

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item No.
Cllr Peter Gibson (Leader of the Council) and Philippa Davies (Corporate Director, Resources)	Council	23 January 2014	10

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Council on matters considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in relation to the Council's Scheme for Members' Allowances.

2. Outcomes

- 2.1 A Scheme of Members' Allowances which appropriately reflects members' current roles, duties, responsibilities and commitments under the Council's Constitution.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the recommendation of the IRP that a 1% increase to the Basic Allowance be implemented from 1 April 2014, in accordance with the previously agreed formula, be approved.
- 3.2 That the other comments made in the report of the IRP, attached as Appendix 1, be noted.
- 3.3 That the revised scheme be publicised, in accordance with the Regulations, as soon as practicable.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to review periodically its scheme of allowance payments to Councillors. The Council has a duty under Section 19 the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to have regard to the recommendations of the Panel when considering any changes to the Scheme. The Council is also required, under Section 22 of the Regulations, to publicise receipt of a report and the main features of the Panel's recommendations.

5. Key Issues and Proposals

- 5.1 The issues considered and the proposals made by the Panel following the annual review are set out in Appendix 1.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The cost of the proposed 1% increase in allowances for 2014/15 will be £4,020 and will be reflected in the draft revenue estimates due to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 19 February and which are subject to approval by the Council on 6 March.
Legal	See paragraph 4.1 above.

OTHER RISKS/IMPLICATIONS: CHECKLIST

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

Implications	✓ / x
Community Safety	x
Equality and Diversity	x
Sustainability	x
Health and Safety	x

Risks/Implications	✓ / x
Asset Management	x
Climate Change	x
Data Protection	x

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List of Background Papers:		
Name of Document	Date	Where available for inspection
None	-	-

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel – January 2014

arm/ex/cou/cr/2301rs2

WYRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

JANUARY 2014

1. **Background**

Two new members, Hilary Alcock and Michael Collins have been appointed to the Panel, since it last reported to Council.

The terms of reference of the IRP are:

To propose a scheme for Members' Allowances which:

- recognises the roles, duties and responsibilities of Members both as decision makers and community representatives under the Council's Constitution;
- is easy to understand by Members and the public;
- is simple to operate;
- includes provision for annual review without the need for fundamental change;
- considers, subject to the necessary legislation, whether allowances should be pensionable;
- considers what other allowances, such as travel and subsistence, should be paid and in what circumstances;
- considers provision for different levels of allowance reflecting the responsibilities of the post-holder or group of post-holders and standing according to political composition of the Council.

The Panel has met on two occasions (11 November 2013 and 6 January 2014), to conduct its "light touch" annual review of the Council's Members Allowances Scheme. All four members of the Panel also attended the Council meeting on 28 November, to observe the proceedings.

A full review will be carried out by the Panel during the autumn of 2014. A report and recommendations will then be submitted to Council in January 2015 with any agreed changes being implemented from 1 April 2015.

The Panel has been supplied with information on the current Members Allowances Scheme, including updated comparative data on other local authorities. Although the views of Councillors were not expressly sought for this interim review, an e-mail received on behalf of 2 councillors was submitted to the Chief Executive asking for a number of thoughts to be considered by the Panel. The Panel noted the comments, many of which have been raised previously, and agreed to consider them further as part of the full review scheduled for autumn 2014.

2. Annual uplift

The Panel has been reminded that in January 2009, the Council approved a recommendation of the IRP that the Basic Allowance be increased on 1 April 2010 by the amount of the final NJC pay award to staff for 2009/10 and that the Basic allowance then be increased on 1 April 2011 by the amount of the staff pay award in the preceding year. However, a pay freeze was subsequently imposed which meant that no pay increases were made to staff in 2010/11, 2011/12 or in 2012/13 and therefore, that no increases were made to Members Allowances in April 2011, April 2012 or April 2013. A 1% increase was paid to staff in 2013/14 so, under this arrangement, unless the Council decides to the contrary, Basic Allowances will be increased by 1% from April 2014.

The panel has agreed that the annual uplift arrangement is rational and logical and RECOMMENDS that the 1% increase due from 1 April 2014 under the approved formula be implemented.

3. Issues for the full next review in 2014

The Panel has identified a number of issues for consideration as part of its full four-yearly review, in addition to its normal review of allowances, including:

- the “approved duties” for which mileage allowances can be claimed;
- whether the initial Special Responsibility Allowances (if any) attached to roles created or changed since the last full review remain valid (including the Chairman of the Standards Committee; Lead Members for Health and Wellbeing, Older People and Young People; Neighbourhood Lead Members);
- Data Protection fees for Councillors;
- provision of IT facilities for Councillors.

The views of all Councillors on these and other issues will be sought during the review process.

Ron Matthews (Chairman)

Hilary Alcock

Michael Collins

Peter Ryder