



COUNCIL: 24 February 2021

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor I Moran

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SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2021/22 AND APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To agree the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2021/22 and to note and endorse the Membership of the IRP.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That it be noted that the IRP has not been asked for a report this year, but met as referred to in paragraph 3.4 of the report.

2.2 That a Members Allowance Scheme be made, effective from 1 April 2021, in accordance with the current scheme, incorporating:

- (a) A Basic Allowance of £4,842 (no increase)
- (b) Provision for SRA payments, as detailed on the Schedule attached as Appendix 1 (no change)
- (c) Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowance to be set at the same level as the Living Wage (currently £9.50 per hour).

2.3 That the Corporate Director of Transformation & Resources update the Members' Allowances Scheme for the period commencing 1 April 2021, such scheme to be incorporated into the Constitution and subsequently published.

2.4 That the Membership of the IRP for 2021/22 and the respective terms of office be noted and endorsed as follows:

Mrs G Stanley (Chairman)	1 May 2024
Mr J Boardman	1 May 2023
Mr I Thompson	1 May 2022

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council must establish and operate an IRP to consider and make recommendations on various issues relating to the matter of allowances to members of the authority. The Council is required to take into consideration any recommendation made by its IRP when making any new scheme of allowances, revising, or amending any existing scheme.
- 3.2 The Council currently has a scheme for the payment of a Basic Allowance to each Member plus a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for each of those Members holding a position of special responsibility. The Scheme also provides for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances and, in certain specific circumstances, Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowance.
- 3.3 In February 2020, the Council resolved to accept the IRP's recommendation that the Basic Allowance should remain at £4,842 and that the figure be fixed for four years (ie. until April 2024), when a further recommendation will be sought from the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council have the right, in any year, to request the Panel to consider an increase. The Panel would expect specific reasons to be put forward in support of such a request. The only increase would be in relation to the Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowance, which was recommended to be set at the Living Wage (currently £9.50).

4.0 THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME FOR 2021/22

- 4.1 The IRP met on 12 February 2021 to consider the current position in relation to Members' Allowances and the Council's Scheme for 2021/22 and agreed that as the Panel had not received any requests to consider an increase, a formal report from the IRP was not required and that the level of allowances should remain at the same rate as the 2020/21 rates, with the exception of the Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowance, referred to in paragraph 3.3. A copy of the Members Allowances Scheme 2020/21 is contained in Section 19 of the Constitution:
<https://democracy.westlancs.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=305&info=1&MD=Constitution>
- 4.2 Members of the IRP also meet to consider Parish matters as the Parish Remuneration Panel (PRP) and in this respect they did not receive any requests to make amendments to the previous report, the Panel considered there was no requirement to issue a new report.
- 4.3 The Scheme commences on 1 April in each year in accordance with the legislation, rather than the municipal year. Following the Council's decision, a new scheme for 2021/22 will be prepared, effective from 1 April 2021. A copy of the new scheme will be incorporated in the Council's Constitution and as a consequence published on the Council's website and circulated to all members.

5.0 THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 The IRP Membership is Mrs G Stanley, Mr J Boardman and Mr I Thompson. Terms of office are 3 years, with one position on the Panel being subject to re-

selection each year. The Term of Office of Mrs G Staney expires on 1 May 2021. The Council is required to adopt an appointments process that it considers is best able to provide an Independent Panel that is well qualified to discharge its functions and which is representative of the community. The Council's arrangements for appointing the Panel involved the placing of advertisements in the local press and then interviewing the candidates.

- 5.2 If the Council wished to appoint a replacement member, a full recruitment process would need to be undertaken in accordance with the appropriate Regulations, which would then be reported to Council for approval at a future meeting. Mrs Stanley has indicated that she is prepared to serve for a further period of three years and continue as Chairman of the Panel. Given the infrequency with which the IRP is required to meet, it takes some time to gain relevant experience and therefore it is sensible to maintain continuity of membership where possible. Mrs Stanley has been a member and Chairman of the Panel since it was established in 2002. It is therefore recommended that Mrs Stanley be appointed for a further 3 years.
- 5.3 The Panel has also been appointed to serve as the Parish Remuneration Panel and in this respect considers and reports to the Parish Councils on issues relating to Members' allowances paid by those bodies.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The budget figures for 2021-22 contained elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting include provision to meet the costs of Allowances contained within the Scheme, together with employer's National Insurance (N.I.) contributions where appropriate.
- 7.2 Regulations provide for Allowances to be paid to IRP members and for 2021/22 each Panel member will be entitled to receive an allowance of £250, with the Chairman receiving an additional £50. These are included as part of the Council's scheme and provision is included in the current budget.

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The report ensures that the Council is complying with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, to establish annually a Scheme of Members Allowances and in making that scheme, to have regard to the recommendation of an Independent Remuneration Panel.

9.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 to this Report).

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees and stakeholders, however there is a direct impact on elected members. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report.

Appendices:

1. SRA Payments
2. Equality Impact Assessment