

Cherwell District Council

Council

22 February 2021

Members Allowances 2021/2022

Report of Director Law and Governance

This report is public

Purpose of report

To determine the levels of the allowances to be paid to Members for the forthcoming 2021/2022 financial year following the submission of the report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

1.0 Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- 1.1 Consider the levels of allowances to be included in the 2021/2022 Members' Allowances Scheme, and whether the Panel's recommendations should be adopted or modified in any way
- 1.2 Authorise the Director Law and Governance to prepare an amended Members' Allowances Scheme, in accordance with the decisions of Council for implementation with effect from 1 April 2021.
- 1.3 Authorise the Director Law and Governance to take all necessary action to revoke the current (2020/2021) Scheme and to publicise the revised Scheme pursuant to The Local Authorities (Member's Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).
- 1.4 Thank the Independent Remuneration Panel for its report and set a fee of £300 for each Panel Member for the work carried out on this review for 2021/2022 and propose the same level of fee for any reviews carried out in 2021/2022 capped at a maximum of £1200, which can be funded from existing budgets.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel has met to review the current (2020/2021) Members' Allowances Scheme and its report on the recommended levels of the allowance payments for the 2021/2022 financial year is attached as appendix 1.

2.2 The Council is required to have regard to the Panel’s recommendations but is under no obligation to accept them if they are deemed to be inappropriate. It is open to the Council to revise the levels of the recommended allowance payments for 2021/2022 (either up or down) as is considered appropriate.

3.0 Report Details 2021/2022

Members’ Allowances

3.1 Based on the information provided to the Panel as detailed in its report at Appendix 1, for the year 2021/2022 it recommends:

3.2 That the Basic Allowance be frozen and remain at the current level:

	Current Level 2020/2021	Proposed level 2021/2022
Basic Allowance	£4512	£4512

3.3 That all Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA’s) be frozen and remain at the current level:

	Current Level 2020/2021	Proposed level 2021/2022
Leader of the Council	£7680	£7680
Deputy Leader of the Council	£2652	£2652
Executive Members holding a Portfolio	£6708	£6708
Leader of the Opposition	£3096	£3096
Chairman of Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee	£3732	£3732
Chairman of Budget Planning Committee	£3732	£3732
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£3732	£3732
Chairman of Planning Committee	£4464	£4464
Chairman of Appeals Panel	£264 SRA plus £264 per meeting to a capped limit of £1056	£264 SRA plus £264 per meeting to a capped limit of £1056
Chairman of Licensing Committee	£264 SRA plus £264 per meeting to a capped limit of £1056	£264 SRA plus £264 per meeting to a capped limit of £1056
	£264 SRA plus £264 per meeting	£264 SRA plus £264 per meeting

Chairman of Personnel Committee	to a capped limit of £1056	to a capped limit of £1056
Chairman of Standards Committee	£264 SRA plus £264 per meeting to a capped limit of £1056	£264 SRA plus £264 per meeting to a capped limit of £1056

- 3.4 That all Co-optee and Independent Persons Allowances be frozen and remain at the current level:

	Current Level 2020/2021	Proposed level 2021/2022
Co-optee and Independent Persons Allowance	£768	£768

- 3.5 That Dependent Carers' and Childcare Allowances be frozen and remain at the current level and are capped at 40 hours per month:

	Current Level 2020/2021	Proposed level 2021/2022
Childcare Allowance	£10 per hour	£10 per hour
Dependent Carers' Allowance	£20 per hour	£20 per hour

- 3.6 That there be no change to Travelling and Subsistence Allowances:

	Current Level 2020/2021	Proposed level 2021/2022
Bicycles	20p per mile	20p per mile
Motorcycles	24p per mile	24p per mile
Motor Vehicles including electric vehicles	45p per mile	45p per mile

Breakfast Allowance	£6.02 per meal	£6.02 per meal
Lunch Allowance	£8.31 per meal	£8.31 per meal
Evening Meal Allowance	£10.29 per meal	£10.29 per meal

- 3.7 That Democratic Services should continue to book overnight accommodation.

- 3.8 That Non-Executive Director Allowances be frozen and remain the same.

	Current Level 2020/2021	Proposed Level 2021/2022
Non-Executive Directors Graven Hill Village Holding Company Limited and Graven Hill Village Development Company Limited	£4464	£4464

Expenses be paid at the same levels set out in section 3.6 and recharged to the relevant company.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 The following paragraphs set out the rationale for the recommendations of the Panel. Further detail is provided in the Panel's report at Appendix 1.

- (a) There had been a 2.75% cost of living increase for staff in 2020/2021. The Panel had recommended the same level of increase to be applied to Members' basic allowance and special responsibility allowances rounded up or down, whichever was closest, to produce 12 equal payments. This increase had been agreed by Full Council in February 2020.
- (b) The Panel acknowledged that the CDC Members' Allowances are relatively low in comparison to other similar councils and elected members therefore represented good value for money.
- (c) The Panel acknowledged that the Covid 19 Pandemic had impacted on the ways Members work and were also mindful of the work carried out by Executive Members and the Leader of the Council
- (d) The increasing complexity, responsibilities and burden of local government made it imperative for individuals representing all of society to be able to stand for election as Councillors. Allowances are not the only means of overcoming obstacles to wider democratic representation, but the absence of a national baseline for Member remuneration did not help efforts to attract a diverse range of people in the local community to consider becoming councillors.
- (e) Whilst levels of remuneration need to reflect the time, effort and expertise required of Councillors, it was evident that it was not the will of Councillors to increase remuneration at this time.
- (f) The Panel considered applying the same cost of living increase to Members' allowances as that awarded to staff as in the previous year. However, taking into consideration the results of the Members Survey, the comments of the Members who addressed the Panel and the expectation of a public sector pay freeze, it was agreed that it be recommended that Members' Allowances should be frozen for the financial year 2021/2022.

4.2 It is the view of the Independent Remuneration Panel that the proposals represent realistic and fair levels of allowance for 2020/2021 and recommend adoption.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 Details set out in appendix 1, the Panel's Report (5.7)

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To modify the Panel's recommendations. This is within the Council's discretion as the Panel recommendations are not binding. However it is not recommended as the Panel has considered and justified the recommendations that they have made.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 Provision has been included in the draft 2021/2022 budget for Members' Allowance with no increase as has been recommended by the Panel.
- 7.2 If Members were minded to altering the levels of the allowances over and above those recommended by the Panel, this would be above the provision included in the draft budget.

Comments checked by:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance, 01295 221845,
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Legal Implications

- 7.2 It is a legal requirement of the Council to consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel before setting the level of allowances.

Comments checked by:

Chris Mace, Solicitor, 01295 221808, christopher.mace@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Risk Implications

- 7.3 There are no risks associated with this report.

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: n/a

Community Impact Threshold Met: n/a

Wards Affected

All

Lead Councillor

Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 - Report of the Independent and Parish Remuneration Panel on the Review of Members' Allowances for the 2021/2022 Financial Year

Background papers

None

Report Author and contact details

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