

Report for: FULL COUNCIL

Date of Meeting:	20 December 2023
Subject:	Independent Remuneration Panel Report
Responsible Officer:	District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: IRP Report Appendix 2: Draft Members Allowances Scheme 2024/2025

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To receive a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel to determine the Members' Scheme of Allowances for 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Recommendation:

That the Members' Allowances Scheme in Appendix 2 be adopted for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

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 early December 2023 to consider the scheme for 2024/2025.

- 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.
- 1.3 Much consideration was given as to whether to recommend that Members receive a lump sum based on that approved for staff, however, applying this would have equated to a circa 32% rise in the Basic Allowance for next year. Having discounted this, the Panel continued to be of the opinion that the link with the staff pay award was an important one and therefore agreed to recommend the average percentage staff salary rise between Spinal Column Points 2 – 43 which was 6.44%. The Panel felt comfortable with that (and the resulting impact on Special Responsibility Allowances) given that Members also faced cost of living rises as well as the wider population.
- 1.4 The Panel were keen for Members’ of the new administration (many of whom were new to local government at district level) to have experienced a full year in office before seeking their views as to their remuneration and whether it provided adequate recompense for their workloads and levels of responsibility. Therefore the review on this occasion was conducted as a ‘light touch’ with the full intention of undertaking a thorough Fundamental Review during 2024. As a minimum this would include questionnaires and face to face interviews as well as the usual comparative data with other similar councils.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 A draft Scheme of Members’ Allowances for 2024 – 2025 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. The Basic Allowance is increased in line with the recently agreed average percentage increase of the staff pay award which is 6.44% thereby increasing it from £6000 to £6386.40 p.a rounding up to £6387 (as NJC would do for staff salaries).
 - b. Special Responsibility Allowances be paid to the following Members at the levels indicated:

Position	Current Council approved weightings	Recommended SRA’s (based upon a BA of £6387)
Leader of the Council	2.00	12,773

Deputy Leader's	1.00	6,387
Cabinet Member	1.00	6,387
Scrutiny Committee Chair	1.00	6,387
PDG Chair	0.50	3,194
Audit Committee Chair	0.50	3,194
Planning Committee Chair	1.00	6,387
Licensing/Regulatory Chair	0.25	1,597
Standards Chair	0.25	1,597
Chairman of the Council	0.50	3,194

- 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
- (* To be uplifted once the rates for 2024/2025 are known).
- f. That subsistence allowances be linked to those of the staff, currently these are as follows in each case up to a maximum of:
- Breakfast £9.71
 - Lunch £13.40
 - Tea £5.26
 - Evening Meal £16.58
- (* To be uplifted once the rates for 2024/2025 are known).
- g. That **all** claims for travel and subsistence reimbursement be accompanied by an appropriate receipt.

h. That a full Fundamental Review is carried out in relation to the Scheme of Members Allowances for 2025/2026 during 2024.

Financial Implications: If the increase in the Basic Allowance is approved from £6000 to £6387 p.a. there will be a corresponding 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 overall increase of circa £21,868 for next year:

- 42 Members x £387 (based on 6.44% increase) = £16,254
- Special Responsibility Allowances increase (based on weightings applied to the BA) = a total of £5,614

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 average staff percentage increase in pay.

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.

Impact on Climate Change: N/A

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

Relationship to Corporate Plan: N/A

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151
Date: 12/12/23

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 12/12/23

Chief Officer: Stephan Walford
Agreed on behalf of the Chief Executive
Date: 12/12/23

Cabinet member notified: (yes/no)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Maria De Leburne
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