

Council

Members' Allowances 2012/2013

27 February 2012

Report of Head of Law and Governance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider and determine the levels of the allowances to be paid to Members for the forthcoming 2012/2013 financial year following the submission of the report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on the review of the 2011/2012 Members' Allowances Scheme.

This report is public

Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- (1) Consider the levels of allowances to be included in the 2012/13 Members' Allowances Scheme, and whether the Panel's recommendations should be adopted or modified in any way.
- (2) Authorise the Head of Law and Governance to prepare an amended Members' Allowances Scheme, in accordance with the decisions of the Council for implementation with effect from 1 April 2012.
- (3) Authorise the Head of Law and Governance to take all necessary action to revoke the current (2011/12) Scheme and to publicise the revised Scheme pursuant to The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).
- (4) Thank the Independent Remuneration Panel for its thorough and detailed report and set a fee of £300 for IRP Panel Members for the work carried out in 2011/12 and propose the same level of fee for 2012/13.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel has met to review the current (2011/12) Members' Allowances Scheme and its report on the recommended levels of the allowance payments for the 2012/13 financial year and is attached to this report as appendix 1.
- 1.2 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 2012/13 (either up or down) as is considered appropriate.

Proposals

- 1.3 It is proposed that the level of basic allowance set for the 2011/12 period remain the same for 2012/13, as do the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA), except for the following:
 - the introduction of an SRA for the Deputy Leader;
 - the introduction of an SRA for the Appeals Panel Chairman;
 - the SRA's for the Chairmen of the Personnel Committee, the Licensing Committee and the Standards Committee be reduced; and
 - the co-optees allowance be reduced.
- 1.4 A review of the fee that is paid to Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel was undertaken last year. Previously this had been £700 per annum, due to the high level of work that was initially required. Over the years this volume of work has decreased as the Members Allowance Scheme has stabilised and the fee was reduced to £300 in 2010/11. There has been no noticeable change in work levels and it is therefore proposed that the fee of £300 remain the same for 2011/12.

Conclusion

- 1.5 It is the view of the IRP panel that the proposals represent realistic and fair levels of allowance for 2012/13 and recommend adoption.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

Option One To accept the Panel's recommendations

Option Two To modify the Panel's recommendations

Consultations

All Members of Cherwell District Council Comments have been considered by the Panel

All Parish Councils Comments have been considered by the Panel

Implications

Financial: Provision has been included in the draft 2012/2013 budget for Members' Allowances. There are principally two options available in terms of settling the levels of the allowances for the forthcoming financial year as follows:-

- (1) to adopt the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel including the increase in the basic allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances – the full year cost can be accommodated within the draft budget as mentioned above;
- (2) to alter the levels of the allowances over and above those recommended by the Panel although this would increase the provision included in the draft budget.

Comments checked by Karen Muir, Corporate Systems Accountant 01295 221559

Legal: It is a legal requirement of the Council to consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and to set the level of allowances.

Comments checked by James Doble, Democratic and Elections Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer, 01295 221587

Risk Management: There are no risks associated with the report other than the possibility of exceeding the budget provision.

Comments checked by James Doble, Democratic & Elections Manager, 01295 221587

Wards Affected

All

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Report of IRP Panel
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Theresa Goss, Democratic & Scrutiny Officer
Contact Information	theresa.goss@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk