

**FULL COUNCIL
6 JANUARY 2021**

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT – JANUARY 2021

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

Reason for Report: The report sets out the Independent Remuneration Panel's views for consideration by Council to set a Scheme of Allowances from 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. The Basic Allowance to be paid to all Councillors remains at the current level of £5252.70 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		£15,758.10
Deputy Leader	1.50		£7,879.05
Cabinet Member	1.25		£6,565.88
Scrutiny Committee Chair	1.25		£6,565.88
PDG Chair	0.75		£3,939.53
Audit Committee Chair	0.75		£3,939.53
Planning Committee Chair	1.25		£6,565.88
Licensing/Regulatory Chair	0.25		£1,313.18
Standards Chair	0.25		£1,313.18
Chairman of the Council	0.50		£2,626.35

- 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)
 - 25p per mile for push bikes
 - 24p per mile for motorcycles

NB: To be increased in line with HMRC rates from 1 April 2021 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 £7.87
- Lunch £10.86
- Tea £4.27
- Dinner £13.44

NB: To be increased in line with HMRC rates from 1 April 2021 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. 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.
- j. 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 – therefore there are no additional financial implications for the Council other than those which may be incurred as a result of the link with the staff pay award.

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 met via Zoom on 25 November 2020.

1.2 The Panel gave consideration to:

- The latest survey of Members Allowances across the South West.
- The on-going Governance Review, the outcome of which may have implications for a future Members Allowances Scheme.
- Virtual meetings and the continuation of decision making at Mid Devon District Council despite the pandemic.
- A significant increase in Members' reliance on IT devices since the start of the pandemic.
- The absence of any adverse comment from Members regarding the current scheme or representations for change or improvements needing to be made.

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 2021 to 31 March 2022 (other than a link to any staff pay award).

2.2 The accompanying report from the IRP (Appendix 1) sets out their reasoning and proposes 10 recommendations for consideration by the Council (as set out above). A draft Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2021 – 2022 is attached at Appendix 2. This draft scheme is the subject of the recommendations above.

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