

Cabinet – 4 February 2026

Members' allowances – Scheme to apply from 1 April 2026

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	In compliance with legislation and the scheme of allowances adopted by Council in February 2025, this report seeks authority to set the scheme of members' allowances to apply from 1 April 2026. No changes are recommended to the scheme.
Recommendation:	That the Cabinet recommend to Council that the current scheme of members' allowances be made as the scheme to apply from 1 April 2026.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	To implement a scheme that will apply for a period of up to four years commencing 1 April 2026. To comply with the provisions of the Local Government (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jill Cleary - Leader
Strategic Director(s)	Kate Ryan – Chief Executive
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Introduction and background

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 here:

[Members' allowances - New Forest District Council.](#)

2. The current scheme was adopted in February 2025 following a review by the Independent Remuneration Panel. The scheme provides for the annual adjustment of allowances (basic, special responsibility and dependant carers' allowances) by the Local Government staff employees' national pay award annual percentage increase.
3. The proposed scheme for 2026/27 continues to align with the last IRC recommendations in November 2024, which took into account the reduction in the number of councillors implemented in May 2023 and made minor adjustments to the calibration of certain allowances.
4. The employees' national pay award for 2025/26 was agreed in July 2025 and has been implemented. Any pay award agreed for the 2026/27 financial year, will automatically, under the terms of the Scheme, be backdated to 1 April 2026. No other changes to the scheme are proposed. Indeed, no changes are possible without a recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Corporate Plan priorities

5. The proposed scheme promotes the Future New Forest objectives by ensuring that the Council's modernised governance and electoral arrangements are reflected in the remuneration of councillors.

Options appraisal

6. In light of no changes being proposed to the members allowance scheme to apply from 1 April 2026, no other option has been considered. Should any changes be proposed, it would be necessary to undertake a review of the members allowance scheme by an Independent Remuneration Panel.

Consultation undertaken

7. No consultation has been undertaken on the basis that a full review was carried out in 2024 and no changes are proposed to the scheme of members' allowances.

Financial and resource implications

8. Provision has been made in the draft 2026/27 budget for members allowance payments.

Legal implications

9. There are none arising from this report. The Council's scheme is in accordance with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. It should be noted that 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. As this Council's scheme of allowances was last reviewed in November 2024, the next review would be due in November 2028. In light of local government reorganisation, it may not be necessary for this Council to undertake a further review. Cabinet will be advised if this position changes.

Risk Assessment

10. A formal risk assessment for the setting of a Members' Allowances Scheme is not considered necessary, having regard to the implications outlined throughout the report.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

11. The continued adoption of a Members' Allowances Scheme with provision for electric vehicles, bicycles and public transport, promotes the use of sustainable travel for Council business.

Equalities implications

12. The continued adoption of a Members' Allowances Scheme with provision for Parental Leave and a Dependent Carers' Allowance has positive implications by ensuring potential candidates are not deterred from standing for election, taking into account a range of personal circumstances.

Crime and disorder implications

13. There are none arising directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

14. There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

Cabinet report – February 2025