

<b>Report title</b>	<b>Members' Allowances Scheme 2024/25</b>
<b>Report author</b>	Mario Leo, Corporate Head of Law and Governance
<b>Department</b>	Law and Governance
<b>Exempt?</b>	No
<b>Exemption type</b>	Not applicable
<b>Reasons for exemption</b>	Not applicable

**Purpose of report:**

**To recommend to full Council**

**Synopsis of report:**

**This report seeks agreement on the updated Members' Allowances Scheme, which includes the previously agreed annual increment, for the 2024/25 municipal year.**

**Recommendation(s):**

**To recommend to the Council that, at the point the staff pay award is agreed:**

- 1. The 2023/24 Members' Allowances Scheme be withdrawn with an end date of 31 March 2024 inclusive.**
- 2. An updated Members' Allowances Scheme, to incorporate an uplift to the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances, commensurate with the staff pay award (but not including any lump sum provisions or similar), be agreed with an implementation date of 1 April 2024 inclusive.**
- 3. Any adjustments to basic and special responsibility allowances (either additional payments or recovery of payments made) be backdated 1 April 2024 inclusive.**
- 4. That the Corporate Head of Law and Governance be delegated authority to implement the revised Members' Allowances Scheme to give effect to the above, and undertake any necessary measures to do so (such as advertising it in a local newspaper, or authorising the recovery or payments made).**

**1. Context and background of report**

- 1.1 The allowance that members receive is not a salary or remuneration but rather a sum of money to acknowledge part of the voluntary time they devote to being a councillor.
- 1.2 The current Members' Allowances Scheme was adopted by the Council on 27 April 2023, following a review of the previous scheme by the Independent Remuneration

Panel (IRP) and subsequent consideration by the Corporate Management Committee in February 2022.

- 1.3 The current structure of the scheme was agreed for a period of three years, with a mechanism included to provide annual uplifts linked to the staff pay award for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 municipal years. The staff pay award is due to come into effect in July 2024. It is proposed that any allowances be backdated to 1 April 2024. This may require the recovery of some sums paid or the backdating of some payments, but the amounts thereof will be dependent on the appointments made at Annual Council in May 2024.

## **2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended**

- 2.1 Various options relating to the Members' Allowances Scheme were considered as part of the IRP reporting process. These considerations are detailed in the report considered by the Corporate Management Committee on 24 February 2022.

## **3. Policy framework implications**

- 3.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme is published as part of the Council's Constitution. The scheme that is agreed for the 2024/25 municipal year will be incorporated into the Constitution.

## **4 Resource implications/Value for Money**

- 4.1 The budget agreed by Council on 8 February 2024 included a provision for an uplift in the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances, commensurate with the provision set aside for the staff pay award.
- 4.2 The cost of advertising the revised allowances scheme in accordance with statutory requirements will be met from existing budgets.

## **5. Legal implications**

- 5.1 Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003(the 2003 Regulations) provide the statutory framework governing members' allowances.
- 5.2 Regulation 4 of the 2003 Regulations requires a local authority before the beginning of the year (year means any period of 12 months ending on 31st March in any year) to make a scheme to provide for the payment of allowances. Given that the Council proposes to increase the amount of allowances payable for the period 01/04/24 - 31/03/25 it needs to withdraw the existing scheme and adopt a new scheme setting out the revised rates.
- 5.3 Regulation 16 of the 2003 Regulations requires that an authority shall, as soon as reasonably practicable after the making or amendment of a scheme, make arrangements for its publication by:
  - (a) ensuring that copies of the scheme are available for inspection by members of the public at the principal office of the authority, at all reasonable hours; and
  - (b) publishing in one or more newspapers circulating in its area, a notice which —
    - (i) states that the authority has made or amended a scheme and specifies the period of time for which the scheme has effect;

- (ii) describes the main features of the scheme and specifies the amounts payable in respect of each allowance mentioned in the scheme.
- 5.4 It should be noted that an authority is required ensure that a notice in the form required above is published in one or more newspapers circulating in its area as soon as possible after the expiration of twelve months after the previous publication of such a notice, irrespective of whether the scheme has been amended during that twelve month period.
- 6. Equality implications**
- 6.1 The allowances are paid to all persons who are elected as councillors and subject to certain qualifying criteria any person can stand to be a councillor.
- 7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**
- 7.1 There are no Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications arising from this report.
- 8. Risk Implications**
- 8.1 There are no risk implications arising from this report.
- 9. Other implications (where applicable)**
- 9.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.
- 10. Timetable for Implementation**
- 10.1 The updated allowances scheme, should it be adopted, will be implemented from 1 April 2024 (subject to the comments above regarding the staff pay award). It will be advertised as soon as is reasonably practicable afterwards.
- 11. Conclusions**
- 11.1 Members are invited to consider and agree a members' allowances scheme for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 12. Background papers**
  - [Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the 24 February 2022 Corporate Management Committee \(item 470\).](#)
- 13. Appendices**
  - None