

Title of Report:

Recommendations of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel 2015

Report to be considered by:

Council on 19 May 2015

Forward Plan Ref:

C2843

Purpose of Report:

To inform Council of the recommendations of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel 2015.

Recommended Action:

Members are asked to consider and if appropriate agree the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.

Reason for decision to be taken:

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel before making or amending their Scheme of Allowances.

Other options considered:

None

Key background documentation:

The report of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel 2011.
Documents set out in Appendix B

Published Works:

Local Government Act 2000
Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy principle:

☒ **CSP8 - Doing what's important well**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy principle by:

Ensuring that the allowance scheme is set at a level that attracts candidates for the right reasons and rewards Members adequately for the work that they do whilst recognising the current economic context.

Portfolio Member Details

Name & Telephone No.:	Leader of the Council
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Contact Officer Details

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Implications

Policy:	The West Berkshire Council Members' Allowances Scheme will need to be amended as a result of any changes agreed by Council.
Financial:	<p>The financial implications of implementing the scheme are set out in Appendix A to the Independent Remuneration Report.</p> <p>In summary, if Members are minded to adopt all the recommendations there would be a net cost to the Council of £43,100. This is as a result of the proposed changes which amount to an additional £58,702 offset against savings of £15,600 as a result of the removal of the broadband and IT consumables allowances. These additional costs would have to be met from reserves in 2015/16 and would be built into the base budget from 2016/17.</p> <p>The indexation of the Allowances would result in an additional uplift of approx £5,000 per year from 2016/17 which would be built into the base budget based on a 1% increase.</p>
Personnel:	None
Legal/Procurement:	None
Property:	None
Risk Management:	None

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes	Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:			
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)			
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at http://intranet/EqlA			<input type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All Councils are required to convene an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their Members' Allowances Scheme. The Council must 'pay regard' to their Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Scheme.
- 1.2 A copy of the report of the IRP is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council is required to publish the recommendations of the Panel and will be required to publish the new Scheme of Allowances (Part 14 of the Constitution) when it is agreed.
- 1.3 West Berkshire Council's Panel last met in 2011 and has therefore had to be reconvened in accordance with the 2003 Regulations that require an Independent Remuneration Panel to meet at least once every four years to agree the level of indexation applied to the Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 1.4 The membership and Terms of Reference of the 2015 West Berkshire IRP was considered by Corporate Board at the 6 January 2015 meeting. The Head of Strategic Support in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) appointed the members to the Independent Remuneration Panel on the 4 February 2015 under authority delegated to him.
- 1.5 The Terms of Reference of the Panel for this review were agreed as follows:

To review the whole West Berkshire Scheme of Members Allowances as follows:
 - Basic Allowance
 - Special Responsibility Allowances
 - Allowances for Independent Members¹
 - Dependants' Carers' Allowance
 - ICT Allowance (to include consumables, printing and mobile phones)
 - Travelling Allowance
 - Subsistence Allowance
 - Pensions (legislative changes excluding Members from the LGPS)
 - The administration of the scheme.
- 1.6 The Panel met on the 11th and 12th February 2015 and received evidence from Officers, and Members in both written and oral format. The Panel also considered written documentation as detailed in Appendix B to the Panel's report. This includes a summary of the South East Employers Members' Allowances Survey and a range of benchmarking information as set out in Appendix C to the Panel's report.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Council is asked to consider and if appropriate agree the recommendations of the West Berkshire Independent Remuneration Panel 2015 as set out below:
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- (1) The Basic Allowance be increased from £6,288 to £7,324 per annum and is inclusive of all items listed in paragraph 2.1 of the Panel's Report (Appendix 1).
- (2) The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Council should be 2.5 x the recommended Basic Allowance which equates to £18,310 per annum.
- (3) The Deputy Leader and the Executive Members (up to 8) continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the Leader's allowance which equates to £9,155.
- (4) The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission receive a Special Responsibility Allowance set at 30% of the Leader's recommended Special Responsibility Allowance (£18,310) which equates to £5,493.
- (5) The Chairman of the Council receives a Special Responsibility Allowance set at 30% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance which equates to £5,493 per annum.
- (6) The Vice-Chairman of the Council receives a Special Responsibility Allowance set at 20% of the Council Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance which equates to £1,099.
- (7) The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairmen of the two Planning Committees be maintained at 25% of the Leader's Allowance which equates to £4,578.
- (8) The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Licensing Committee continues to be set at the current ratio of 15% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance, which equates to £2,747.
- (9) A Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee set at 15% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance which equates to £2,747.
- (10) No Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to Chairmen of the Licensing Sub Committees, Personnel Committee and Standards Committee or any Co-opted Members of the Council.
- (11) The Leader of the Opposition should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance set at 40% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance which equates to £7,324.
- (12) The Opposition Spokespersons should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance set at 30% of the Leader of the Opposition's Special Responsibility Allowance which equates to £2,197 per annum and that this Special Responsibility Allowance should be paid to a maximum of four members of the Opposition (in addition to the Leader of the Opposition).
- (13) The Leader of any Minority Groups should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance set at 10% of the Leader's Special

Responsibility Allowance which equates to £1,831 but that this allowance is only payable if they have a minimum of five Members

- (14) No Councillor shall be entitled to more than one Special Responsibility Allowance paid by the Council.
- (15) Travel Allowance rates should continue to be in line with Inland Revenue approved rates and that they should only rise in accordance with any increase in the Inland Revenue rates.
- (16) When claiming a Travel Allowance for attending an approved duty within the district then that claim will be made with the starting point being a Member's usual place of residence or work within the District, or, if the usual place of residence or work is outside the District boundary, then the total return journey for which that claim can be made is capped at 36 miles.
- (17) The current Subsistence Allowances remain unchanged but are indexed linked to relevant Officers' rates.
- (18) The current Dependants' Carers' Allowance of £6.13 per hour up to a maximum of 40 hours per month per Councillor be increased to the current UK Living Wage (currently £7.85 per hour) up to a maximum of 40 hours per month per Councillor.
- (19) The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) be removed from the Members' Allowances Scheme.
- (20) The Members' Allowances Scheme be amended to state that Members shall submit all claims relating to travelling, subsistence and Child Care and Dependants' Carers Allowance within two months of the date of the meeting being claimed for.
- (21) The level of indexation for the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances be automatically linked to that used for West Berkshire Council Officers unless Members choose to forgo index linked increases in a particular year.
- (22) In accordance with the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations (21.1e) the level of indexation be revisited in February 2019 if not before.
- (23) The scheme to be implemented from the 20th May onwards and any amendments made to the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances be payable from June 2015.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 3.1 This item is not relevant to equality.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The West Berkshire Council Scheme of Members Allowances will be updated in accordance with all recommendations agreed by Members at the Council meeting. In accordance with the Members' Scheme of Allowances, the Basic and Special

Responsibility Allowances are paid over 11 months from June – April with no payment made in May. Any amendments made to the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances will therefore be payable from June 2015 onwards. All other changes will be implemented from the 20th May 2015 onwards.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Report of the West Berkshire Independent Remuneration Panel
11th and 12th February 2015

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: The Independent Remuneration Panel

Officers Consulted: Andy Day, Kevin Griffin, Nick Carter. Wendy Howells, Jo Watt

Trade Union: Unison