

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members Allowances 2023/24

Strategy & Resources Committee Thursday, 1 December 2022

Report of: Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

This report sets out recommendations on the Members Allowance Scheme 2023/24 following a review by the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel ('IRP'). The Council is required to establish an IRP to review Members Allowances. The last review was completed in April 2019. In accordance with statutory requirements, the Council is required to receive a recommendation from the IRP every four years, where the basic allowance is adjusted annually according to an index.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

Contact officer Alex Berry, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
aberry@tandridge.gov.uk

Recommendations to Committee:

1. That, having had regard to the views of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), the Committee consider the recommendations listed in paragraph 4 regarding Member Allowances, and recommend to Council either:
 - a. The adoption of IRP recommendations 1-3 with effect from the start of the 2023/24 Municipal Year.
 - b. The adoption of an alternative Members Allowance Scheme with effect from the start of the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

2. That the Committee agree to recommendation 4 of the IRP that a full review of Members' Allowances be undertaken in Autumn 2024.

Reason for recommendation:

These recommendations ensure compliance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

Introduction and background

- 1 In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and guidance from the government, the Council is required to consider a report from the IRP every four years, if the Basic Allowance is index linked. The last review was completed in April 2019, and the Basic Allowance was linked to staff pay awards. It is therefore necessary for the Council to consider a report from the IRP before April 2023.
- 2 The IRP was formed in October 2022 and has reviewed Members' Allowances as outlined in its report, which is attached as appendix A.
- 3 The IRP report contains the recommendations of the IRP, which are listed below.

Basic Allowance	
Recommendation 1:	The Basic Allowance be retained at the current level (£4,317) and remains index linked to staff pay awards.
Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)	
Recommendation 2:	That Special Responsibility Allowances be retained at the current level and remain index linked to staff pay awards.
Travelling and Subsistence Expenses and Dependents' Carers' Allowance	
Recommendation 3:	That Travel and Subsistence Expenses and Dependents' Carers' Allowance be retained at the current level.
Future Review	
Recommendation 4:	That a full review of Members' Allowances be undertaken in autumn 2024.

- 4 Part E of the Constitution makes provision for the Committee to recommend to Full Council matters relating to Members' Allowances. The Committee are therefore asked to consider the recommendations of the IRP and recommend to Full Council for consideration at its meeting on 15 December 2022 either:
- a) The adoption of IRP recommendations 1-3 with effect from the start of the 2023/24 Municipal Year; or
 - b) The adoption of an alternative Members Allowance Scheme with effect from the start of the 2023/24 Municipal Year.
- 5 The Committee may also recommend to Full Council that a further review of Members' Allowances is undertaken following the implementation of new electoral arrangements following the boundary review, as per recommendation 4 of the IRP.

Consultation

- 6 Details of consultation undertaken by the IRP as part of its review can be found in appendix 2 to the IRP report.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

A decision to retain Member allowances at the current level would be accommodated within the existing budget, albeit with a small increase in cost if a staff pay award is agreed. The Draft Budget for 2023/24 presented to this Committee assumes that the recommendations, as laid out by the IRP, are approved. An alternative outcome would need to be factored into the emerging final budget which will return to Committee in January. This should be considered in light of affordability constraints.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require each local authority to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel for the purpose of reviewing and recommending a scheme for the payment of Members' Allowances. The Council must have regard to the recommendations of the IRP before it makes changes to the Members' Allowance Scheme.

Regulation 10(4) requires that where any index is used for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances, it must not rely on that index for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the independent remuneration panel. The last review was completed in April 2019.

Regulation 20(2) requires that an independent remuneration panel shall consist of at least three members none of whom:

- (i) is also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of such an authority; or

(ii) is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority.

The three members of the IRP are individuals, none of whom is disqualified from being or becoming a member of a relevant authority.

Equality

The Committee should have regard to the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 which requires due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Climate change

There are no significant environmental or sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Independent Remuneration Panel report to Tandridge District Council on Members Allowances

Background papers

None

----- end of report -----