



COUNCIL: 28 February 2024

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**Report of: Chief Operating Officer**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Y Gagen**

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**SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2024/25 AND APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP)**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To agree the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25 and to note and endorse the Membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the IRP's report for 2024/25, attached at Appendix 2, be received and taken into account when considering the recommendations at 2.2 and 2.3 below.

2.2 That in accordance with paragraph 10 of the IRP's report, a Members Allowance Scheme be made, effective from 1 April 2024, incorporating:

- (a) A Basic Allowance of £4,950
- (b) Provision for Special Responsibility Allowances, as detailed on the Schedule attached as Appendix 1
- (c) Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowance to be set at the same level as the 'Real' Living Wage (£12.00 from 1 April 2024).

2.3 That the Head of Legal & Democratic Services update the Members' Allowances Scheme for the period commencing 1 April 2024, such scheme to be incorporated into the Constitution and subsequently published.

2.4 That the Membership of the IRP for 2024/25 and the respective terms of office be noted and endorsed as follows:

Mrs G Stanley (Chairman)	1 May 2027
Mr J Boardman	1 May 2026
Mr I Thompson	1 May 2025

### **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 The Council have the right, in any year, to request the Panel to consider any changes to the Scheme and the Panel would expect specific reasons to be put forward in support of such a requests. Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowance would increase annually, which has been recommended to be set at the 'Real' Living Wage (£12.00 from 1 April 2024).

### **4.0 THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME FOR 2024/25**

- 4.1 The IRP met on 8 and 19 February 2024 to consider the current position in relation to Members' Allowances and the Council's Scheme for 2024/25. A copy of the Members Allowances Scheme 2023/24 is contained in Section 19 of the Constitution:  
<https://democracy.westlancs.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=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 consider a revised scheme for 2024/25, to take into account that change. The Leaders of each political group were asked to submit the views of their groups in respect of any changes they felt would be required in the revised scheme, which were submitted to the IRP for consideration. The Group Leaders also attended the meeting on the 19 February 2024 to present those views. A copy of the IRP's report and recommendations are contained in Appendix 2.
- 4.3 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 that no changes were required to the existing scheme.
- 4.4 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 2024/25 will be prepared, effective from 1 April 2024. 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 Stanley expires on 1 May 2024. 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. 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 and it is therefore recommended that she 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 2024-25 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 2024/25 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. IRP Report (to follow)
3. Equality Impact Assessment