

REVIEW OF THE SCHEME FOR MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Governance Committee - 27 June 2017

Report of	Chief Finance Officer
Status	For Consideration and Decision
Key Decision	No

Executive Summary: A Joint Independent Remuneration Panel has carried out a review on Members' Allowances. The review has made a number of recommendations and is being presented to this Committee who will then make a recommendation to Council.

This report supports the Key Aim of Effective Use of Council Resources

Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Anna Firth
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Recommendation to Governance Committee:

- (a) That the Committee considers the report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel
 - (b) That it be recommended to Council that either
 - i) no action is taken
 - ii) or that
 1. the revised Schedule of Recommended Members Allowances as detailed on page 19 and 20 of Appendix A be agreed;
 2. in future the allowances are updated in line with any increases in the remuneration of Council staff;
 3. the current travel expenses scheme based upon the HMRC approved rate, continues;
 4. the existing scheme for meal and subsistence allowances, which excludes tea allowance, should continue and
 5. the IT allowance is not paid to Councillors after the next election.
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- iii) Or that a Member working group to further consider the recommendations from the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel and report back its findings to the meeting of the Governance Committee on 7 November 2017.
- (c) The Committee formally record thanks to Gary Allen, Max Lewis and Chris Oliver for their work in preparing 'A Review of Council Members' Allowances for Sevenoaks District Council.
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Reason for recommendation: Section 19 of The Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 state that before an authority makes or amends a Members' Allowance scheme, the authority shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by the Independent remuneration Panel.

Background

- 1 The Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP) was established jointly by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Sevenoaks District Council in 2001 to make separate recommendations for each Council on their Scheme of Members' Allowances. The JIRP operates under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003. The function of the Panel is to make recommendations to Council in accordance with Statutory Instruments (Primarily 2003 No.1020 and No.1692).
- 2 The JIRP is drawn from residents of the three council areas it serves and the Members of the Panel are:
 - Gary Allen, a resident of Lamberhurst
 - Max Lewis, a resident of Tunbridge Wells
 - Chris Oliver, a former resident of Tonbridge and Malling Borough
- 3 One of the roles of the Governance Committee is to receive the recommendations of the JIRP and make recommendations for changes to the Members' Allowance Scheme to the Council and, if required, to the JIRP.

Introduction

- 4 The JIRP provides an objective view of the remuneration that should be provided for Members and makes a recommendation to this Council. Legislation requires that before an Authority amends a scheme, the authority shall have regard to the recommendations made to it by the JIRP.
- 5 The Council's current Members' Allowance Scheme is set out in Appendix G of the Constitution.

- 6 The purpose of the JIRP review is to carry out the quadrennial update of Members' allowances required by legislation, taking into account Members' workload, responsibilities and required time commitment and then to recommend a fair level of recompense for those commitments.
- 7 Historically Members have modified the JIRP recommendations to ensure that the final scheme remained within budget.
- 8 If the Governance Committee do recommend an increase above the current budget to Council, if approved, a growth item will be required in the 2018/19 budget process.

Summary of JIRP's Recommendations

- 9 The JIRP report, attached at Appendix A sets out a summary of recommendations. Recommendations and factors that Members may find of particular interest are as follows:

- The existing Basic Allowance of £5,359 pa should continue at the current rate.
- Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) should be set as a percentage of the Leader's allowance. Members should continue to only receive one SRA. SRA's recommended in the report include:
 - Council Leader £20,000 p.a.
 - Deputy Leader £12,000 p.a.
 - Opposition Group Leaders £270 p.a. per group member
 - Cabinet Members £7,500 p.a.
 - Deputy Cabinet Members £1,600 p.a.
 - Committee Chairs £1,500 - £5,000 p.a.
 - Advisory Committee Chairs £2,500 p.a.
 - Development Control Ctte Vice-Chair £1,000 p.a.
 - Development Control Ctte Members £500 p.a.
 - Licensing Ctte Members £135 p.a.
 - Standards Co-optees £480 p.a.
- Child Care Allowance should be payable at the actual amount charged, subject to a maximum rate of £7.20 per child per hour.
- Dependent Carer's Allowance should be payable at the actual amount charged, subject to a maximum of £16.00 per hour.

- Allowances should be updated in line with any annual increases in pay awards to Council staff.
- Travel expenses should continue to be based upon the HMRC approved rate.
- The existing scheme for meal and subsistence allowances should continue.
- The existing IT allowance should be stopped at the next Election.

Key Implications

Financial

In 2017/18, the Council's budget for Members' Allowances is £385,998.

If the JIRP's recommendations are adopted, the financial implications are set out in Appendix B, which shows that they would cost £20,000 per annum more than the current scheme.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Council is required under the Local authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 and subsequent amendments to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to review and make recommendations to the Council on the range and levels of remuneration for elected Members.

Under the regulations, the Council is required to undertake a full review every four years. A full review was considered by the Council on 20 November 2012, but the Panel was requested to carry out a further review as the Council had adopted revised Governance arrangements in May 2013. The further review was considered by the Council on 1 October 2013.

Remuneration for Members is intended to ensure that there are no avoidable obstacles preventing people from taking part in the work of the Council. The level of remuneration needs to be at an appropriate level. Any deviation from the recommendations should be justified with a written record being made.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

The basis of the current level of Members' Allowances for Sevenoaks District Council was established by the Panel in December 2001 following guidance issued by central government. Allowances have been revised following later Panel's recommendations to reflect the changing roles of Members. Members are

requested to consider the contents of this report and appendices before making a recommendation to Council.

Appendices

Appendix A - A Review of Council Members' Allowances for Sevenoaks District Council (JIRP May 2017)

Appendix B - Financial Effect of JIRP's Recommendations

Background Papers

[Local Authorities \(Members Allowances\)\(England\) Regulations 2003](#)

[Members' Allowances Scheme set out at Appendix G in the Council's Constitution](#)

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Chief Finance Officer