

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - REPORT OF THE JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Item GP 23/23 referred from General Purposes Committee of 3 July 2023

The report of the Management Team set out details of a recent review undertaken by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP) on the Scheme of Members' Allowances and summarised the key recommendations arising from the Panel at 1.2.4 of the report. Management Team advised that the recommendations of the Panel, if adopted, would produce a saving of circa £45,900 when compared to the budget included within the 2023/24 Estimates.

The Committee recognised the considerable work undertaken by the Panel in evaluating the role undertaken by Members and acknowledged the case made for a reduction in the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Deputy Leader. However, the Committee felt that it was neither appropriate nor fair to reduce the allowance in consideration of the significant responsibilities of this role.

Members recognised the value and role of the vice-chairs and considered it appropriate to set an allowance to vice-chairs at a level based on 25% of the relevant chairman's allowance.

Following a comprehensive debate it was

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the Basic Allowance payable to all Members remain at its current level of £5,175 per annum;
- (2) the level of the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) be set as follows:
 - (a) the Leader's Allowance remain at £20,706 per annum;
 - (b) the SRA for the Deputy Leader remain at £15,528 per annum (circa 75% of the Leader's Allowance);
 - (c) the SRAs for Cabinet Members remain at £8,802 per annum;
 - (d) the SRAs for Committee Chairs be set as follows:
 - (i) Area Planning Committees (x 3) - £1,725 per annum;
 - (ii) Audit Committee - £2,589 per annum;
 - (iii) General Purposes Committee - £1,725 per annum;

- (iv) Joint Standards Committee - £2,589 per annum;
 - (v) Licensing and Appeals Committee - £2,589 per annum;
 - (vi) Overview and Scrutiny Committee - £2,589 per annum;
 - (vii) Scrutiny Select Committees (x 3) - £2,589 per annum;
- (e) the SRAs for qualifying** opposition group leaders be set at a flat sum of £4,401 per annum, and where applicable, a maximum of one additional SRA per Member (excluding group leader allowances) be applied;

***To qualify, neither the leader of an opposition group nor any members of the leader's group can serve on Cabinet.*

- (f) the SRAs for vice-chairs be set at 25% of the relevant Committee Chairs' allowances as follows:
- (i) Area Planning Committees (x 3) - £431 per annum;
 - (ii) Audit Committee - £647 per annum;
 - (iii) General Purposes Committee - £431 per annum;
 - (iv) Joint Standards Committee - £647 per annum;
 - (v) Licensing and Appeals Committee - £647 per annum;
 - (vi) Overview and Scrutiny Committee - £647 per annum;
 - (vii) Scrutiny Select Committees (x 3) - £647 per annum;
- (3) the Mileage Allowances remain at the HMRC approved rate;
- (4) the existing scheme for meal and/or subsistence allowances be ceased;
- (5) the carers' allowances be set at a maximum rate of £10.42 per hour per child (linked to the National Living Wage) for general childcare and £18.00 per hour for dependent carers;
- (6) the allowances, including those for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, be updated in line with any increases in the remuneration of Council staff;
- (7) the amended scheme of allowances, once approved, be agreed to take effect from the date of Council on 11 July 2023; and

- (8) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to update Part 6 of the Constitution (Members' Allowances) to reflect any agreed changes to the current scheme of allowances arising out of the above recommendations.

***Referred to Council**