

REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Committee: Resources and Finance Committee

Date: 19 June 2017

Author: Democratic Services Manager

[S25]

1.0 **ISSUE**

1.1 To consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) relating to Members' Allowances.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That Council be recommended to approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) as set out at Appendix A or be recommended to approve an alternative scheme of Members' Allowances with effect from 1 April 2017.

2.2 That the Committee makes recommendations to Council on the level of allowances payable to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.

2.3 That the Committee considers the IRP comments in relation to the IT allowance for Members who choose not to be provided with Council ICT facilities; and considers the allowance for venue hire costs for Member Surgeries, and makes any decisions/recommendations to Council.

3.0 **BACKGROUND/OPTIONS**

3.1 Corporate Governance and Finance Committee on 28 July 2016 approved arrangements for the setting up of an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to review Members' allowances as follows:

- That the Democratic Services Manager be authorised to take all necessary actions to set up an IRP comprising of up to 5 Lay Members to conduct a review of Members' Allowances in the autumn/winter of the current year, with a view to making recommendations that can be considered as part of the Budget-setting process of the Council, to be implemented from April 2017 for a 4 year period with indexation.
- That funding in the sum of around £5,000 be allocated for the conducting of the review.

3.2 One of the previous Lay Members who served on the IRP in 2012 (Richard Tyler) stated that he was willing to continue as a Panel Member for the 2016 review. Also, as a result of discussions with local Monitoring Officers who were conducting IRP reviews this year, one lay person who had served on

Independent Remuneration Panels for Norfolk and Suffolk Councils was appointed to undertake the role for this Council, although she had to resign in late October 2016 due to a change in family circumstances. A further 3 Lay Members were recruited via general advertisement on the Council's website, local and social media, Parish Councils and neighbouring Councils within Cambridgeshire; application form; and shortlisting/interview by the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer. Therefore, the following 4 Lay Members comprised the IRP that completed the review:

Richard Tyler (Chairman)
Richard Powell
Stanley Curtis
Margaret Clark

- 3.3 The Panel was provided with a comprehensive information pack relating to the existing allowances scheme and general information on East Cambridgeshire District Council. This information pack also contained comparative data for the Members Allowances Schemes of other Councils of a similar size and nature to ECDC both locally and nationally; the salary scales of other public sector bodies; and the final report of the previous 2012 ECDC IRP. The Democratic Services Manager undertook an induction session for IRP Members and acted as clerk and adviser to the Panel. The IRP also met with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. The Panel produced a Questionnaire which was E-mailed to all Councillors and received 20 completed questionnaires back from the 39 that were sent out. A copy of a summary of the Questionnaire results is attached to the IRP report. 10 Councillors then were interviewed, selected by the Panel as a representative cross-section of Members, to obtain their viewpoints regarding their role as a Councillor and the allowances paid.
- 3.4 Following the commencement of the IRP review, full Council on 16 November 2016 requested the IRP to revise their timetable to align with the review of the Committee Structure. The IRP complied with this request and adjusted their reporting timetable and recommendations to accord with what they were advised would be the recommendations relating to a revised Committee structure for the Council. After meeting on 8 separate occasions, including 2 sessions interviewing Councillors, the Panel completed their review. The IRP delivered their report in March 2017 but, due to the Election periods, consideration of the report by the Council was delayed until this meeting which will make recommendations to full Council on 13 July 2017.
- 3.5 The full IRP report is attached at Appendix A. Councillors are asked to consider the recommendations of the IRP and take a decision on the level of allowances with effect from 1 April 2017. Members also may wish to consider the 'other recommendations' of the IRP in paragraph 4.3 of their report and make a response in relation to these.

4.0 CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL ALLOWANCES/IT ALLOWANCE/VENUE HIRE COSTS MEMBER SURGERIES ALLOWANCE

4.1 The Allowances for the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council are covered by Sections 3(5) and 5(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as such are not a matter that the IRP is obliged to make recommendations on. These are currently £3631 and £971 respectively. Therefore, Members are asked to consider and make recommendations to Council on the level of these allowances in the context of the IRP review.

4.2 Also included in the Members Allowances Scheme is an IT allowance for those Members who choose not to be provided with Council ICT facilities. This is currently set at up to £400 per annum (subject to presentation of receipted claims). Again, this is not a matter that the IRP is obliged to make recommendations on but, in response to Member comments as part of the review, the IRP have made an 'other recommendation' at paragraph 4.3.1 of their report on Tablets/I Pads. Members are asked to consider and make any decision(s)/recommendation(s) to Council regarding the IT allowance.

4.3 Council on 30 July 2012 approved that Members be able to claim a maximum of £50 for the cost of hiring a venue for the purposes of holding a surgery for their constituents on the basis of a maximum of 4 per year per ward. Council also agreed that Members would not be able to claim for any travel and subsistence expenses or other related costs, such as for marketing or promotion of the surgery. Members are asked to consider if they wish to review or make any further recommendations to Council in relation to this allowance.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The scheme of allowances recommended by the IRP would cost approximately an additional £48,216 per annum, based on the existing Budget provision. A full financial appraisal based on the recommendations from this Committee will be prepared for the full Council meeting on 13 July 2017.

5.2 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) not required.

6.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
IRP Information Pack and comparative salary information documents, etc provided to IRP held on file in Room 214B, The Grange.	Room 214B The Grange, Ely	Tracy Couper Democratic Services Manager (01353) 616278 E-mail: tracy.couper@eastcambs.gov.uk