

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

5 OCTOBER 2021

Title:

Review of the Members Allowances Scheme
Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Head of Service: Robin Taylor, Head of Policy & Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Key decision: No

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) provide that it is for each local authority to decide its Members Allowances Scheme, and the amounts to be paid under that Scheme. Councils are required to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to provide advice on its Allowances Scheme, and to carry out periodic reviews of the Scheme. Council must have regard to the recommendations of the IRP before making any changes to the Members Scheme of Allowances.
- 1.2 A review of the Waverley Scheme of Members' Allowances by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) was carried out on 21 and 27 July 2021, and the IRP's report is attached at Annexe 1.
- 1.3 Having considered the report and recommendations of the IRP, the Executive is asked to make appropriate recommendations to Full Council on changes to the Members Allowances Scheme.

2. Recommendation

Executive recommends to Full Council that:

1. The report and recommendations of the IRP are noted.
2. In view of the continuing significant pressure on the Council's budgets, there is no change to the Members Allowances Scheme until after the next Borough elections in May 2023, at which time the Scheme should be reviewed again by an independent remuneration panel.
3. The annual indexation of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries continues from 1 April 2022 for up to three years.

3. Reason for the recommendation

- 3.1 To comply with the requirements of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended). A council can only rely on the agreed form of indexation for a maximum of 4 years before further review of the Scheme by the IRP.

4. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 4.1 The delivery of the IRP's review of the scheme of allowances supports the Council's strategic framework by ensuring payments to councillors are reflective of their roles and responsibilities. It will help to ensure allowances are set at a level that facilitates suitably able, qualified, and representative people standing as candidates for Council (and their retention and development once elected).

5. Implications of decision

5.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

The IRP recommends an increase in Basic Allowance from 1 April 2022 of 1.06% compared to the level payable in 2021/22.

The IRP recommends an overall increase in the total Special Responsibility Allowances payable from 1 April 2022 of 5.06% compared to the total payable in 2021/22.

The total increase in Members' Allowances budget would be £3k, taking account of the reduction in the number of O&S committees from 4 to 2.

The 2020/21 Members' Allowances budget totals £423k.

5.2 Risk management

There are no risk management implications for the purposes of this report.

5.3 Legal

The allowances payable to councillors are matters for local determination.

While the Council has a duty under the 2003 Regulations to have regard to recommendations made to it by the IRP before it makes or amends the scheme of allowances, it is not bound to follow those recommendations.

5.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

The purpose of the Scheme of Allowances is to create a schedule of remuneration that will support and enable councillors to execute their roles across a range of governance duties and responsibilities. A successful scheme will enable any local person, regardless of their income and status, to be able to stand for election and fulfil the roles of office without experiencing the deterrent of financial disadvantage.

A successful scheme of allowances will assist in increasing the diversity of councillors, to better reflect the communities they represent and serve. In addition, a scheme of allowances should encourage local democratic participation.

5.5 Climate emergency declaration

There are no climate emergency implications.

6. Consultation and engagement

6.1 The IRP sent a survey to all councillors to gather feedback on the current Allowances Scheme, and interviewed councillors in roles attracting Special Responsibility Allowances.

7. Other options considered

7.1 The options available are to accept the recommendations of the IRP; not to accept the recommendations of the IRP; or to accept some but not all of the recommendations of the IRP.

8. Governance journey

8.1 The recommendations of the Executive will be considered by Full Council on 19 October 2021.

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, August 2021

Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: date

Head of Finance: date

Strategic Director: date

Portfolio Holder: date