

Report to Council

Subject: Independent Remuneration Panel - Report and recommendations for 2023/24

Date: 3 March 2023

Author: Democratic Services Manager

Purpose

To inform Council of the latest report from the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), relating to member remuneration for 2023/24, and invite Council to consider the recommendations made by the Panel.

Recommendations

- 1) To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and whether to accept the recommendations contained in the report;**
- 2) Consequent on those recommendations, to agree the schedule of members' allowances for 2023/24 as attached at Appendix 2 to this report; and**
- 3) To authorise the Monitoring Officer to make appropriate amendments to section 29 of the Constitution to reflect any changes to the members' allowances scheme agreed and to publish a notice confirming the amendments to the scheme, as detailed in the report.**

Background

The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel met in January to carry out its annual review of members' allowances.

Following that meeting, the Panel prepared a report to members with regard to the level of members' allowances to be payable for 2023/24.

Proposal

The Panel's report, including associated recommendations, is attached at Appendix 1. Should Council be minded to accept the Panel's recommendations on allowances, then the level of allowances to be paid to members for 2023/24, subject to any pay award, will be as set out at Appendix 2.

Alternative Options

The Independent Remuneration Panel is advisory in nature so Council could decide on an alternative scheme of allowances payable to members.

Financial Implications

Should Council accept the Panel's recommendations, then costs can be accommodated from within existing budgets.

Legal Implications

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) set out that local authorities must establish a panel to review and advise on the level of allowances payable to members. The Council must have regard to the recommendation made by the Panel. If the recommendations are approved, the regulations requires the Council to publish a public notice confirming the amendments to the Members Allowances Scheme.

Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

There are no environmental sustainability implications arising from this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel 2023/24
Appendix 2 – Indicative schedule of Members Allowances 2023/24

Background Papers

None identified

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by: Mike Hill
Date: 21.01.2023

Financial Officer

Approved by: Fran Whyley
Date: 20.01.2023

Monitoring Officer

APPENDIX 1

Report of the Gedling Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the 2023/24 year.

Introduction

- 1.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel was established under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) to provide advice and recommendations to the Council on its Members' Allowances Scheme and amounts to be paid under it.
- 1.2 The panel received administrative support from the Democratic Services Manager.
- 1.3 The Panel's Terms of Reference are as follows:

The Independent Remuneration Panel will review, on an annual basis, the level and extent of allowance payments made to Borough Councillors having particular regard to:

- The role of Councillor and the importance of effective democratically accountable local government and community leadership;
- The scale and complexity of the Council's operations and changes taking place in the various roles Councillors are expected to fulfil and the particular responsibilities attached to the various roles;
- The time commitment required from Councillors to enable both the Council and individual Councillors to be effective in their various roles; and
- The importance of encouraging people from all backgrounds and circumstances to serve in local government without suffering financial loss as a consequence of their membership of the Council.

The Panel will also:

- Consider the level and extent of travel and subsistence allowances including dependent carers' allowance; and
- Review the payment of allowances and expenses payable in relation to attendance at seminars, conferences and other council business.

The Panel's operation:

- The Panel is comprised of three Independent Members
- Panel members are recruited by public advertisement and should be of good standing in the community either as a resident and/or a stakeholder in the Borough. Ideally members should have sound

knowledge of employment and financial matters with an understanding of the operations of a local authority.

- The Panel is advisory in nature and the recommendations it makes are not binding on the authority. However, the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) requires Council to "have regard" to the Panel's recommendations when setting its allowances.

Process

- 2.1 A Strategic Review of Members' Allowances took place in 2015. The Review looked in detail at all allowances paid to Members including the Basic Allowance and all positions attracting a Special Responsibility Allowance. The Review resulted in a completely rewritten scheme of members' allowances. The Panel made a series of recommendations to Council in March 2016 and a new scheme was agreed by Members.
- 2.2 For the 2020 year, following the 2019 borough elections, Council adopted a revised scheme of members' allowances that better reflected the political makeup of the authority. In particular adjustments to the scheme were made to ensure that the amount of a special responsibility allowance was better aligned to the size of a political group. Council also approved a new list of approved duties and a rate at which dependent carers allowance can be claimed.
- 2.3 For the 2022/23 year, a cash settlement was offered to senior local government staff, which aligned to an increase of 2.66% for SCP 82. This percentage increase is due to be applied to member's allowances accordingly and will be backdated to April 2022.
- 2.4 As is usual practice, all members of the Council were contacted directly and asked for their views on the current levels of allowances paid to members
- 2.5 No submissions were received from any members of the Council or Political Groups.
- 2.6 All members of the Panel contributed their views (John Flowers, Ted Mills and Paul Mullins)

