

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item No.
The Corporate Director of Resources (Philippa Davies)	Council	21 January 2016	11

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 (the Scheme).

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 Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) paid to the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, currently 1 x Basic Allowance, be continued.
- 3.2 That no changes be made to any other Special Responsibility Allowances but, that the SRA's paid to the Leader of the Council and the other members of the Cabinet be kept under review.
- 3.3 That no SRA be paid to the Shaping Your Neighbourhood Lead members.
- 3.4 That the comments made by the IRP be noted and that the revisions to the scheme be publicised in accordance with the Regulations.
- 3.5 That the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for their work.

4. Background

- 4.1** The Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to review periodically its scheme of allowances for Councillors. The current members of the Panel are Mr Ron Matthews (Chairman), Mr Michael Collins and Mr David Blight.
- 4.2** The Council has a duty under regulation 19 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to have regard to the recommendations of the Panel when considering any changes to the Scheme.
- 4.3** The Council is also required, under regulation 22 of the Regulations, to publicise receipt of a report and the main features of the Panel's recommendations.
- 4.4** The last comprehensive review was undertaken in the autumn of 2014, with recommended changes approved at the Council meeting on 22 January 2015. This is the first annual review of the Scheme since then.

5. Key issues and proposals

Background

- 5.1** The Panel has met on four occasions (2 November, 16 November, 17 November and 23 November 2015) to conduct its annual review of the Scheme.
- 5.2** The Panel was supplied with information on the current Members Allowances Scheme including comparative data on other local authorities for a selection of allowances. It also considered the appointment of an additional Cabinet Member, a proposal to introduce a new Special Responsibility Allowance for the Shaping Your Neighbourhood Lead Members and those issues which the Panel stated in its last report would be kept under review.

Basic Allowances

- 5.3** The Panel was reminded that in January 2015 the Council approved the recommendation of the IRP that the Basic Allowance be increased by 1% from 11 May 2016 and by a further 1% in 11 May 2017 (i.e. the anniversary of the appointment to office of Councillors).
- 5.4** The updated benchmarking information (as at November 2015) revealed an average Basic Allowance across the family group of £4,371 and the Panel felt that the current allowance for 2015/16 of £4,239 (£4,059 plus £180 IT Allowance) was still appropriate.

Special Responsibility Allowances for the Leader and other Cabinet Members

- 5.5** The Leader of the Council currently receives an SRA of 4 x Basic Allowance (£16,236 per annum) and each of the Cabinet Members received an SRA of 2 x Basic Allowance (£8,118 per annum).
- 5.6** The Panel had previously noted that the SRAs paid to the Leader and members of the Cabinet in Wyre were at the higher end of the rank order of such allowances using the Audit Commission family group of sixteen similar authorities. The updated benchmarking data revealed the Leader to be 4th and other Cabinet Members to be the 3rd highest. The Panel were particularly concerned about the appointment of an additional Cabinet member from May 2015 and the perception that the same amount of work was being done but by an increased number of Cabinet Members with no reduction in allowance. The Panel considered the information provided by the Leader about the nature and volume of the work undertaken by members of the Cabinet including the new responsibility for Health and Wellbeing and the desire to work in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Groups. Whilst the Panel do not propose to make any amendments at this stage, recognising the potential impact on all the other SRAs, they are minded to consider this again as part of the next fundamental review to be undertaken in the autumn of 2017 but will keep it under review in the meantime.

Special Responsibility Allowance for the Licensing Committee Chairman

- 5.7** The Chairman of the Licensing Committee currently receives an SRA of 1 x Basic Allowance (£4,059 per annum) and the Panel had previously indicated a desire to keep this SRA under review.
- 5.8** The Panel were informed that there had been 6 meetings of the Licensing Committee in 2014/15 and 4 meetings had been scheduled prior to the end of November 2015.
- 5.9** The Panel has taken account of comments made by the current Chairman of the Licensing Committee (Cllr Bridge), who was appointed to that role in May 2014, about the work that is undertaken outside of the formal committee meetings and has concluded that the current SRA is appropriate.

Special Responsibility Allowances for the Lead Members for Older People and Younger People

- 5.10** Lead Members are appointed for Older People and Younger People. They have no decision making powers, but the intention is that they develop expertise and provide information, advice and support to the Cabinet on those issues. Currently, they are paid a fixed sum of £250 per annum for 3 years. Evidence provided by the Lead Member for Older People, indicates that they represent Wyre at meetings of the Older People's Champions North West Committee as well as being a member

of the Executive Committee for the same group. The Panel is therefore not recommending any change at this stage.

Shaping Your Neighbourhood Lead Members

5.11 The Panel had previously concluded that there was insufficient evidence to suggest that the Shaping Your Neighbourhood Lead Members had a significantly higher level of responsibility than that required for the general community leadership role expected of all Councillors. At the request of the Leader and Chief Executive, however, they have reviewed the matter taking into account the Roles and Responsibilities as documented in the Councillor Development Programme which was submitted to the Council 22 October 2015. The Panel considered information supplied by 5 of the SYN Lead Members but once again felt that there was insufficient evidence on the impact of their role to suggest that any SRA should be paid, with much of the activity being that for which councillors already receive a basic allowance. The Panel also recognised that SRAs were already being paid to 3 of the current SYN Lead Members in their roles as Cabinet Member, Chair of Audit Committee and Lead Member for Younger People. No change is therefore being recommended, i.e. that no SRA payments are made for these positions.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	The full year cost of the additional Cabinet member appointed in May 2015, currently £8,118p.a., will be built into the 2016/17 Revenue Estimates and MTFP update, funded effectively by other savings. The cost of the proposed 1% increase in allowances for 2016/17 has already been reflected in the Council's MTFP.
Legal	The Council has a duty under regulation 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 regulation 22 of the regulations, to publicise receipt of the report and the main features of the Panel's recommendations.

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

None.

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