

This report may be of interest to: All Members
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MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To introduce an interim Scheme for the payment of Members' Allowances for 2000/2001, including Special Responsibility Allowances, which reflects the new Democratic Structures.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Council currently pays a Basic Allowance to all elected Members, together with a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Leader of the Council, Opposition Leader, Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs and four Lead Members on some Partnerships.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That from 1 April to 23 May 2000, the existing Members' Allowance Scheme remains in operation.
- 3.2 That for the remainder of the financial year 2000/01, or until the proposals of the Independent Panel are implemented, Allowances be paid to Members in accordance with the rates set out in the **Annex** to this report.
- 3.3 That Chairs of Select Committees or Policy Review Forums who are not otherwise in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance be paid an Allowance equivalent to £1,000 per annum, pro rata to the duration of the term of office.

4. **Background**

- 4.1 The new Democratic Structures, as agreed by the Council, come into force on 23 May 2000.
- 4.2 The Members' Allowance Scheme runs annually from 1 April each year to the following 31 March.
- 4.3 The Council has agreed to appoint an Independent Panel to review Members' Allowances later in the year, but a scheme needs to be agreed to run from the Annual Council Meeting until the recommendations of the Independent Panel can be implemented.

5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 The level of allowances listed in the **Annex** are seen as an interim measure until such time as a new Allowance Scheme is agreed by an Independent Panel and implemented.
- 5.2 No provision has been made for Select Committee Chairs or Policy Review Forum Chairs on the assumption that Select Committees are likely to be chaired by an existing Scrutiny Board Chair and the Policy Review Forums are likely to be chaired by a Cabinet Member. If this proves not to be the case, an appropriate pro-rata allowance could be available for the Chairs concerned.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Environmental

None.

6.2 Equalities

The Scheme of Members' Allowances helps ensure that people from differing social backgrounds can offer for service as Councillors.

6.3 Financial

This interim scheme has been devised to minimise the impact on current budgets, as, although allocated differently, the total amount of allowances paid is similar to that paid in 1999/2000. The budget for Members' Allowances in 2000/01 amounts to £277,530.

6.4 Legal

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to prepare a scheme if it intends to pay allowances to Members. There is a requirement that if any Special Responsibility Allowances are to be paid, at least one must be paid to a Member who is not a Member of the majority party.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

Both the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances will be paid direct to Members automatically through the Council's Payroll Section. Members will not need to submit a claim in respect of these Allowances.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 The report proposes a Scheme of Members' Allowances to be applied from the Annual Council Meeting until the proposals of the Independent Panel can be implemented.

Background Papers: Members Allowance Scheme (1 April 2000 - 31 March 2001)