Panel's Deliberations

- 3.1 The Panel noted that no submissions were received on Members' Allowances from members. Furthermore the panel heard that there had been no material change to duties performed by councillors since the last review. They heard the impact that the Covid 19 pandemic

had on the council's operations and financial position, and also considered the impact of the cost of living and energy crises.

- 3.2 The Panel next noted that the National Pay Award for senior local government staff had yet to be offered or agreed for the 2023-24 financial year, although an offer of 1.5-2% was likely. In previous years the Panel had recommended that all member allowances increase in line with the pay award for Senior Managers (SCP 82) and saw no reason not to make this recommendation for the coming year.

Basic Allowance

- 3.3 On the issue of the Basic Allowance the Panel noted that no representations had been received from Members and concluded that their findings and recommendations from the previous review were still relevant. A recommendation to increase the basic allowance in line with the pay award for Senior Managers (SCP 82) was therefore agreed.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

- 3.4 As no new information had come to light since the last meeting, there was no need to suggest any amendments to the levels of Special Responsibility Allowances that are currently paid. A recommendation to increase the special responsibility allowance in line with the pay award for Senior Managers (SCP 82) was therefore agreed
- 3.5 Finally the Panel considered the allowances paid to co-opted members as well as mileage, subsistence and dependent carers' allowances. The panel concluded that no adjustments to these were necessary.

Parental Leave Policy for Councillors

- 3.6 The Panel noted the draft Parental Leave Policy for Councillors and the impact on basic and special responsibility allowances this would have. They deemed that the policy was acceptable subject to member consultation and later approval.

Recommendations

- 1) That all Members' Allowances payable from 1 April 2023 should be increased by the same percentage in line with the pay award made to local government senior management; and
- 2) That no other changes to the members' allowances scheme should be made for the 2023/24 year; and

- 3) That a full review of the scheme be recommended for the 2024/25 year, after the local elections; and
- 4) That the Member Allowance Scheme reflects the parental leave policy for councillors, in terms of payments of allowances from 1 April 2023, if approved

APPENDIX 2 (please note that the 2023/24 pay award has NOT been applied to these figures)

From 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2024 inclusive:

	Percentage of the Leader's Allowance	Per Annum (£)
Leader of Council	100%	15,446.15
Deputy Leader of the Council	80%	12,356.92
Cabinet Members	50%	7,723.08
Leader of Main Opposition Group	25% plus £160.99 per elected member*	4,988.47
Leader of Minority Opposition groups	Flat fee of £160.99 per elected member*	321.98 (ind group) 482.97 (lib group)
Level One Committee Chair (Planning and Environment and Licensing Committees)	35%	5,406.15
Level Two Committee Chair (Audit and Overview and Scrutiny Committees)	25%	3,861.54
Level Three Committee Chair (Joint Consultative and Safety and Standards Committee)	10%	1,544.62
Business Manager of Majority and Main Opposition Groups	Flat fee of £160.99* per elected member	4507.72 (majority) 1126.93 (main opp)
Mayor	37.5%	5,792.31
Deputy Mayor	12.5%	1,930.77
Policy Adviser	12.5%	1,930.77

1. From 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2024 the Basic Allowance payable to each Councillor

4,497.12

2. Co-opted Members

500.00

3. Dependent Carers Allowance of up to £9.30 per hour payable to cover childcare and dependents. The person providing the care may not be a close relative defined as spouse, partner (opposite or same sex cohabitantes), parents, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents and grandchildren. The paid care attendant must also sign a receipt to show that they have cared for the dependant during the hours claimed for.

4. Travelling and subsistence payable at the currently in force NJC employee rate.

*based on current membership at Feb 23 of number of Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent members