



Council

27 January 2025

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR 2025/2026

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact 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 2025/2026 to be effective from 1 April

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1

That the Basic Allowance Payable to all Members be increased by 5.67% (£382.73) in line with the increase received by the lowest paid staff (From £6750 to £7,132.73)

Recommendation 2

That Vice Chairs of Governance & Audit Committee, Overview & Scrutiny and Corporate Policy & Resources Committee to each receive the full Special Responsibility Allowance for the role (£1,537) as opposed to the current sharing arrangement.

Recommendation 3

That the wording of the Member Allowance Scheme (Paragraphs 1-11 be updated as Shown in Appendix 1 to this report to provide additional clarity for both Members and Officers.

All above recommendations to be effective from 1 April 2025.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council must appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations on the Allowances Payable to Members.

The Council must approve and Publish a Members Allowance Scheme by 31 March each year and can decide to either reject or accept the Panel's recommendation(s).

Financial : FIN/134/25/SL

Recommendation 1 – To increase the current allowance of £6,750 per member by 5.67% to £7,132.73.

Total budget required for 36 members - £256,800

Current Budget within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) - £249,100

Pressure on the MTFP - £7,700

Recommendation 2 - the proposal will result in an increase of 3 x £1,537 above the existing budget for 2024/2025.

Total budget required - £70,200

Current Budget within the MTFP - £67,200

Pressure on the MTFP - £3,000

Total Pressure on the MTFP from 2025/2026 from recommendations 1 & 2 - £10,700

Recommendation 3

There are no financial implications arising from recommendation 3.

Staffing : The Remuneration Panel is independent from the Council, and is administered through the Democratic Services team

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Risk Assessment : None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : The meetings of the Remuneration Panel are held via Microsoft teams

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Report to Council January 2025 – website

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 a pay award increase of £1290 for staff; a comparison of allowance rates payable at comparable Councils; and the role allowances play in attracting prospective Councillors through upholding democratic processes.
- 1.3 The Panel offered consultation to all members, providing the opportunity for members to make comments via email and also offering the option for members to meet individually with the Panel remotely via MS Teams. On 8 August 2024, four Members met independently with the Panel to give their views. No written views were received from Members.
- 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 them.

2. Members' Basic Allowances

- 2.1 The pay award received by all staff below Chief Officer level had been a flat payment of £1290.
- 2.2 The Panel noted that this had equated to a 5.67% increase for the lowest paid staff.
- 2.3 Panel Members had long recognised the role allowances played in attracting prospective Councillors and as such have recommended that the Basic Allowance Payable to all Members be increased by 5.67% in line with the increase received by the lowest paid staff.

3 Members Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

- 3.1 The Panel in its last report to Council, in January 2024, had recommended that the Vice Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny and Governance & Audit should receive the full allowance payable for the role to bring parity.
- 3.2 Council at its meeting in January 2024 rejected the Panel's recommendation in respect of this matter and the Vice-Chairman's Allowance for these roles continued to be shared.
- 3.3 Council at its AGM in 2024 approved the introduction of an additional Vice-Chairmanship to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee with no budget for such having been set in advance, it was agreed with the Leader, that until such time as the

Remuneration Panel considered allowances again, the allowance would be split so as to remain in budget.

- 3.4 Having considered this matter, the Panel have again recommended that the Vice Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny and Governance & Audit receive the full special responsibility allowance. The Panel have also recommended that the additional Vice-Chairman position for the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee, introduced in May 2024, also receive the full special responsibility allowance in order to bring parity to the roles.
- 3.5 The Panel have not recommended any increases to any other Special Responsibilities Allowances Payable (Codes B-M of the Scheme – see appendix one)

Members should note that they may elect to forego their allowance, if they so wished.

4 Wording of the Member Allowance Scheme

- 4.1 The overall wording and phrasing of the Allowance Scheme, which preceded the schedule of allowances payable, had not been reviewed for a number of years and it was this part of the document which provided both Members and Officers with more detailed guidance and clarity about claiming allowances, specifically in respect of subsistence and mileage.
- 4.2 At the request of Officers the Panel had considered amendments which aimed to provide additional clarity. The Panel were supportive of the amendments and suggested further additions/ re-phrasing.
- 4.3 The proposed amended wording is as set out in Appendix One (additions shown in bold underline) along with the revised schedule of proposed allowances.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 **Recommendation 1** - That the Basic Allowance Payable to all Members be increased by 5.67% in line with the increase received by the lowest paid staff (From £6750 to £7,132.73)
- 5.2 **Recommendation 2** - That Vice Chairs of Governance & Audit Committee, Overview & Scrutiny and Corporate Policy & Resources Committee to each receive the full Special Responsibility Allowance for the role (£1,537) as opposed to the current sharing arrangement.
- 5.3 **Recommendation 3** - That the wording of the Member Allowance Scheme (Paragraphs 1-11) be updated as Shown in Appendix One to this report to provide additional clarity for both Members and Officers.

All above recommendations to be effective from 1 April 2025.