

## **Independent Remuneration Panel Report – July 2015**

**Responsible Officer:** Head of Communities and Governance and Monitoring Officer

**Reason for Report:** The Independent Remuneration Panel had made a number of recommendations to Council on 29 April 2015 which had been approved. One of these was that they undertake an interim review to ascertain whether any changes to the Scheme were needed in advance of a more Fundamental Review over the next 12 months. The Panel consider that there are a number of areas within the current scheme which do need amending in the short term and are therefore recommending that an interim scheme be put in place (to include these small changes) from 1 August 2015 until 31 July 2016.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- a. That there be no changes to the existing Members Allowances Scheme until 31 July 2016 except in the areas below.
- b. That the Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee receive a Special Responsibility Allowance for each deputised meeting that is one twelfth of the SRA paid to the Chairman of the Planning Committee.
- c. The payment of £15 per month for Broadband costs should cease for all Members as from 1 August 2015 with the expectation that these costs will be covered within the Basic Allowance.
- d. For Members using a Council iPad the payment of £75 as an IT allowance per year should cease as from 1 August 2015.
- e. For Members using their own digital devices the payment of £75 should continue as from 1 August 2015.
- f. For Members receiving paper copies of minutes and agendas but using their own equipment to communicate with the Council and their electorate by email, the payment of £75 per year should continue as from 1 August 2015.
- g. The Chairman's Allowance be included as a Special Responsibility Allowance within the Members Allowances Scheme and that £2323 be the amount paid for his or her constitutional role in chairing full Council meetings.
- h. Payments with regard to his or her Civic role should be paid retrospectively and only on production of a receipt/s.
- i. That the IRP re-examine expenses in relation to the Chairman's Civic role as part of the Fundamental Review.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** None

**Financial Implications:** The Panel's recommendations, if approved, will result in a saving to the Council of approximately £13k. This is made up of savings in relation to Broadband costs, the provision of Council rather than privately owned digital devices and printing and postage costs relating to committee agendas.

**Legal Implications:** The Local Authorities (Member's Allowances) Regulations 2003 require that an Independent Remuneration Panel consider Members Allowances and make recommendation to Council.

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

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Following Council's approval of the Panel's recommendations on 29 April 2015, the Panel met again on 22 May 2015 to consider whether any changes were needed to the scheme in advance of a more Fundamental Review taking place over the next 12 months.
- 1.2 Having received bench marked information for their initial meeting in February 2015 they were keen to know why so many local authorities within the south west paid a Special Responsibility Allowance to Vice Chairmen of Planning Committees. They also wanted an understanding of the levels of IT allowances paid elsewhere. In addition to this they wanted to consider the Chairman's Allowance as well as provide clarification regarding tax and National Insurance as it affects all Members Allowances.
- 1.3 A full report of their considerations is attached at Appendix 1 and a revised scheme based upon their recommendations is attached at Appendix 2.

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**Circulation of the Report:**