

Report to:	Full Council
Date:	19 February 2024
Title:	Members' Allowances Scheme – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)
Report of:	Simon Russell, Head of Democratic Services (and Monitoring Officer)
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	To advise the Council of the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations and determine changes to the Council's Allowances Scheme in the light of the recommendations.
Officer recommendation(s):	<p>(1) To consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out at appendix 1 to the report and decide on one of the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To accept the Panel's recommendation in full. (b) To partially accept the Panel's recommendation with compelling reasons for doing so. (c) To reject the Panel's recommendation in full with compelling reasons for doing so. <p>(2) That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make the necessary amendments (if approved) to the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.</p> <p>(3) That thanks be conveyed to the Panel for the work undertaken and report produced.</p>
Reasons for recommendations:	To meet the statutory requirement for Council to have regard to the recommendations made to it by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
Contact Officer(s):	Name: Simon Russell Post title: Head of Democratic Services (and Monitoring Officer) E-mail: simon.russell@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk Telephone number: 01323 415021

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require the Council to have regard to the recommendations made to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) before it agrees its Members' Allowances Scheme.

- 1.2 In accordance with regulation 20.2 (a) of the above regulations, an IRP comprising a minimum of three members, was appointed and tasked with carrying out this review. One appointed, an IRP's term of office expires after four years of service. The Members' Allowances Scheme is reviewed at least every four years.
- 1.3 The last review of the Council's Members' Allowances schemes took place in 2020. The IRP appointed in 2020 was therefore called and tasked with carrying out a new review of the allowances in 2023, for subsequent consideration in February 2024.
- 1.4 The Panel comprised the following members: -
- Mr Mark Palmer (Chair)**
Mr Ian Buckingham
Ms Daphne Bagshaw
- 1.5 This covering report has been produced to accompany the detailed report of the IRP that is included at appendix 1. Reference should be made to that report for further information and detail.
- 1.6 Since the review was undertaken, the staff pay award for 2023/24 has been announced. In accordance with the current adopted Members' Allowances scheme, the basic allowances, special responsibility allowances and IT allowances awarded to Councillors were subsequently indexed in line with the average percentage increase in staff salaries. The current rate of allowances awarded to Councillors are therefore included at Appendix 2 to this report for information.
- 1.7 The regulations require the Council to publicise the recommendations of the IRP, the agreed scheme and actual allowances paid to councillors each year. Arrangements are in hand for the required notice to be published in accordance with the regulations.
- 1.8 The Panel undertook a separate review of allowances paid to Lewes Parish and Town Councils. The Panel's final report would be issued to Town and Parishes following confirmation by the District Council of their 2024 Members' Allowances Scheme.

2 Recommendations made by the Panel

- 2.1 Under the regulations the Council is required to have regard to the advice of their IRP. The phrase "...shall have regard to the recommendations made..." is used in the regulations. Should the Council wish to implement arrangements not fully in accordance with the Panel's recommendations they will need to give compelling reasons for doing so. In addition, it should be noted that details of any variations between the Panel's recommendations and the Council's final decision must be detailed in a public notice.

2.2 The full recommendations of the Panel are detailed in their report but a summary is set out below:

- **Basic allowance** (payable to all 41 Councillors): **£5,002**
- **Special responsibility allowances (SRA)** (no Councillor shall be entitled to receive at any time more than one SRA):

	Full Year Total:
Leader of the Council	£18,756
Deputy Leader of the Council	£10,316
Members of the Cabinet with portfolio	£8,440
Members of the Cabinet without portfolio	NO SRA
Chair of the Council	£3,751
Deputy Chair of the Council	No SRA
Chair of Planning Applications Committee	£7,502
Vice Chair of Planning Applications Committee	£1,500
Other Members of Planning Applications Committee	£750
Chair of Policy & Performance Advisory Committee	£5,627
Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee	£5,627
Chair of the Licensing Committee	£3,751
Leader of the Largest Opposition Group	£6,565
Deputy Leader of the Largest Opposition Group	No SRA
Chair of the Joint Staff Advisory Committee	£1,395

Chair of a Licensing Sub-Committee	£65 per meeting
Ordinary Member of a Licensing Sub-Committee	0-12 meetings (£0 per annum) 13-26 meetings (£576 per annum) 27-40 meetings (£862 per annum) 41+ meetings (£1,150 per annum)
Chair of Policy and Performance Advisory Panel	£65 per meeting
Ordinary Member of Policy and Performance Advisory Panel	0-12 meetings (£0 per annum) 13-26 meetings (£576 per annum) 27-41 meetings (£862 per annum) 41+ meetings (£1,150 per annum)
Co-opted Member of Standards Panel	£33 per meeting (maximum of £160 per annum)

➤ **Travel and subsistence allowance: -**

No change to current scheme.

➤ **Dependants' carers' allowances (DCA): -**

No change to current scheme.

DCA to be based on two rates:

Rate 1: Childcare at market rate with no monthly maximum claim.

Rate 2: Specialist care based at cost.

➤ **Parental Leave Policy: -**

No change to current policy.

➤ **Information technology allowance: -**

Withdrawn.

➤ **Indexing of allowances: -**

The basic allowance and SRAs to be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries up to 2027/28, at which time the allowances scheme shall be reviewed again by an IRP.

➤ **Implementation of new scheme of allowances: -**

Recommended to be implemented with effect from the beginning of the 2024-25 financial year.

3 Financial appraisal

3.1 The cost of the review has been met within an existing budget. The IRP's recommendation would result in an increase in basic allowance, SRA and IT allowance totalling £68,468. The existing budget allocation for allowances also includes expenditure incurred by Councillors for ad hoc travel and subsistence claims, carers allowances and annual allowance for the appointed Standards Independent Persons.

The projected increase to allowances has been factored into the budget setting process for 2024/25, should the Council agree to accommodate the suggested increase in its entirety.

4 Legal implications

4.1 It is a statutory requirement under regulation 19(1) of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 that a local authority has regard to the recommendations of an IRP before it makes or amends a members' allowances scheme.

By regulation 2(5) of The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities)

Regulations 2000, the function of making any scheme authorised or required by regulations under section 18 (schemes for basic, attendance and special responsibility allowances for local authority members) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, or of amending, revoking or replacing any such scheme, is not to be the responsibility of an executive of the authority.

Accordingly, the power to implement the officer recommendations in this report, as set out on the front sheet and reiterated at paragraph 3.2 above, is conferred solely on the Full Council.

5 Risk management implications

9.1 There are none.

6 Equality analysis

7.1 The scheme, as a whole, is intended to assist the objective of overcoming any financial and other disincentive that an individual might experience in being a councillor and encourage persons from all sections of the community to become and remain councillors.

7.2 The Panel has given consideration to the subject of equalities in its report.

7 Environmental sustainability implications

8.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

8 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Report from the Independent Remuneration Panel of November 2023.
- Appendix 2 – Current rate of allowances paid after 2023 indexing applied.

9 Background papers

- None