

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COUNCIL – 7 JANUARY 2020  
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report considers the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) at their meeting on the 4 November 2019.
- 1.2 The Chief Executive's report and the minutes of the IRP meeting on 4 November 2019 are set out as background papers to this report (Appendix A and B).

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 Council accepts the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel and approves the proposed level of Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances as set out in Appendix C, payable with effect from 1 July 2019.
- 2.2 Council accepts the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel and approves the proposed increase to the Care Allowance Payments.
- 2.3 Council accepts the recommendation for officers to carry out a full review of all SRAs for the financial year 2020/21.
- 2.4 Council notes that a recruitment process will be commenced for new members to the IRP.

**3 Explanation**

- 3.1 The Panel's recommendations are for levels of allowances to increase in line with the national agreement for staff (an increase of 2%).
- 3.2 Special consideration was given to the level of allowances payable to opposition group leaders in order to more fairly reflect political balance of the parties. A new calculation is proposed where each Opposition Group Leader receives an allowance calculated from 50% of the basic allowance plus £225 for each group member.
- 3.3 In light of the current period of no overall control, a supplement is suggested to reflect the additional work currently undertaken by the opposition leaders.
- 3.4 There are currently 3 members forming the IRP. One member of the IRP has indicated their intention to resign following this latest review and it will therefore be necessary to recruit a new member. In any event, it would be good practice to commence a fresh recruitment exercise, in view that the current appointments were made some years ago.
- 3.5 Once the recruitment process has been completed, Council will be required to make these appointments.

## **Implications**

### **4 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The council must set members' allowances in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. Before an authority makes or amends a scheme, it has a legal duty to have regard to the recommendations made by its IRP.
- 4.2 The IRP must form at least 3 members, none of whom is a councillor of the authority nor would be so disqualified from being a councillor.
- 4.3 The council must ensure that any IRP recommendations and agreed members' allowance schemes are duly publicised in accordance with the statutory requirements.

### **5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 It is proposed that the level of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances (SRAs) are increased by 2%, in line with the national agreement for staff. An equivalent increase is proposed for the Care Allowance.
- 5.2 The Opposition Group Leaders' allowances are recalculated with each now using the same method. With the optional supplement included this would see an increase for both on last year's allowance.
- 5.3 As in previous years, some members hold more than one office: the scheme provides that they only receive the highest of the allowances due.
- 5.4 If the proposed increases are agreed this will be covered from current budgets. Once agreed, the Members' Allowances Budget for 2020/21 will be set sufficiently.

### **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 The risks related to this proposal are:

### **7 Procurement Implication(s)**

- 7.1 None

### **8 Climate Change Implication(s)**

- 8.1 None

### **9 Human Resources Implication(s)**

- 9.1 None

### **10 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)**

- 10.1 None

### **11 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)**

- 11.1 None

## **12 Link to Corporate Priorities**

- 12.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority "Our Council", and specifically to the achievement of promoting equality and fairness; supporting our councillors with their professional development so they may better work for, and represent, local communities.

## **13 Equality and Diversity**

- 13.1 An EqIA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Chief Executive's report to the IRP dated November 2019 (Appendix A).
2. Minutes of the IRP meeting held on 4 November 2019 (Appendix B).
3. Proposed new Members' Allowances Scheme and Care Allowances (Appendix C)

Rob Bridge  
Chief Executive  
November 2019