

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL – 12TH MARCH 2025
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & GOVERNANCE

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2025/26 – 2028/29

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report considers the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) at their meeting on 15th January 2025. This followed the approaching conclusion of the Member Allowance Scheme for 2021/22–2024/25.

2 Recommendation

2.1 That Council agrees the recommendation of the IRP and approves the continuation of the current Member Allowance scheme as set out in section 3 of the report, payable with effect from the beginning of the Municipal year 2025/26.

2.2 That Council note that the proposed amendments would end in May 2029.

3 Explanation

3.1 Council agreed the recommendation to introduce the Member Allowance Scheme 2021/22 – 2025/26 at the Full Council meeting on 26th July 2022.

3.2 The IRP panel previously met in early 2024 to consider the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Chairs of the Community Cabinet Panel, Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel and they also reviewed the SRA for the Standards Committee Chair at the same time. All of the IRP recommendations were adopted by Full Council in February 2024.

3.3 The IRP convened on 15th January 2025 to create a new four-year rolling scheme to run from 2025/26.

3.4 In this meeting, Panel members queried whether any substantial changes how committees functioned, and it was confirmed there had been no material changes since they met in 2024.

3.5 Therefore, the Panel decided that the design of the Member Allowance Scheme 2021/22 – 2024/25 should continue to be implemented with a yearly CPI index (capped at 4%) for the municipal years of 2025/26 – 2028/29.

Implications

4 Legal Implications

4.1 Each 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. The current IRP consist of 5 members who meet these criteria.

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 Member Allowance Scheme for 2025/26 – 2028/29 be implemented in line with the IRP's recommendations. The scheme would see allowances increase by 2.3% for 2025/26, in line with the October 2024 CPI inflation. The continuation of the scheme includes the provision of a 4% annual cap on increases if CPI is greater than this.

5.2 The 2025/26 budget already includes provision for these proposed increases.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)

7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications arising from this report.

8 Procurement Implication(s)

8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

9.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

10 Human Resources Implication(s)

10.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

11.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

12 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)

12.1 There are no communications and engagement implications arising from this report.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 The report links to the successful running of the council, and all its services, which will assist in the delivery of all corporate priorities.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.