they met and, therefore, the Panel are not recommending any increase for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. However, the Panel does recognise that, following the election in May 2019, the Council now has a new administration and that the Council continues to experience a period of change. Members are encouraged to reflect on what evidence might assist the Panel in its deliberations during the coming year to inform any recommendations they may make for the 2021 – 2022 Member Allowances Scheme.
- 2.2 The accompanying report from the IRP (Appendix 1) proposes 11 recommendations for consideration by the Council (as set out above). A draft Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2020 – 2021 is attached at Appendix 2.

Contact for more Information: Kathryn Tebbey, Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer) or Sarah Lees 01884 234310, Member Services Officer.