

AGENDA ITEM 7

REPORT TO COUNCIL

27 JANUARY 2021

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME- REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL**

SUMMARY

The report provides details of the Independent Members' Allowances Remuneration Panel's ("the Panel") report with a view to making any recommendations for the Council's Members Allowance Scheme for 2021/22.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

To consider the final report of the Independent Remuneration Panel regarding the Members Allowances Scheme for 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Panel's report and recommendations detailed below are considered by Council, and the Panel be thanked for their work:-

- 1. The Panel recommends that the basic allowance for Members should be increased to £9,555 for 2021/22 in line with the most-recently determined National Joint Council award for employees within the local government sector;***
- 2. The Panel recommends that the overall current SRA allowance for a Committee Chair & Vice Chair remains at £9,375 but be re-balanced as follows:***
 - Chair £7,000 – Equivalent to 28% of the Leader SRA***
 - Vice-Chair £2,375 – Equivalent to 9.5% of Leader SRA and 34% of the Chairs SRA***
- 3. The Panel recommend that there be no change to the current scheme in terms of the allowances paid in respect of Leader allowances paid; nor to the allowances paid to Cabinet members and the Mayoral/Deputy Mayoral allowance.***
- 4. The Panel recommended no changes to the allowances paid in respect of each of Child Care & Dependent Carers Allowance, Co-optees Allowance and Travel & Subsistence Allowance .***

DETAIL

1. As a result of a report to Council on 22 July 2020, a new Independent Remuneration Panel was established with Council's approval and the Panel was subsequently asked to review Stockton's Members' Allowances, with a view to making any recommendations for 2021/22.
2. The Panel has now concluded its review and its report is attached at **Appendix 1** for consideration.
3. Members are asked to consider the Panel's report and in particular its recommendations contained therein and summarised at paragraph 55 of the Panel report.
4. The rationale in respect of the proposed increase of the basic allowance was summarised below:-
 - a) The Basic Allowance having been frozen at £9,300 since 2013/14 is not reasonable, and whilst not recommending a full catch up, feel a small increase based on the most recent National Joint Council award would be appropriate, suggesting a new basic allowance of £9,555, to be reviewed annually in line with this index.
5. Similarly, the rationale behind the proposed re-balancing of the Chair/Vice Chair SRA was detailed as follows:-
 - b) In most other Tees Valley Councils vice-chairs received no allowance, while in the CIPFA group, more of the Councils did award SRAs to vice-chairs, but Stockton still ranked at the more generous end for vice-chair SRAs.
6. It was noted also that the Child Care & Dependent Carers Allowance was available for all those members during periods of maternity, paternity and ongoing caring responsibilities, allowing them to fulfil both their personal and elected member responsibilities.
7. Cabinet will consider the matter at its meeting to be held on 21 January 2021 and a copy of the minute extract will be made available to Members.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8. The financial implications of the Panel's recommendations for 2021/22 are summarised at paragraph 51 of the Panel report totalling an increase of £14,322.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The review by the Panel, Cabinet and Council's consideration of the Panel's report, and decisions regarding the Authority's allowances schemes, taking account of the Panel review are all statutory requirements. The Authority is therefore complying with its legal obligations pursuant to this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

10. The issues identified within this report are categorised as low to medium risk.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

11. Establishing the appropriate level of remuneration is important to reflect the responsibilities incurred by members in their representational and advocacy roles. Independent Remuneration Panels are integral to this process and the matters highlighted in the report are key features of the Members' Allowances Regulations and related guidance.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

12. Copies of this report will be made available to all Members. Consultation with all Members, in writing, was carried out on behalf of the Panel and the Panel also had one to one meetings with a number of Members, including Group Leaders. The Panel's report has also been circulated to Group Leaders in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

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<u>Background Papers</u>	The Panel Report
<u>Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:</u>	Not Ward Specific
<u>Property</u>	None