

COUNCIL MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2023/24

For Cabinet on December 8 2022

Summary

Lead Member: Councillor David Hayward, Governance and Transparency

Lead Director: Lee Colyer, Director of Finance, Policy and Development (s151 Officer)

Head of Service: Jane Clarke, Head of Policy, and Governance

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Classification: Public document

Wards Affected: All

Approval Timetable	Date
Management Board	26 October 2022
Portfolio Holder	TBC
Finance and Governance	15 November 2022
Cabinet	8 December 2022
Full Council	14 December 2022

Recommendations

The recommendations by the Joint Independent Remunerations Committee as supported by the Portfolio Holder:

1. That the Basic Allowance should be retained at £5,500 per annum.
2. That the Special Responsibility Allowance for Council Leader should be retained at £19, 250 per annum.
3. That the existing Special Responsibility Allowance for Minority Group Leaders should be abolished, and a new Opposition Group Leader allowance established at £5,500 per annum, for qualifying leaders.
4. That the Special Responsibility Allowance for Cabinet Members should be £8,000 per annum.

5. That the Special Responsibility Allowance for co-opted members of the Audit & Governance Committee continue at the rate the of £800 p.a.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Council is required to undertake a full review of its members allowances every four years. The last full review was considered by Council in 2016. This report is the result of the latest review conducted in Summer/Autumn 2022.
- 1.2 When reviewing the scheme, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of its independent Remuneration Panel. However, it is the responsibility of the Council to determine the scheme having regard to all appropriate matters and the Council is not bound by the recommendations of the Panel.
- 1.3 The Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP) was established to review and make recommendations on member allowances for Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in August 2022.
- 1.4 The Panel have considered the Councils financial climate and have looked at proposing a scheme which it felt was fair, simple to administer and properly reflected the time commitments given.
- 1.5 The review has simplified the structure of SRAs by using an approach which sets the level of each SRA as a percentage of the Leaders allowance of the basic allowance. The panel have also reconsidered the allowances of the Vice Chairs
- 1.6 We continue to support the 2007 guidance on Members Remuneration from the Councillors Commission which recommends that members should not receive more than one SRA. This is of relevance to our recommendation regarding the current 'minority group leader' allowance.
- 1.7 The recommendations for Special Responsibility Allowances for each role are:
- Council Leader - £19,250 p.a.
 - Opposition Group Leader - £5,500 p.a. per group member not in Cabinet
 - Cabinet Members - £8,000 p.a.
 - Committee Chairs:

Overview and Scrutiny	£2,500 p.a
Licensing	£2,000 p.a
General Purpose	£2,000 p.a
Joint Transportation Board	£2,000 p.a
Planning	£5,500 p.a
Audit and Governance	£2,000 p.a
Planning Committee Vice Chair	£1,320 p.a
Audit and Governance Co-optees	£ 800 p.a

- 1.7.1 The Child Care Allowance is recommended to be set at National Living Wage **£9.50** per hour per child and that the Dependant Carers Allowance should be payable to a maximum of £18 per hour.
- 1.7.2 Mileage expenses for Members will remain at the standard class public transport and the mileage rate at the HMRC published rate.
- 1.7.3 Allowances are recommended to increase in line with any annual increases in pay awards to Council staff.
- 1.7.4 Meal allowances were rarely claimed, it is therefore recommended that meal and subsistence allowance no longer be part of the Council allowance framework.
- 1.7.5 Any member can forgo all or part of their allowance entitlement by writing to the s151 Officer on an annual basis.

2. Options

- 2.1 A financial summary of the current scheme in comparison with the approved budget and the impact of implementing the JIRP recommended scheme is set out in appendix B.

Option A: Keep the current scheme

Option B: Implement the JIRP Recommendations

Option C: Members determine an alternative scheme

Recommendation from Cabinet Advisory Board

- 2.1 The Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board were consulted on Tuesday 15 November 2022 and their recommendation to Cabinet was to remain with the current scheme (Option A)

3. Implementation

- 2.1 Paragraphs for this next section should start at 7.1.
- 2.2 This would be the next paragraph.

Optional sub heading for Section Seven

4. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendices: To

- Appendix A: Comparative Data from other Local Authorities
- Appendix B: Financial Summary
- Appendix C: Review of Councillors Allowances

5. Cross Cutting Issues

A. Legal (including the Human Rights Act)

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require the Council to consider and publish a scheme of remuneration for members before the start of each financial year and in addition, to review the scheme.

B. Finance and Other Resources

The 2022/23 budget consists of £360,000 for Members Allowances and £10,000 for National Insurance. The proposed budget for 2023/24 will reflect the cost of the decision by Full Council for the 2023/24 Scheme for Members' Allowances.

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C. Staffing

There are no staffing implications

D. Risk Management

There are no new risk management issues

E. Environment (inc. Biodiversity) and Sustainability

There are no new issues

F. Community Safety

There are no new issues

G. Equalities

There are no new issues

H. Data Protection

There are no new

I. Health and Safety

There are no new issues

J. Health and Wellbeing

There are no new issues