

Council



Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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To: COUNCIL

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Councillors' allowances

Recommendations

To:

1. consider the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations on the councillors' allowances scheme, as set out in appendix 1 to this report;
2. agree a revised councillors' allowances scheme for 2015/16 with effect from 11 May 2015;
3. authorise the head of legal and democratic services to implement and advertise the new scheme, and make any consequential amendments to the constitution.

Purpose of the report

1. To consider the report and the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on a new councillors' allowances scheme and to agree a revised scheme of allowances effective from 11 May 2015.

Background

2. The Local Government Act 2000 requires the council to appoint an independent remuneration panel to review its councillors' allowances scheme and make recommendations on the level of allowances to be paid. Council is responsible for setting the scheme of allowances having regard to the panel's recommendations.
3. The last increase to councillors' allowances was in 2007.

Panel report

4. Following meetings during the winter and spring 2015, the panel has made recommendations for a revised scheme of allowances to run from 11 May 2015. The panel's recommendations and the reasons for these are set out in appendix 1. The

driving factor behind the review was the reduction in the number of councillors from 48 in 2014/15 to 36 in 2015/16 and beyond. This followed a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Legal implications

5. The council is required to establish an independent remuneration panel under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Local Government Act 2000, and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003. Under the legislation, Council is required to have regard to the recommendations of the panel when making or revising a scheme of allowances. However, Council does not have to accept the panel's recommendations if it does not consider them appropriate.
6. The panel recommends that this revised councillors' allowances scheme comes into effect from 11 May 2015, this being the fourth day after the district council elections when councillors' appointments become effective.

Financial implications

7. The 2015/16 budget has £139,200 provision for councillors' basic allowances and £80,600 for special responsibility allowances. The total budget provision for councillors' allowances, including travel, subsistence and carer's allowances in 2015/16 is £234,800.
8. The panel is recommending an increase in the basic allowance as there will be fewer councillors to undertake the workload. Even though the panel is recommending an increase in the basic allowance from £2,900 per annum to £3,500 per annum, the total cost of basic allowances reduces to £126,000. The panel is also recommending an increase in the special responsibility allowances; the maximum budgetary cost being £95,210.
9. Together the maximum cost of the proposed basic allowances and special responsibility allowances for 2015/16, as recommended by the panel, is less than a one per cent increase on 2014/15. If Council adopts these recommendations, this small increase in basic and special responsibility allowances is likely to be offset by a reduction in the amount of travel, subsistence and carer's claims in 2015/16, due to the reduction in the number of councillors from 48 in 2014/15 to 36 in 2015/16. The current allowances budget of £234,800 should be sufficient to cover the revised allowances.

Conclusion

10. The Independent Remuneration Panel has undertaken a review of the councillors' allowances scheme. Council is requested to consider the recommendations set out in the report and agree a scheme of allowances to run from 11 May 2015, immediately after the 2015 district council elections.