

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL – 5 SEPTEMBER 2018
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

WELWYN HATFIELD MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks a recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel on a review of the level of allowances to be paid to Members for 2018/19 with effect from 1 July 2018.

2 Financial Implications

- 2.1 The current level of payments set out in the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2017/18 is attached at Appendix A and the proposed level of payments for 2018/19 is attached at Appendix B.
- 2.2 If the level of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances are increased by 2% as recommended in this report in line with the national agreement for staff, the additional cost will be £ 7,110. This will be offset by a saving in special responsibility allowances of £7, 768 as there were two Lead Members last year and none have been appointed this year plus £2080 as the Leader of the Council is Chairman of the Standards Committee. The cost of the increase can therefore be contained within the current overall annual budget of £355,750.

3 Background

- 3.1 Since the review by the Panel of the level of allowances for 2013/14, the Panel had adopted the convention to recommend annual increases in line with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services annual employee pay award and this approach had been agreed by the Council.
- 3.2 Before then allowances had been frozen since 2008/09.
- 3.3 In 2016 the Panel revisited the increases in allowances recommended by the review previously undertaken by an independent consultant in 2009 and agreed increases to move towards the Hertfordshire median rates.
- 3.4 The Panel has previously agreed with the recommendation by the independent consultant's review to introduce a care allowance at a rate of £6.00 per hour for children and £10.00 per hour for adults to be claimed by any Member of the Council where there was a child of under 14 years residing at home or a dependent relative in need of special attention by reason of disability. This recommendation had not been taken up, but it remained open to the Council to do so.
- 3.5 The Liberal Democrat Group have requested that this be reconsidered by the Panel as part of this year's review and this has been supported by the Leader of the Council.

- 3.6** The cost of this would depend on take-up which has not been quantified and is currently unknown. It is expected however that take-up will be limited and on that basis the cost is likely to be able to be met within the existing budget but this will need to be monitored.
- 3.7** If this is agreed, the rate recommended in 2009 will also need to be reviewed by the Panel. Some comparative information from Hertfordshire local authorities is attached at Appendix C.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1** The Panel is recommended therefore to increase Members' Allowances by 2% will effect from 1 July 2018 in line with this year's national agreement for staff.
- 4.2** The Panel is recommended to consider the introduction of a care allowance, and if agreed, what the rate of the allowance should be.
- 4.3** The Panel's recommendations will be reported for consideration to the Council meeting on 19 September 2018.

Rob Bridge
Chief Executive
August 2018