

CABINET – 7 FEBRUARY 2018

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2018/19 – 2022/23 - REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 2 August 2017 the Cabinet commissioned an Independent Remuneration Panel comprising Dr Declan Hall, Mr Gerald Lewis and Mrs Diane Roberts to review and make recommendations on the Council's scheme of members' allowances for the four year period commencing 1 April 2018. The Panel met over two days on 9 and 10 October 2017. The Panel's report arising from its deliberations is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The current Members' Allowances Scheme is attached at Appendix 2.

2. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 make it mandatory for local authorities to receive a report from an Independent Remuneration Panel before making or amending their schemes of members' allowances. Where a scheme allows for the adjustment of allowances to be determined by reference to an index, the application of that index must be reviewed at least every four years. A four-year period has elapsed since the index applicable to this Council's scheme of allowances was last reviewed and fresh recommendations from the Panel on the scheme to apply from 1 April 2018 were therefore required.
- 2.2 The Council is not obliged to adopt the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel but it must "have regard to" them.
- 2.3 The Regulations also require the Council to publish the main features of the Panel's recommendations and to make copies of the report available for inspection. Arrangements for this are in hand.

3. THE PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Panel's recommendations are set out at the front of the IRP report and are not repeated here. However, one significant issue is that the Panel has recommended the continuance of the current arrangements for the scheme to provide for allowances to be updated annually by the amount of the annual staff pay award. This arrangement may then apply for a period of four years, before a Panel would have to be reconvened to make fresh recommendations.
- 3.2 Since the Panel met, the Leader of the Council announced an increase in his Cabinet from six to eight portfolio holders. This increase does not affect the Panel's report and recommendations.

- 3.2 The Cabinet is requested to consider the Panel's recommendations and to make recommendations to the Council. It has been this Council's practice in the past to accept the recommendations of the Panel in their entirety.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The budget for members' allowances is £496,670. The slight increase in the ICT element of the basic allowance (£25x60 = £1,500) and the increase in the allowance for the Chairman of the Planning Committee (£1,421) will mean a modest increase in the members' allowances budget. There are also small increases proposed for dependent carer's and child care allowances but the number of claims in any one year is minimal.

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

- 5.1 There are none.

6. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' COMMENTS

- 6.1 I am grateful for the thorough work carried out by the Independent Remuneration Panel and will be interested to receive Members' comments on their recommendations.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Cabinet considers the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and makes recommendations to the Council for the Members' Allowances Scheme to apply from 1 April 2018.

Further information:

Rosemary Rutins
Service Manager, Democratic Services &
Member Support
Tel: (023) 8028 5588
rosemary.rutins@nfdc.gov.uk

Andy Rogers
Democratic Services
Tel: (023) 8028 5588
andy.rogers@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Published documents