



REPORT TO:	COUNCIL
DATE:	26 SEPTEMBER 2022
SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME
PURPOSE:	To consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel following a review of the Members Allowance Scheme.
KEY DECISION:	N/A
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	N/A
REPORT OF:	INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
REPORT AUTHOR:	LORRAINE BUSH, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DELIVERY MANAGER
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	NONE
EXEMPT REPORT?	NO

SUMMARY

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council must establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations to the authority about the allowances paid to Councillors.

The Independent Remuneration Panel has met to review the level of allowances currently paid under the Member's Allowance Scheme, and Council is invited to consider the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the following recommendations of the Panel be accepted:-

1. That the basic allowance be retained at its current level of £4,692.
2. That the special responsibility allowances be retained at current levels as set out in Appendix A.
3. That the wording for the Special Responsibility Allowance for Licensing Hearing Panels be amended to Hearing Panels to include attendance at Standards Hearings.
4. That a Special Responsibility Allowance be introduced for the position of Chairman of the Boston Town Area Committee in the sum of £1280, backdated to 1 April 2022.
5. That the Dependant Carers' Allowance be retained at current levels.

6. That the travel and subsistence rates be retained at current levels.
7. That the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances be linked to staff pay awards for a four year period from 1 April 2022.
8. That the published Members Allowance Scheme be updated to include Mayoral travel costs as an approved duty for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor within Schedule 2 of the Scheme.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure allowances are sufficient to not financially disadvantage an average working person from standing for Council and taking on positions which attract additional responsibility.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not to accept the recommendations and make alternative proposals.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, Councils have a duty to consider the findings of an Independent Remuneration Panel before determining any councillors' allowances scheme.
- 1.2 The Regulations place a statutory obligation on the Council to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to consider councillors' allowances and report its views to the Council. Council has a statutory duty to have regard to the Panel's recommendations before making or amending any councillors' allowances scheme.
- 1.2 The Panel makes recommendations about the level of the basic allowance, special responsibility allowances, dependant carers' allowances, travel and subsistence allowances and co-optees allowances.
- 1.3 The recognised principles for the Independent Remuneration Panel when considering a scheme of remuneration are that it should be: -
 - justifiable and defensible, based on logical construction;
 - transparent and simple to understand and administer;
 - should not discourage or encourage candidates for financial considerations;
- 1.4 Any scheme should minimise financial barriers as much as possible, without setting a level that would attract people to stand for Council solely for the allowances. Published guidance suggests that the basic allowance should be set at a level which would allow an average person to take a day off work per week for Council duties, without being out of pocket.
- 1.5 The Independent Remuneration Panel has a responsibility to make recommendations to the Council on the Members' Allowances Scheme, having regard to the published guidance and legislation.

- 1.6 However, the Panel has no legislative provision to make any recommendations based on an attendance allowance scheme, whereby members only receive an allowance for the meetings they attend other than ad hoc meetings such as licensing hearings, or any form of performance related payment, or for allowances to be linked to the Member Code of Conduct as a form of sanction.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel met on 8 July 2022 to commence a review on the Members Allowances for 2022-23. It was noted that in 2018 the Panel undertook a comprehensive review with the aim of establishing a remuneration framework that would hold good for at least four years.
- 2.2 Having considered the current benchmarking information with other Lincolnshire authorities and those in the CIPFA 'family group' for Boston Borough Council, the Panel felt that it had largely achieved its aims and that a light touch review was all that was required for the financial year 2022/23.
- 2.3 The Panel invited Members to submit comments on the current scheme of allowances which were also taken into account during the Panel's deliberations.
- 2.4 The Panel has prepared its report, a copy of which is attached at Appendix A of the report.

In summary the Panel's recommendations are:-

- That the basic allowance be retained at its current level of £4,692.
 - That the special responsibility allowances be retained at current levels as set out in Appendix A.
 - That the wording for the Special Responsibility Allowance for Licensing Hearing Panels be amended to Hearing Panels to include attendance at Standards Hearings.
 - That a Special Responsibility Allowance be introduced for the position of Chairman of the Boston Town Area Committee in the sum of £1280, backdated to 1 April 2022.
 - That the Dependant Carers' Allowance be retained at current levels
 - That the travel and subsistence rates be retained at current levels.
 - That the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances be linked to staff pay awards for a four year period from 1 April 2022.
 - That the published Members Allowance Scheme be updated to include Mayoral travel costs as an approved duty for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor within Schedule 2 of the Scheme.
- 2.5 Council must have regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, but there is no specific requirement to approve the Panel's recommendations. If the Council wishes to make an alternative scheme of allowances, reasoning should be provided.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The key focus of the Independent Remuneration Panel when considering revisions to the scheme was to achieve allowances that would not deter an average working person from standing for Council, or result in Councillors being financially disadvantaged, if they had to take unpaid leave from their job to carry out Council duties.
- 3.2 When considering the issues involved the panel took into account government guidance that some elements of the work of members should be voluntary – that some hours are not remunerated. However, this must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by elected members and to further ensure that, despite the input required, people from all age groups and all sections of the community are encouraged to come forward as elected members and that their service to the community is retained.
- 3.3 The Panel believes the proposed allowances achieve this balance and urges the Council to adopt its recommendations.
- 3.4 Members are reminded that they do have the option of personally rescinding any increase in allowance, or any allowance in full, if they wish.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

N/A

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

None.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

None.

STAFFING

None.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The review has been undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and taking account of equality principles.

DATA PROTECTION

None.

FINANCIAL

The introduction of a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Boston Town Area Committee would increase the Members Allowance budget by £1280.

RISK MANAGEMENT

None.

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

All Members of the Council were invited to submit comments on the current levels of allowances to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

REPUTATION

None.

CONTRACTS

None.

CRIME AND DISORDER

None.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

Equality principles were taken into account as part of the review process.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

None.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

None.

ACRONYMS

IRP – Independent Remuneration Panel.

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Benchmarking of allowance schemes for Lincolnshire authorities and those in the CIPFA family group.	Democratic Services.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

REPORT APPROVAL	
Report author:	Lorraine Bush Lorraine.bush@boston.gov.uk
Signed off by:	Independent Remuneration Panel
Approved for publication:	N/A

CHECKLIST - DELETE BEFORE SUBMISSION TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

S151 Officer consulted on financial implications:	Yes
Monitoring Officer consulted on legal and constitutional implications:	Yes
Portfolio Holder consulted:	NA
Ward Member consulted:	NA