

Report for: Standards Committee 23 January 2020

Title: Independent Advisor's Draft Report on Review of Member's Allowances 2020/21

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Non Key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This Committee has responsibility for considering and recommending changes to the Member's Allowance scheme, to full Council for adoption.

1.2 The Committee agreed previously to instigate a review of the Member's Allowance scheme focusing on the functions and responsibilities of Council Committees together with the volume and complexity of their decision making to ascertain whether the SRA's provided to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Committee chairs, Vice -Chairs and Scrutiny Panel Chair's reflects the allocated allowance. It was agreed that the review would be supported by an independent adviser to the Committee and Richard Penn, an LGA associate agreed to provide independent advice and support to the review.

1.3 Since the Committee meeting in October, a Member questionnaire was circulated to obtain Member views on the current SRA scheme and 29 councillors responded with their views and comments. In addition, the Independent Advisor, Richard Penn met with 12 councillors who provided further detailed views on the scheme. This information, along with comparative data from other Local Authorities, the IRP report on Member's Allowances 2018 and the Independent Advisors experience in compiling and implementing remuneration arrangements for other authorities has informed the attached draft report and recommendations for Member's Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2020/21.

1.4 The Independent Advisor, Richard Penn will be attending the meeting to discuss his draft report and seeking Committee member's comments.

1.5 Further to comments on the report, there will be a further final report for consideration by Standards Committee on the 2nd of March which will be for onward submission to Full Council on March 16th 2020.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

Not applicable

3. Recommendations

3.1. To consider and comment on the attached draft report.

4. Reasons for decision

The Council has a legal duty under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to adopt a Members' Allowances Scheme before the end of each year to cover the following year. The Council can amend a scheme any time during the year but can only revoke a scheme with effect from the beginning of the year. The scheme must make provision for basic allowances and, if they are to be paid, special responsibility, dependents' carers, travelling and subsistence and co-optees' allowances.

The Committee agreed in January 2019 that an independent review of Members Allowances be taken forward

5. Alternative options considered

To not review the scheme which would be contrary to previous resolutions of the Committee.

6. Background information

6.1 The Committee agreed the scoping document attached at their meeting in June.

6.2 Since this meeting, Richard Penn, an LGA Senior Associate, has been commissioned to provide independent support and advice to the Committee. Richard has completed a number of reviews of Members Allowances in the recent past and also chairs the Independent Remuneration Panel for South Derbyshire Council. In January 2008 he was appointed by the Minister for Local Government as the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, a post he held until the end of 2015. The Panel was responsible for setting the remuneration arrangements for all 22 unitary councils in Wales, for also the four Fire and Rescue Authorities and the three National Parks in Wales. It was also responsible for setting remuneration for the 750 plus Town and Community Councils in Wales.

6.3 Richard Penn has been provided with information on the Council in the form of the boundary commission review submission on council size, and previous Standards and Full Council reports on the members allowance scheme.

6.4 Following Richard's advice, Democratic Services have compiled a questionnaire which is proposed for distribution to all Councillors. The purpose

of the questionnaire was to obtain the views of Councillors regarding the Council's current Member's Allowance Scheme. The questionnaire was revised following the Committee's comments at their meeting in October and distributed to all councillors to respond to within a 4 week window. The Independent Advisor was available to meet with councillors over a two day period and met with 12 councillors. In addition he met with both Political Leaders and Chief Whips, to obtain their views and respond to questions about the review. Information was also collated on the work of committee chairs outside of chairing meetings as well as information on the work of Leader and Cabinet Members.

- 6.5 Following consideration of this information and comparative data on Member's Allowances, the attached draft report has been compiled by the Independent Advisor for consideration and comment by the Standards Committee.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

Members of the Council are directly responsible for the setting and oversight of all strategic priorities.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

8.1 Finance

The recommendations put forward various proposed increases to SRA's and if these were to all be accepted it would require making available a minimum addition of £29,962 in the budget for Local Democracy and Member services to support this. There is not currently any additional funding in the 2020/21 budget allocation for this increase in this service area. Therefore, this would need to be met within the allocated budget for Local Democracy and Member Services.

8.3 Legal

8.4 Legal services comments are contained within this cover report.

8.5 Equality

N/A

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft Report – Richard Penn – Independent Advisor

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 The Council Constitution which can be found at;

<http://www.haringey.gov.uk/local-democracy/about-council/council-constitution>

11. IRP Member's Allowances 2018