

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING	Council	
MEETING	04 May 2021	
TITLE:	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix 1 Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances		
Appendix 2 Proposed response to queries raised by the IRP		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to

- 2.1 Note the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on Members' Allowances and determine which recommendations to implement and from what date.
- 2.2 Consider the proposed responses to the Appendix to the IRP report (Appendix 2) and authorise the Monitoring Officer to respond to the IRP's queries with any necessary amendments.
- 2.3 Formally thank the Panel for their work.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel has submitted its report on its review of the allowances which it recommends be paid to councillors by the Council from the current financial year.
- 3.2 The report recommends retaining all allowances at present levels save for the following proposed changes:
- 3.3 The basic allowance is to be increased by £958 from £7993 to £8951 in 2021/22. There is also a proposed stepped increase to bring the allowance up to £11,555 by 2025/26. The increase to be staged by £750 each year for the years 2021/22 to 2024/25 and £354 in 2025/26 (Recommendation 1)
- 3.4 Introduce a new allowance for the role of Vice Chair of Planning of £3,578 for 2021/22 (Recommendation 7).
- 3.5 Political Group Leaders to receive a basic governance allowance and a differential allowance to recognise group size (Recommendation 12).
- 3.6 Remove the Additional Group Allowance of £100 per member and incorporate this into the budget for member support (Recommendation 13).
- 3.7 Travel and subsistence to have an additional entry for the approved list for attending parish council meetings (Recommendation 16).
- 3.8 The Dependents Carers Allowance should permit claims subject to a maximum of the real living wage, currently £9.50 per hour, instead of the current differential rates (Recommendation 17).
- 3.9 All allowances to be index linked to the headline percentage increase agreed by the National Joint Council as the pay award for staff on the national pay scale (green book) (Recommendation 18).
- 3.10 Backdate the changes to the level of allowances to take effect from the 1 April 2021 (Summary of Recommendations).
- 3.11 The IRP also recommends that it reviews the members allowance scheme on a regular basis with at least an annual Health Check (Recommendation 19).
- 3.12 The IRP propose to review at an early opportunity the
- Special Responsibility Allowance bandings to reduce the number of different bands to make the scheme clear and transparent.
 - agenda management arrangements for the Policy Development and Scrutiny panels to review their effectiveness in delivering scrutiny.
 - effectiveness of the changes to the Dependents Carers Allowance.
- 3.13 The panel seeks responses to the advisory observations at Appendix A and items i to iv of Recommendation 20.
- 3.14 During consideration of the IRP report by Group Leaders it was identified that the Foster Panel Allowance in the current scheme had not been evaluated by the IRP as a result of this review. The IRP have confirmed to the Monitoring Officer that this should be included in the report as an additional

recommendation and should continue to be paid at the current rate until the banding review, detailed in para 3.12, has concluded. There are no financial implications for the Council in respect of this additional recommendation because this allowance is paid by the fostering body.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 4.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 constitute the legal framework for councillors' allowances. The Council must establish an Independent Panel to advise on these and the Council is required to have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Panel when it decides on the allowances that councillors are paid.
- 4.2 The Council's existing Scheme of Allowances remains in force until it is amended by any changes approved at this meeting following consideration of the Panel's report.
- 4.3 The approved 2021/22 budget is sufficient to fund the recommended proposals. Existing budgets for the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances will be realigned accordingly. Additional inflationary budget growth will be required in future years as the cost increase from 2022/23 onwards is over and above current assumptions built into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This will be taken into account in the 2022/23 budget planning cycle.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 A risk assessment was not required.

6 EQUALITIES

- 6.1 Elected representatives should be remunerated fairly for the duties that they undertake and in doing so this should encourage a more diverse and broader spectrum of the community to enter public life.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 7.1 No direct impact.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 None

9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Independent remuneration Panel has consulted members and considered comparator authorities members allowance schemes in making its recommendations.
- 9.2 The Cabinet member for Resources, Group leaders, Monitoring officer, Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer have been consulted.

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Background papers	None.
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	