

REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 3/2025/ 2026

FULL COUNCIL 16 MARCH 2026

Councillor Erdal Dogan (chaired the meetings on the 3rd of February and 9th of March 2026)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report arises from the Standards Committee meetings held on the 3 February and 9 March 2026 and asks Full Council to consider the following:
- 1.2 To revoke the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 as of 31 March 2026 and to approve a new Members' Allowances Scheme, set out at Appendix 4, for the Municipal year 2026/27 to take effect from 1 April 2026.
- 1.3 To approve the proposed Introduction of Electronic Signing and Sealing and subsequent changes to the Constitution.

2. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2026/27

- 2.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 allow London Boroughs to use an Independent Remuneration Panel set up for the purpose of making recommendations across London. London Councils set up a panel for this purpose in 2001 and its most recent report was published on 5th of January 2024 following a detailed review, with recommendations on the remuneration of Councillors in London. We noted that the Independent Remuneration Panel 2023 report (attached as appendix)continues to be considered by Councils and there will be no new report in 2026. The LGA confirm that a report by the IRP Panel is next expected at the end of 2027.
- 2.2 The 2023 report argued strongly that the salaries for Councillors are considerably lower than those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and workers in London. The Panel were recommending that the basic allowance should be £15,960 and the approach and calculations are listed at paragraph 7.9 of the attached report at Appendix 5. The Panel had included comments from their research and focus groups to help to provide assurance on how this may not be negatively perceived.
- 2.3 We noted that although the IRP 2023 makes recommendations, it is for each individual Council to decide the level of remuneration and for which roles.
- 2.4 There was discussion at the Standards Committee in February 2026, and Members welcomed the IRP recommendations to incrementally increase with officer pay. However, it was noted that Members would discuss any changes with political groups and return in March 2026 with final recommendations. At

this meeting it was also noted that continuing with a 2% increase would be an **£13,680** additional budget cost and would mean a new basic Allowance as **£12,234.00**. This was noted to be still well below the Basic Allowance recommendation from IMP Panel of **£15,960** and below the rates paid by Islington, Hackney and Camden Council.

- 2.5 The attached appendix 3 sets out an updated Member Allowance scheme 2026/27 with a 2% increase to the Basic Allowance.

$£11,994/100 \times 2 = £239.88$ (rounded to £240.00) with new Basic Allowance as £12,234.00.

$£240 \times 57 = £13,680$ additional budget cost.

3. WE RECOMMEND

- 3.1 Full Council revoke the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2025/26 as of 31 March 2026.
- 3.2 Full Council consider the proposed changes to the Members' Allowance Scheme 2026/2027 set out at **Appendix 1, 2 and 3**.
- 3.3 Full Council approve the new Members' Allowances Scheme for the Municipal year 2026/27, **as set out in Appendix 4**.

4. INTRODUCTION OF ELECTRONIC SIGNING AND SEALING

- 4.1 To consider the introduction of electronic signing and sealing and associated amendments to the Council's Constitution to support the introduction of electronic signing and sealing for documents executed by the Council.
- 4.2 The adoption of electronic execution arrangements will modernise the Council's approach to signing and sealing of documents which is currently wholly paper based with 'wet' signatures and requires the physical presence of relevant officers to undertake this task. For some processes such as contracts, where documents are sent out to be signed, 'wet signatures' add to delays in execution of documents. An electronic system will improve efficiency, reduce administrative burden, support the council's digital service transformation objectives and reduce spend on associated print and paper costs.
- 4.3 The proposed changes require amendments to the Constitutional provisions relating to the execution of documents and the use of the Common Seal.

5. WE RECOMMEND:

- 5.1 Full Council consider and agree the proposed changes to the Constitution set out in Appendices 7 and 8, to enable the local authority to adopt electronic signing and sealing.

6. Reasons for decision

- 6.1 The Council's current constitutional arrangements underpins the current practice which is wholly paper based and requires 'wet' signatures by officers to whom the Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to sign and seal documents.
- 6.2 Signing and Sealing is the formal process used to confirm that a document has been formally approved and is legally binding on the local authority. The Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to a defined list of lawyers 'authorised persons', who can sign and seal documents on behalf of the council.
- 6.3 Signing means that an authorised person signs documents, by hand, to confirm that the council agrees to be bound by the document. Whilst all documents are signed, not all documents are required to be both signed and sealed. Sealing is the use of the Council's official seal which is attached to a document and is a legal formality required for specific classes of legal documents, typically, leases, deeds and legal agreements where legislation requires execution as a deed. The seal is witnessed by an authorised officer and is recorded in the council's seal register. Sealing confirms that the document is legally valid.
- 6.4 Developments in the law now permit the use of electronic signatures. An electronic signature is the electronic equivalent of a handwritten signature and links a party to the contents of an electronic document. Electronic sealing is also permitted, and both are undertaken by several local authorities across the country.
- 6.5 Introducing electronic signing and sealing will enable faster completion of contracts, deeds and other formal documents, support remote and hybrid working, contribute to business continuity and reduce spend on print and paper.

7. Alternative options considered

- 7.1 Leaving the Constitution unchanged would result in the Council falling behind in the use of electronic practices. Amending the Constitution to recognise the validity of electronic signatures and allow the documents to be sealed without the need for physical attendance and meet evolving working practices and aid remote working.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Standards Committee Report Members' Allowances Scheme

Appendix 2: Members Allowances Scheme 2026/27 unchanged

Appendix 3 Members Allowance Scheme 2026/27- 2% increase(Track changes)

Appendix 4 3 Members Allowance Scheme 2026/27- 2% increase publication copy.

Appendix 5: The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2023– report of the Independent Panel

Appendix 6 - Report to Standards Committee Changes to the Constitution - Introduction of Electronic Signing and Sealing

Appendix 7 - Haringey Constitution - Track Changes with Introduction of Electronic Signing and Sealing – Part Two Articles

Appendix 8 - Haringey Constitution - Track Changes with Introduction of Electronic Signing and Sealing – Part 4 Section C Miscellaneous Functions