



COUNCIL: 22 February 2023

Report of: Chief Operating Officer

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Y Gagen

Contact for further information: Mrs J Denning (Ext. 5384)
(Email: jacky.denning@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2023/24 AND APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP)

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To agree the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/24 and to note and endorse the Membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (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 4.1 of the report.

2.2 That a Members Allowance Scheme be made, effective from 1 April 2023, in accordance with the current scheme, incorporating:

- (a) A Basic Allowance of £4,842 (no increase)
- (b) Provision for Special Responsibility Allowances, 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 (£10.42 from 1 April 2023).

2.3 That the Legal & Democratic Services Manager update the Members' Allowances Scheme for the period commencing 1 April 2023, such scheme to be incorporated into the Constitution and subsequently published.

2.4 That the Membership of the IRP for 2023/24 and the respective terms of office be noted and endorsed as follows:

Mrs G Stanley (Chairman)	1 May 2024
Mr I Thompson	1 May 2025
Mr J Boardman	1 May 2026

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 and 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 (£10.42 from 1 April 2023).

4.0 THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME FOR 2023/24

- 4.1 The IRP met on 1 December 2022 to consider the current position in relation to Members' Allowances and the Council's Scheme for 2023/24 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 2022/23 rates. A copy of the Members Allowances Scheme 2022/23 is contained in Section 19 of the Constitution:
<https://democracy.westlancs.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=305&info=1&MD=Constitution>
- 4.2 The Panel was advised that from May 2024 the Council had made the decision to move to a committee system of governance and would be required to meet following the May 2023 elections to consider a revised scheme for 2024/25, to take into account that change. The IRP agreed that relevant Councillors would be invited to attend meetings to be consulted on the revised scheme, particularly in relation to Special Responsibility Allowances. The IRP also asked to review allowances from 2024/25 in respect of Civic Dignitaries (The Mayor & Deputy Mayor), including the definition for the purpose of claiming Carers allowance for dependant relatives, classed as children aged 14 years and under.
- 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 2023/24 will be prepared, effective from 1 April 2023. 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 Mr J Boardman expires on 1 May 2023. 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. Mr Boardman has indicated that he is prepared to serve for a further period of three years. 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. Mr Boardman has been a member since January 2012 and it is therefore recommended that he 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 2023-24 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 2023/24 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 recommendations 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. Special Responsibility Allowances
2. Equality Impact Assessment