

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT

Responsible Officer: District Solicitor

Reason for Report: To determine the Members' Scheme of Allowances for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Members' Allowances Scheme in Appendix 2 be adopted for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Financial Implications: If the increase in the Basic Allowance is approved there will be a slight increase in the amount of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's) paid. This is because SRA's are based upon a multiplier of the Basic Allowance. This would result in a total increase of circa £2885 for next year. The recommendations do not propose any other financial increases – 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: N/A

Legal Implications: None beyond those covered in this report.

Risk Assessment: The Council must take account of the IRP's report to avoid potential successful challenge of its Scheme.

Equality Impact Assessment: None beyond those issues identified in this report.

Impact on Climate Change: N/A

1.0 Background

1.1 The Council is required to consider its Members' Scheme of Allowances taking account of a relevant report of its Independent Remuneration Panel before making any changes to the allowances for the following financial year. Accordingly, the Panel convened in October and November 2021 to consider the scheme for 2022/23.

1.2 The Panel's full report is included in Appendix 1. The report sets out the range of information the Panel considered, its findings and reasons for its recommendations.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 A draft Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2022 – 2023 which incorporates all of the IRP's recommendation is attached at Appendix 2. The IRP proposed amendments to the current scheme are limited to the following:

(a) Removal of IT Allowance of £150 per annum;

- (b) Increase of Basic Allowance by £150 to £5402.70 per annum (existing inflationary increases as outlined in the current policy still applying);
 - (c) The existing Special Responsibility Allowance multipliers remain, but the amounts payable be rounded up / down to the nearest pound; and
 - (d) Inclusion of a Parental Leave Policy as set out in paragraph 3.17 of the IRP report.
- 2.2 Taking account of the available evidence regarding the workload of Members during 2021/22, the Panel did not consider there was any change sufficient to warrant a revision to the Basic Allowance or the SRA multipliers beyond the existing inflationary rises. It considered the Digital Allowance should be incorporated into the Basic Allowance, it being clear that the use of IT was now well established amongst Members. The annual rounding up and down of the SRA was also included in its recommendation for administrative simplicity.
- 2.3 The main change proposed to the Scheme concerns the introduction of a Parental Leave Policy, for which some local authorities already have provision. It provides clarity where none has existed to date. Paragraph 3.17 of the IRP Report covers the provisions for payment of the allowances during relevant periods of absence from council work. These proposals have been incorporated into the draft scheme at paragraphs 9 to 12 (Appendix 2). The provisions are compatible with relevant equality principles.

Contact for more Information:

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