

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – SCHEME TO APPLY FROM 1 APRIL 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Allowances paid to members of the Council are set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Council is required annually to make a scheme of members' allowances, which must be published. The current scheme is available to view at: newforest.gov.uk/media/adobe/o/b/chapter_29.pdf Changes to a scheme of members' allowances may be made only after receiving a recommendation from an Independent Remuneration Panel.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The current scheme provides for the annual adjustment of allowances (basic, special responsibility, co-optees' and dependant carers' allowances) by the Local Government staff employees' national pay award annual percentage increase, backdated to 1 April each year. This provision has applied since 1 April 2010. Before 1 April 2010, the scheme provided for annual adjustment of allowances based on RPI.
- 2.2 Although RPI had increased by 4%, the Council did not increase members' allowances for the year commencing April 2009. There has been no pay award for employees since 1 April 2010 (when members allowances were first linked to staff pay), and therefore the last general increase in members' allowances was in April 2008. A few special responsibility allowances were adjusted following recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel in 2010 and 2012, and the ICT allowance of £575 paid separately to members was amalgamated into the basic allowance with effect from 1 April 2012, but, apart from these adjustments, members' allowances have remained at the same level since April 2008.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The 2013/14 employee pay claim is still being negotiated. If there is a pay award to employees during the current year, the % adjustment would apply also to members' allowances, backdated to 1 April, unless the Council decided otherwise.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the current scheme remains unchanged for the year 2013/14. If members so wish, a further report could be made to the Cabinet once the outcome of the employee pay claim is known.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report, but any increase in members' allowances applied if an award is made to employees would increase the overall amount paid to members. A 1% increase would involve additional expenditure of approximately £4,500 per year.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY AND CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are none.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 That it be a recommendation to the Council that the current members' allowances scheme be adopted without change as the scheme to apply for the year commencing 1 April 2013.

Further information:

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Background Papers:

Published documents