



Council

Thursday, 7 March 2019

Independent Review of Councillors' Allowances

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require local authorities to make a scheme of allowances for their members and to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel to make recommendations to the Council about the scheme and the amounts to be paid. To that effect, an Independent Remuneration Panel was convened in January 2019 and met twice to review the Rushcliffe Borough Council Members' Allowance Scheme. The report of the Panel is appended at Appendix One.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Council

- a) considers the Panel's report and determines whether to implement all, or some, of the Panel's recommendations
- b) considers the Scrutiny SRAs proposed in paragraph 4.6 of this report for the year 2019/20.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The last full review of the Members' Allowance Scheme was undertaken in 2015. The proposals in the report, subject to Council's consideration, would enable a revised scheme to be agreed prior to the end of the municipal year. If agreed a revised Member's Allowance Scheme would then be in place in time for the 2019 Borough Council elections.
- 3.2. The terms of reference for the Independent Remuneration Panel included as an appendix to the Panel's report.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The Panel's overall assessment of the current Members' Allowance Scheme is outlined in paragraph 10 of their report and states 'there has been no substantial change in members' responsibilities to justify any significant change in the Council's allowance scheme'. This judgement has led the Panel to make three recommendations outlined at the end of their report:
- That the basic allowance remain unchanged but that it be increased annually in line with the percentage pay award made to officers

- That there be no changes to the special responsibility allowances but that they be increased annually in line with the percentage pay award made to officers
 - That the travel and subsistence allowances remain unchanged.
- 4.2. In reaching these recommendations, the Panel reviewed background and comparative information; spoke with, or received written correspondence from, eleven Councillors; and was advised by senior officers.
- 4.3. Information received by the Panel led to the consideration of the following areas:
- Chairman of Member Development Group
 - Planning Committee Chairman, Vice Chairman and members
 - Mayoral Allowance
 - Scrutiny Groups
 - Business Manager
 - Information Technology.
- 4.4. On reflection, whilst the Panel welcomed the comments from Councillors, these did not result in any recommended changes to the Members' Allowance Scheme.
- 4.5. Of particular note, given the current Review of Scrutiny also on this agenda for discussion, is the Panel's consideration of this area outlined in paragraphs 37 to 41. The Panel was made aware of the proposed changes but as these had not yet been accepted at Council did not feel that these changes could be reflected in the review of the Members' Allowance Scheme. They have, however, made it clear that, in their considered opinion, 'unless there is a good and clear reason to do so, the overall special responsibility allowance currently paid in respect of scrutiny (£18,176) is not exceeded under the new arrangements, nor is the number of members receiving a special responsibility allowance for scrutiny roles increased'.
- 4.6. To that effect the following breakdown of the scrutiny 'pot' is proposed for the period of 2019/20:
- Chairman of Corporate Overview Group - £4,544
 - Chairmen of the three Scrutiny Groups - £3,408 (£10,224 in total)
 - Vice-Chairmen of the three Scrutiny Groups - £1,136 (£3,408 in total)

Please note the figures exclude the anticipated 2% pay increase for 2019/20.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1. No alternatives were considered.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

- 6.1. As the last full review was undertaken in 2015, failure to properly consider the Panel's report could restrict the Council's ability to ensure its Councillors

receive an allowance reflective of their community leadership role and also an amount representative of their responsibilities.

- 6.2. Under the relevant Regulations, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel before it makes or amends a Scheme, but it is not bound to follow the recommendations.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

7.1.1. The financial implications of the report are covered in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.6. Given there are no proposed changes, existing budgets are sufficient to fund the scheme.

7.2. Legal Implications

7.2.1. The Council must under the relevant regulations have regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel before approving or amending its Members' Allowance Scheme. This is in order to ensure the scheme has been independently reviewed and retain public confidence in the allowance setting process.

7.3. Equalities Implications

7.3.1. Consideration of an independent review of members' allowances supports delivery of the Council's priority of 'Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life' by ensuring allowance payments to Councillors are reflective of their roles and responsibilities as community leaders. It can also help to ensure the allowances are set at a level that doesn't restrict people's ability to engage in community leadership and become a Councillor, reflecting the aims within the Council's equality scheme.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

7.4.1. There are no Crime and Disorder Implications within this report.

7.5. Other implications

7.5.1. There are no other implications within this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

- 8.1. Providing an appropriate level of recompense to Councillors that is reflective of their community leadership role supports delivery in all three of the Council's priority areas.

9. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Council

- a) considers the Panel's report and determines whether to implement all, or some, of the Panel's recommendations

- b) considers the Scrutiny SRAs proposed in paragraph 4.6 of this report for the year 2019/20.

For more information contact:	Allen Graham Chief Executive 0115 9148349 agraham@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices:	Appendix A – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

APPENDIX