



Council

21 January 2019

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR CIVIC YEAR 2019-2020

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

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Purpose / Summary:

To review and agree the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel with regard to Members' allowances for 2019-2020 civic year.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Members approve the new rates as shown within this Report (Appendix 1), with regard to Members' allowances for the Civic Year 2019–2020 by agreeing to:

- a) The proposed increase of 2% for the Basic allowance
- b) The proposed increase of 2% across Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's)
- c) The reduction of claimable broadband reimbursement payments to £10 per calendar month
- d) Rail travel, when amounting to more than £25, should be booked centrally through Committee Administration.
- e) Retaining all remaining allowances at current rates

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial : FIN/158/19
The total additional budget requirement for the proposed increases is £4,750.
This amount will be built into the Base Budget 2019/20 onwards.

Staffing : None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Risk Assessment : None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
None

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman) **Yes** **No**

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications **Yes** **No**

1. Background

- 1.1 West Lindsey District Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), has carried out its annual review of the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances.
- 1.2 To inform the review, the Panel has considered a number of factors. These include as assessment of the workloads of Members; changes in the availability, costs and uptake of broadband services and the financial and budgeting situation the Council faces, including proposed pay awards for Officers.
- 1.3 The Panel consulted with all Members, providing the opportunity to make comments via email and also offered the opportunity for meeting with the Panel. On 23 October 2018, five Members met independently with the Panel to give their views.
- 1.4 The comments made to the Panel by Members have been taken into account when arriving at the final Recommendations within this report.
- 1.5 The Panel would like to record its thanks to those Members and Officers who made themselves available to speak with the Panel.

2. Members' Allowances

- 2.1 Taking all factors into account, the Panel have recommended a 2% increase across all Members' allowances. This is in line with the proposed pay award for Officers for 2019/20, but is lower than the figure of 2.5%* which has been cited as the average pay award for 2018/19 (Income Data Research – Oct '18).
- 2.2 A convention to round up to the nearest five pounds has been adopted in applying the 2% award. This increases the Members' basic allowance by £110 to £5590 p.a. for the year 2019/20.
- 2.3 The net effect of applying the 2% award is an overall increase for 2019/20 of £4,750 across the allowance scheme.
- 2.4 The revised schedule of allowances is set out in Appendix One.

3. Broadband Payments

- 3.1 The Panel also reviewed the allowance available for Members to assist with the provision of broadband services. This currently stands at £20 per month, but is not universally claimed.
- 3.2 The background for inclusion of the allowance was reviewed. It was introduced a number of years ago, at a time when broadband/internet access was not as widespread across the populace. However, such access was deemed to be useful to enable Members to fulfil their duties more effectively and also assisted in the Council's move to paper-less working.

- 3.3 In present times, broadband/internet access is now much more widespread and its availability among Members is not solely for their Council work. Hence it is recommended that the current allowance be reduced to £10 per month.

4. Travel by Public Transport

- 4.1 A need for greater clarity concerning the rules associated with travel by public transport (particularly train travel) was brought to the attention of the Panel.

- 4.2 The Scheme currently states:

“The rate for travel by public transport shall not exceed the ordinary first class fare. Any Member who wishes to travel standard class may elect to do so.”

- 4.3 The Panel were firmly of the view that, where rail travel amounts to more than £25, then this should be booked centrally through Committee Admin; giving as much notice as possible of the intention to travel, and utilising any discount rail cards. “Standard fare” tickets should be the default position, unless the cost of first class, (which includes a meal/wif-fi), is lower than the cost of “standard fare” plus any subsistence payment that may arise.

5. Mileage and Subsistence Allowances

- 5.1 No change to mileage allowances. The Panel noted and commented that mileage allowances are currently in line with the tax efficient rate authorised by the Inland Revenue.

- 5.2 No change to subsistence allowances as set out below. Receipts must be provided for subsistence claimed and attached to the claim form.

a. Absence of more than four hours but no more than eight hours – only the cost of one meal can be reimbursed up to a maximum of £15.

b. Absence of more than eight hours but no more than 12 hours – only the cost of two meals can be reimbursed up to a maximum of £25.

c. Absence of more than 12 hours but no more than 16 hours – only the cost of three meals can be reimbursed up to a maximum of £33.

d. Absence of more than 16 hours but not including an overnight stay – only the cost of four meals can be reimbursed up to a maximum of £40.

e. Overnight – No Change - £83

f. Overnight (London or LGA) – No Change - £208

Appendix One: Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA): Recommended Rates

Allowance	Rate 2018/19	Rate 2019/20
Basic Allowance	£5,480	£5,590
SRA – Leader of Council	£12,180	£12,425
SRA – Deputy Leader/s (in the event of two or more being nominated, the payment to be shared)	£4,415	£4,505
SRA – Chair of Council	£3,900	£3,980
SRA – Vice-Chair of Council	£1,340	£1,370
Civic Allowance for the Chairman of Council	£1,575	£1,610
Civic Allowance for the Vice-Chairman of Council	£430	£440
SRA – Committee Chairs (excluding Licensing Cttee and Regulatory Cttee)	£3,045	£3,105
SRA – Regulatory Chair	£1,522.50	£1,555
SRA – Licensing Chair	£1,522.50	£1,555
SRA – Committee Vice-Chairs (excluding Licensing Cttee and Regulatory Cttee)	£1,440	£1,470
SRA – Regulatory Vice-Chair	£720	£735
SRA – Licensing Vice-Chair	£720	£735
SRA – Leader of the Opposition (in the event of the Council being a ‘hung’ Council, the Leaders of the two largest groups be paid the same special responsibility allowance as for the Leader of the Opposition)	£4,415	£4,505

SRA – Deputy Leader of the Opposition	£800	£820
SRA – Minority Group Leaders (per group member, and including the Group Leader)	£95	£100
Independent Members: Governance & Audit and Standards Committees – A payment of £60.00 for the first four hours of attendance at a meeting/event and a second payment for attendance in excess of four hours. The first four hours would commence from the start time of the meeting (To be paid when not chairing a meeting).	£60	No change
Dependent Carer’s Allowance	£10	No Change