

Report to COUNCIL

Members' Allowances Scheme 2026/2027

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4 March 2026

Reason for Decision

The Council is required, under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP/Panel) to review and make recommendations to the Council on the range and levels of remuneration for Elected Members. The Council must have regard to the Panel's recommendations before making decisions in relation to members' allowances.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

1. That Council considers the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, and its recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1, and adopts the scheme as set out in Appendix 2 for the municipal year 2026/27 effective from 1 April 2026.
2. That Council delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Governance in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Legal (Monitoring Officer) to:
 - (i) take all necessary action to implement 1 above;
 - (ii) update the constitution;
 - (iii) establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to review the scheme of allowances for implementation of the revised scheme from April 2027.
3. That the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for its report.

Members' Allowance Scheme 2026/2027

1 Background

- 1.1 The Council is legally obliged to consider a report from its Independent Remuneration Panel before making any changes to its scheme of allowances. It is good practice to have the scheme reviewed periodically to ensure that it reflects any changes in the Council's operation. Where the scheme allows for increases by reference to an index, there is a requirement for review of this index at least once every four years by an Independent Panel. (Local Authorities) Members' Allowances (England) Regulations 2003).
- 1.2 The Independent Panel has made recommendations for changes to the scheme in respect of basic and special responsibility allowances. The changes are set out within their report attached at Appendix 1, and the draft scheme is set out in Appendix 2.
- 1.3 Full Council must now consider the final report, have regard to the recommendations and decide whether to make any amendments to the existing scheme. Whilst the Council has a duty to have regard to the Panel's recommendations, it is the Council's choice whether to accept the Panel's recommendations in whole or in part, or not at all, or to determine any other scheme for 2026/2027.

2 Options/Alternatives

- 2.1 Having considered the recommendations, Council may:
- a. Adopt the recommendations of the Independent Panel in full.
 - b. Adopt the recommendations in part.
 - c. Choose not to adopt the recommendations.

The Panel have set out their rationale and justification for the changes within their report.

3 Preferred Option

- 3.1 To give due consideration to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel consulted the Group Leader of the Administration, the Group Leaders of the two Main Opposition Groups and the Group Leader of the Minority Opposition at its April meeting.

5 **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The proposals recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel within this report can be met from within the revenue base budget provision for Members Allowances.

(Vickie Lambert)

6 **Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The Council is required to approve a Members Allowances Scheme.

(Alex Bougatef)

7 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

- 7.1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to marriage & civil partnership.

Although it does not directly relate to protected groups, the proposed scheme contains the ability to pay a dependent carers allowance to Councillors. This contributes to aims 1 and 2 of the Equality Act as it removes barriers to Councillors standing who have relatives that may be in need of dependent care.

8 **Key Decision**

- 8.1 No. Decision for the full council.

9 **Key Decision Reference**

- 9.1 N/A

10 **Background Papers**

- 10.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

Members' allowances file.

11 **Appendices**

11.1 Appendix 1: Independent Remuneration Panel report and allowances recommendations

Appendix 2: Members' Allowances Scheme