

Report to Council

Subject: Independent Remuneration Panel - Report and recommendations for 2026/27

Date: 21 January 2026

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 2026/27 and to 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, or to propose an alternative; and
- 2) Consequent on the IRP recommendations being accepted, to agree the schedule of members' allowances for 2026/27 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

1. Background

- 1.1. The last IRP recommendations were debated at the Council meeting in January 2025 with members choosing not to accept some of the panel's recommendations – namely to remove the allowance for the Business Managers. It is also useful to note that at the meeting in January 2024, members agreed to link both Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances to increase in line with Chief Officer's local authority pay awards until the 2028/29 financial year.
- 1.2. The pay award was agreed in August 2025 and payments to members were made in August, being backdated to April 2025. For the 2025/26 year, allowances were increased by 3.2%, in line with the pay award to senior local government staff.

- 1.3. The Council will recall that, following a successful recruitment campaign, a new member was appointed to the IRP in August 2024 meaning the panel is at full capacity. The larger panel has increased the resilience and expertise of the panel, which allows for a more thorough review.
- 1.4. The IRP met in December 2025 to carry out its annual review of members' allowances.
- 1.5. Following that meeting, the Panel prepared a report to members regarding the suggested level of members' allowances to be payable for 2026/27. As detailed in the report, the reviewed anonymised responses from members, as well as some benchmarking of allowances paid by surrounding councils of varying size and political control. Current and predicted financial information, such as inflation figures (CPI and RPI), were also reviewed to get a feel for the upcoming national financial picture.
- 1.6. Following the meeting of the panel, additional information surrounding increased workload of the Leader of the Council was provided to the panel. The panel acknowledged the work of the Leader had increased, as a result of Local Government Reorganisation. However, after reviewing all of the information, they did not feel this warranted any further changes to remuneration, on top of the already approved indexation increase agreed by council.
- 1.7. After reviewing all relevant information, the panel agreed upon the below recommendations:
 - That all Basic Allowances only, payable from 1 April 2026, should be increased in line with the senior officer pay award offer; and
 - That the allowance for Business Managers be removed from the scheme; and
 - That the allowance for Policy Advisors be removed from the scheme; and
 - No other changes are made for the 2026/27 year.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Panel's report, including associated recommendations, is attached at Appendix 1. Recommendations are noted above at 1.6.
- 2.2 Should Council be minded to accept the Panel's recommendations, then the level of allowances to be paid to members for 2026/27, subject to any pay award, will be as set out at Appendix 2.

3. Alternative Options

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

4. Financial Implications

4.1 Should Council accept the Panel's recommendations, then costs will be included in proposed budgets for 2026/27. Not all costs are known, due to the ad hoc nature of some of the suggested allowances, but the removal of the allowances for the Business Manager and Policy Advisor would help to alleviate any budgetary pressures given the already agreed increases to all members basic and special responsibility allowances.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 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, but do not have to accept them.

6. Equalities Implications

6.1 The scheme as a whole seeks to support members by providing financial support for carers and parents.

7. Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

7.1 There are no direct environmental impacts as a result of this report.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel 2026/27
8.2 Appendix 2 – Proposed schedule of Members Allowances 2026/27

9. Background Papers

9.1 None identified

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by: Mike Hill
Date: 13.01.2026

Financial Officer

Approved by: Fran Whyley
Date: 13.01.2026

Monitoring Officer