
Governance Committee: Independent Remuneration Panel Review of Member Allowances

Background and Context

- 1** Members of local authorities have been able to receive certain allowances and expenses for many years, as a way of acknowledging the time and responsibility they invest in serving as members.
- 2** The Member Allowances Regulations 2003 requires all local authorities to have a Members' Allowance Scheme published as part of their Constitution. It also established that authorities must establish Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) which should review schemes from time to time and make recommendations to the local authority about its scheme. An IRP must consider the scheme around every four years.
- 3** A new Members' Allowances Scheme came into effect in May 2017, based on a Scheme recommended by the IRP to Council in December 2016. The Council asked the IRP to review the Scheme after about a year of operation.

Proposal

- 4** The IRP have prepared the report **set out at Appendix 1** that sets out its recent review of the Scheme following about a year of its operation. This includes details of consultation undertaken with a range of elected members.
- 5** In summary, the IRP recommends amending the Carer's Allowance to more explicitly highlight that it can be used to claim for childcare costs or the care of dependant adults and recommends setting separate hourly rates and annual limits, based on the differing costs of these types of care. It also recommends a small amendment to the travel expenses scheme, to allow members to claim travel expenses for observing a committee meeting for development purposes.

Resources

- 6** If the IRP's recommendations are agreed by Council, it is expected that any additional claims for carer's allowance and for travel expenses can be met from within the current Members' Allowances Budget.

Factors taken into account

Consultation

- 7** The IRP interviewed a range of elected members and also undertook a member survey which all 70 members were able to respond to. It has consulted the County Chairman and group leaders, who were supportive in principle of the IRP's draft report.

Risk Management Implications

- 8** The County Council is obliged to consider the recommendations of the IRP, which gives assurance that the Members' Allowances Scheme is fit for purpose. The independent nature of the IRP mitigates against any reputational risk.

Recommended

That the Independent Remuneration Panel's report and recommendations be approved.

Lionel Barnard

Chairman of the Governance Committee

Contact: Charles Gauntlett 033022 22524

Background Papers

None