

COUNCIL

Members' Allowances Scheme – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel 16th November 2011

Report of the Head of Governance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Council to consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of travel allowances.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **Council is asked to consider the recommendations set out in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and to approve any consequential amendments to the Members' Allowances Scheme.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to make an allowances scheme for each year. The Regulations require that before an authority makes or amends a scheme, it must have regard to the recommendations made to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 1.2 Some Members may recall that in February 2011, Council considered a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel, following which the Members' Allowances Scheme to take effect from May 2011 was approved. The recommendations of the Panel on that occasion related primarily to the amount of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances to be paid under the Scheme. The Panel had not made any recommendations in respect of the existing scheme in so far as it related to travel allowances.
- 1.3 For Members' information, Appendix B to the Members' Allowances Scheme, which deals with travel and subsistence allowances, is appended to this report.
- 1.4 The Independent Remuneration Panel met on the 2nd September 2011, and was asked to consider two issues which had recently arisen. These were the payment of travel expenses to members travelling to meetings from outside the district, and the reimbursement of car parking fees incurred by members.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The Panel's report, including its recommendations, is appended to this report. The Chairman, Mr Colin Everett, and another member of the Panel, Ms Janice Wilson, will be attending the meeting to present the report and to answer any questions.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 The attached report sets out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which the Council is required to have regard to in making any decisions about the Allowances Scheme.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 The Panel's report sets out three recommendations for consideration by Council. It would be open to Council to accept any of those recommendations, to accept any of those recommendations with amendment, or to reject any of the recommendations. Council does not have to accept the recommendations of the Panel, but it must have regard to them in making its decision.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Council is asked to consider the Panel's recommendations.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None directly arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As set out in the report, there is a legal requirement for Council to have regard to the recommendations of the Panel.

Members may wish to be aware that members' car park permits expire on 31st March. They are referred to in the current Off Street Car Parks Order, which is amended whenever substantive changes are required. However, if a permit were discontinued, it would not be necessary to amend the Order immediately, and the change could be incorporated when other changes to the order are required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As context, the budget for members' travel is currently £6,500 for 2011/12.

With regard to travel from outside the district, it is impossible to quantify the exact cost should members be minded not to accept the recommendations of the Panel. It is understood that there are currently two members who are students who have family homes at some distance from the district.

With regard to car parking, currently 15 members' car parking permits have been issued. The loss of permit income to the Council if the permits were withdrawn would be around £2,625 per annum. However, there would be additional income to the Council car parks budget through increased pay and display usage by Members, which, when relating to official business, would then be reimbursed from the members' allowances budgets. The amount of this is also impossible to quantify at this stage.

For other proposed changes to mileage rates, draft budgets are generally updated to take account of price inflation and therefore the application of prevailing AMAP rates fits with that approach. The use of AMAP rates typically means that allowances reflect reasonable estimates of actual costs incurred, with no 'profit' element included.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**Human Resources:**

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

Car park permits are administered by Property Services. The relevant implications are set out in the financial and legal implications above.

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The report has been prepared by the Monitoring Officer in her capacity as the officer supporting the Independent Remuneration Panel.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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