

## **Report to Governance Committee**

**10 May 2023**

## **Independent Remuneration Panel Review 2023/24**

### **Report by Director of Law and Assurance**

**Electoral division(s): Not applicable.**

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### **Summary**

The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) will be carrying out a review of member allowances in 2023/24. The Governance Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to set out any guidance to the IRP on its forthcoming review.

### **Recommendation**

- (1) That the Committee be invited to give guidance to the IRP on aspects of its review for 2023/24.
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### **Proposal**

#### **1 Background and context**

- 1.1 Councillors are able to receive allowances and expenses in recognition of the time they invest and any particular responsibilities they carry.
- 1.2 The Member Allowances Regulations 2003 require all local authorities to have a Members' Allowance Scheme published as part of their Constitution. They also require authorities to maintain an IRP which should review schemes from time to time and make recommendations to the local authority about its scheme. An IRP must do so about every four years.
- 1.3 The current County Council scheme (Appendix 1) was approved in 2021 following a full review of roles and responsibilities of members in 2020.

#### **2 Proposal details**

- 2.1 The IRP will be undertaking a review of allowances in 2023/24 and the Committee is asked to indicate if it wishes to give any guidance to the IRP at the start of its work. This could include a view about the overall cost of the Members' Allowance Scheme and whether it should be increased or decreased.
- 2.2 The Committee might also want to suggest an evaluation of any particular special responsibility allowances for roles that are felt to be out of line with other roles.
- 2.3 The Committee may also wish to comment to the IRP on its other allowances, such as the scope of the travel expenses scheme or the carer's allowance.

### **3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)**

3.1 Not applicable.

### **4 Consultation, engagement and advice**

4.1 The Committee could make suggestions for consultation that the IRP might undertake, such as with all members of the Council, together with targeted interviews and whether it should seek information from outside the Council.

4.2 The Committee might also wish to ask the IRP to informally consult with the Chairman and group leaders on its draft conclusions at the end of its review.

### **5 Finance**

5.1 The current spend on Member Allowances is around £1.4m per annum.

### **6 Risk implications and mitigations**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Action (in place or planned)</b>
That members are seen to approve their own allowances, risking complaints of a conflict of interest. Lack of transparency in use of public funds	The independent nature of the IRP mitigates any reputational risk.  The approval process is all in the public domain.
That the Council fails to agree an appropriate Allowance Scheme, giving uncertainty for current or potential future councillors, leading to insufficient candidates coming forward in 2025.	The IRP plans to conclude its work in 2024 with the aim of recommending a Scheme for implementation after the elections in 2025.

### **7 Policy alignment and compliance**

The IRP's work must be carried out in accordance with the Member Allowance Regulations 2003 and the officers supporting the IRP in its review will ensure that advice is given on this matter.

Tony Kershaw

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### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Current Members' Allowances Scheme (Part 6 of the Constitution)

### **Background papers**

None