



Council

20 January 2020

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR CIVIC YEAR 2020-2021

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

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Purpose / Summary:

To review and consider the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel with regard to Members' allowances for 2020-2021 civic year.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- (1) That Members approve the new rates as shown within this Report (Appendix 1), with regard to Members' allowances for the Civic Year 2020–2021 namely, :-
 - A proposed increase of £560 p/a to the individual Basic Allowance and incorporating broadband within this. (no separate broadband payment to be made.
 - Retaining all remaining allowances at current rates.
- (2) Where there is more than one Vice Chair sitting on a committee, Members are requested to approve either: -
 - Option A
 - That the allowance be split between the Vice-Chairmen; or
 - Option B
 - That the allowance continue to be paid to both Vice-Chairmen.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial : FIN/146/20/JA

Pending approval from Full Council in March 2019 Basic Allowances have already been built into the MTFP for 2020/21 at an increase of 2% from 2019/20 budget.

Option A - One Vice Chairman allowance be made per Committee

The proposed changes would increase the Basic Allowance budget to £221,400. The additional cost is partially offset by incorporating broadband allowances into the basic allowance (previously budgeted separately). Opting to pay one vice chairman allowance per committee would result in a saving of £3,000 p/a for SRA's, therefore resulting in an overall **pressure on the MTFP of £7,500 in 20/21** increasing to a **pressure of £9,000 by 2024/25**.

Option B - Allowances for Vice Chairman remain as present

The proposed changes would increase the Basic Allowance budget to £221,400 which is offset by the broadband balances as per recommendation A. No saving would be achieved from SRA's resulting in a **pressure on the MTFP of £10,500 in 20/21** increasing to a **pressure of £12,000 by 2024/25**.

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 the financial and budgeting situation the Council faces, including anticipated pay awards for Officers (no details available at present); a comparison of allowance rates payable at comparable Councils; the rates of increase in Member allowances over the recent past and the role allowances play in attracting prospective Councillors and upholding democratic processes. The Panel were cognisant of the fact that at the last local elections in May 2019, four Members (almost 10% of the total) were returned unopposed.
- 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 22 October 2019, two Members met independently with the Panel to give their views. The Leader of Council met with the Panel on 29 October 2019. Two further Members offered their comments in writing to the Panel.
- 1.4 The comments received by the Panel from 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 an increase of £560 pa to Members' basic allowance. This incorporates the rolling in of broadband connection payments within this amount; valued at £240 pa. These are currently claimed by Members separately.
- 2.2 This increases the Members' basic allowance to £6150 p.a. for the year 2020/21, and equates to an extra amount of £10.77 per week per Member.

3. Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

- 3.1 The Panel were of the view that SRAs were currently adequate and recommended that these remain unchanged.

4. Vice-Chairs' Allowance

- 4.1 Both Prosperous Communities and Overview & Scrutiny Committees have two Vice Chairs currently sitting on Committee. The Panel were of the view that, only one payment should be made and that this should be shared in the case of multiple Vice Chairs.

- 4.2 The Panel recommend that one Vice Chairman payment be made per Committee, and in the case of multiple Vice Chairmen on that Committee, that this be shared.

5. Broadband Payments

- 5.1 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 taken up.
- 5.2 As detailed at point 2 above, it is recommended that the current allowance be rolled into the basic allowance in order to bring this into the scheme.

6. Attendance at Member Training

- 6.1 The Panel heard concerns from Members about poor attendance levels at Member training events and whether the withholding of a proportion of the basic allowance could be applied to any Member who fails to attend training.
- 6.2 Officers, while cognisant of the fact that Members receive an allowance and not a salary, looked further into this suggestion. At present there is no legislation or legal basis for such action to be taken.

7. Mileage and Subsistence Allowances

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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

8. Financial Impact

- 8.1 There are two financial scenarios depending on whether Members are minded to accept the recommendation related to the reduction in payment for Vice-Chairs.

- 8.2 Option A - If Members accept this recommendation the proposed increase in Member allowances represents a net 3.1% increase in the total allowance scheme for 2020/21. After taking into account the 2% increase already built into the MTFP (pending Full Council approval) this recommendation results in a pressure of £7,500 in 20/21.
- 8.3 Option B - If Members do not support the recommendation relating to Vice-Chairs, the proposed increase in Member allowances represents a net 4.2% increase in the total allowance scheme for 2020/21. After taking into account the 2% increase already built into the MTFP (pending Full Council approval) this recommendation results in a pressure of £10,500 in 20/21.
- 8.4 The revised schedule of proposed allowances is set out in Appendix One.

9. **Recommendation**

- 9.1 (i) Option A: One Vice Chairman allowance be made per Committee, and in the case of multiple Vice Chairmen on that Committee, that this be shared. The Members' basic allowance be increased to £6,150 p.a. for the year 2020/21, inclusive of broadband payments. This would represent a net increase of £7,500 in the total allowance scheme for 2020/21.
- (ii) Option B: Allowances for Vice Chairman remain as at present. The Members' basic allowance be increased to £6,150 p.a. for the year 2020/21, inclusive of broadband payments. This would represent a net increase in £10,500 in the total allowance scheme for 2020/21.

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

Allowance	Rate 2019/20	Rate 2020/21
Basic Allowance	£5,590	£6,150
No change to SRA allowances:		
SRA – Leader of Council	£12,425	£12,425
SRA – Deputy Leader/s (in the event of two or more being nominated, the payment to be shared)	£4,505	£4,505
SRA – Chair of Council	£3,980	£3,980
SRA – Vice-Chair of Council	£1,370	£1,370
Civic Allowance for the Chairman of Council	£1,610	£1,610
Civic Allowance for the Vice-Chairman of Council	£440	£440
SRA – Committee Chairs (excluding Licensing Cttee and Regulatory Cttee)	£3,105	£3,105
SRA – Regulatory Chair	£1,555	£1,555
SRA – Licensing Chair	£1,555	£1,555
SRA – Committee Vice-Chairs (excluding Licensing Cttee and Regulatory Cttee)	£1,470	£1,470

SRA – Regulatory Vice-Chair	£735	£735
SRA – Licensing Vice-Chair	£735	£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)	£4,505	£4,505
SRA – Deputy Leader of the Opposition	£820	£820
SRA – Minority Group Leaders (per group member, and including the Group Leader)	£100	£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

