

**Report To:** Full Council

**Date of Meeting:** 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**Report Title:** Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

**Report By:** Mary Kilner, Chief Legal Officer

**Key Decision:** N/A

**Classification:** Public

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### **Purpose of Report**

To present the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel to Council for consideration.

The Members Allowances have been reviewed in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

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### **Recommendation(s)**

- 1. Full Council to consider and approve the recommendations in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (attached)**
- 2. That the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel and contributing Councillors and Officers are thanked**

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### **Reasons for Recommendations**

Full Council will need to agree the Members Allowance scheme for 2023/24.

Councillors should be remunerated for the all the work they conduct on committees.

The work of the Independent Remuneration Panel is a specialist role. The Panel is thankful for the contributions that helped form the final recommendations.

## Introduction

### Background

1. The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) last sat in 2018 to consider Member's allowances.
2. Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Reg 10(5), the local authority must not rely on the annual index that it uses for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel established in respect of that authority on the application of an index to its scheme.
3. The IRP was reconvened in early September 2022 to test the index for uplifting the allowances paid to Members.
4. The final report from the Independent Remuneration Panel was submitted on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022.
5. The IRP undertook the following investigative work and reviews;
  - The report of the previous panel (November 2018)
  - Current Members Allowance Scheme
  - South East Employers'(SEE) Data Return 2022
  - Details of Allowances Schemes from other District Authorities
  - Responses to the Members Allowances Survey circulated to all current Members
  - Individual meetings with 3 Senior Officers and 5 Members
  - The Duties of Councillors
  - Current rates of inflation and RPI
  - Pay awards made to Officers
  - National Joint Council (NJC) agreed pay award for local government employees for 2022/23
  - Feedback from IRP Training Seminar delivered by SEE attended by all Panel members
  - Details of the current financial position of the Council

### Report Overview

6. The final report submitted by the Independent Remuneration Panel makes several recommendations in line with the legislation for the Members Allowance scheme 2023/24.
7. A summary of these recommendations follows. The reasoning for these recommendations are contained within the final Independent Remuneration Panel report.

### Basic Allowance

8. The Basic Allowance be frozen at its present level and paid to each of the 32 Councillors at the rate of £6429 per annum

### Structure of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA)

9. In the interests of transparency only one SRA is paid to the Leader incorporating the two separate SRAs currently being paid.

10. In the interests of transparency only one SRA is paid to the Deputy Leader incorporating the two separate SRAs currently being paid.
11. The IRP recommend that in line with other councils' practices that only one SRA be paid to any one Councillor, and if two posts of responsibility are held at the same time by one Member then only the higher value SRA to be paid.

### Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA)

12. SRA payments remain frozen at their present levels, subject to the recommended change in paragraph 9 & 10 above, and paid to the following post holders as indicated in the table below:

Post	Present to nearest £	Proposed (combining all current total allowances)	Change
Leader	12,861	14,238 + 192.52 per member  Currently 17,126	Single SRA, Includes Cabinet and Majority Group Leader  No change to amount paid
Deputy Leader	8,364	8,364 + 192.52 per member  Currently 11,252	Single SRA, Includes Cabinet and Majority Group Deputy Leader  No change to amount paid
Cabinet, including Chair Charity Committee	6,945	6,945	No change
Chair Audit	3,216	3,216	No change
Chair Environment and Safety	615	615	No change
Chair Licensing	1,047	1,047	No change
Chair Overview and Scrutiny	3,216	3,216	No change
Chair Planning	3,861	3,861	No change
Vice-Chair Overview and Scrutiny	630	630	No change
Vice-Chair Planning	1,413	1,413	No change
Opposition Group Leaders	1,377 + 192.52 per member	1,377 + 192.52 per member	No change
Main Opposition Group Deputy Leader	192.52 per	192.52 per	No change

	member	member	
Members Environment and Safety	305	305	No change
Members Licensing per Sub Committee	109	109	No change
Members Planning	1,047	1,047	No change
Mayor's Allowance	6,840	6,840	No change
Deputy Mayor's Allowance	2,235	2,235	No change

### **Independent Co-optees Member Allowances**

13. These should continue to be paid at the current rates as follows:

- Members of Standards Committee: £602.82
- Members of Museums Committee: £70.38

### **Travel Expenses**

14. Where approved travel costs using a private vehicle are reimbursed this is in line with current HMRC specified mileage rates.

### **Dependent Carer's Allowances**

15. Dependant Carer's Allowance should be based on the actual costs incurred whilst undertaking an approved duty, including up to 1 hour in total travelling to and from the place at which the approved duty takes place.

### **Subsistence Allowances**

16. The subsistence allowances should be paid up to the current maximum rates for Officers.

### **Council Policy on payment of Allowances**

17. The Panel endorses the policies in place regarding Renunciation, Part Year Entitlements, Withholding and Repayment of Allowances and Working for another Authority as detailed in the Report.

### **Annual Review of Allowances Scheme**

18. A Working Party be set up as soon as possible to carry out an in-depth review of all SRAs.
19. Following the Report of the Working Party the IRP is reconvened within one year of the date of this Report to carry out a further review of all SRAs based on the recommendations of the Working Party.

### **Timetable of Next Steps**

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Full Council	Approval needed for the 2023/24 Members Allowance scheme	26/04/23	Mary Kilner

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## Wards Affected

All

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## Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 30.3

Have you used relevant project tools?: Y

### Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	Y
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	N
Economic/Financial Implications	Y
Human Rights Act	Y
Organisational Consequences	Y
Local People's Views	Y
Anti-Poverty	Y
Legal	Y

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## Additional Information

Appendix A- Final Independent Remuneration Panel Report

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## Officer to Contact

Officer: Mary Kilner (Chief Legal Officer)

Email: [mary.kilner@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:mary.kilner@hastings.gov.uk)

Tel: 01424 451066