

## **TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**23 November 2022**

#### **Report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive**

##### **Part 1- Public**

##### **Delegated**

#### **1      SCHEME OF MEMBER'S ALLOWANCES**

**This report recommends that the Scheme of Member's Allowances remains unchanged for the year 2023/24 pending consideration of any recommendations from the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.**

##### **1.1    Introduction**

- 1.1.1 The existing Scheme of Members' Allowances was agreed by Full Council at its meeting on 11 April 2017 following a review of allowances undertaken by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 1.1.2 On 22 February 2022 the Council agreed to freeze basic and special responsibility allowances for the 2022/23 financial year. It was also reported at that stage that the Council was in the process of establishing a new Panel.
- 1.1.3 In August 2022 the Council appointed a new Panel, jointly with Tunbridge Wells Borough and Sevenoaks District Councils. That panel is now working towards providing its recommendations to the three Councils.
- 1.1.4 It is anticipated that the Panel should be in a position to provide its recommendations to the Council by January 2023. However, this is unlikely to allow sufficient time for Members to consider the recommendations and formulate their proposals in time for budget-setting for the financial year 2023/24. In addition, following Borough elections in May, the composition of the Council will change, from a cohort of 54 Members to 44. Consequently, each Member will have a greater number of constituents and the panel recommendations (and any scheme adopted) should take this into account.

##### **1.2    Legal Implications**

- 1.2.1 The Council cannot adopt a revised scheme of Member's Allowances without first receiving recommendations from an Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council is not obliged to adopt the recommendations of the Panel but it is obliged to publish in local newspapers what the Panel recommended and what scheme the Council, ultimately, determine to adopt.

- 1.2.2 Until the report of the Panel is received and considered, Members are not able to increase the allowances in line with the previous indexation agreed in 2017 i.e. that the allowances should increase in line with the staff pay award, as this indexation was agreed more than 4 years ago and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 do not permit reliance on an indexation for more than 4 years without consideration of a further recommendation from the Panel.
- 1.2.3 However, Members will be able to review the Scheme of Allowances for 2023/24 during the 2023/24 municipal year, upon receipt of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

### **1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.3.1 The recommendation that the Scheme of Allowances remains unchanged for the year 2023/24 would if approved represent a cost saving compared to budget of circa £20,000. The change in the composition of the Council from a cohort of 54 Members to 44 following the Borough elections in May would also on face value deliver a cost saving of circa £47,000 in terms of the basic allowance. The extent of any ongoing cost saving would be dependent on the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and what the Council decide to do.

### **1.4 Risk Assessment**

- 1.4.1 Not applicable.

### **1.5 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.5.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

### **1.6 Recommendations**

- 1.6.1 Members are recommended to AGREE that the Scheme of Allowances for the 2023/24 municipal year shall remain unchanged from the current Scheme for 2022/23.
- 1.6.2 NOTE that the Scheme of Allowances for 2023/24 may be reviewed during the 2023/24 municipal year upon receipt of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Background papers:

contact: Kevin Toogood

Nil

Adrian Stanfield  
Director of Central Services & Deputy Chief Executive