

REPORT TO: FULL COUNCIL

DATE: 10 DECEMBER 2020

TITLE: REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL 2020/21

LEAD OFFICER: SIMON HILL, HEAD OF GOVERNANCE
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RECOMMENDED that:

- A** The Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances for the 2021/22 financial year remain unchanged from 2020/21 (as set out in Appendix A to the report).

BACKGROUND

1. The Council has a duty under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowance) (England) Regulations 2003 to have an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The role of the IRP is to make recommendations as to the level of allowances and expenses for Councillors and co-optees of the Council.
2. The IRP has considered the following information:
 - a) comparative data on allowance scheme for other councils
 - b) written or verbal statements by the Council's two Group Leaders.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

3. In reviewing the Council's current Scheme, the Panel noted that the past two years, allowances had been increased following a period where they had been frozen. Allowances remained amongst the lowest in Essex, and other comparator authorities.
4. The Panel considered the aspiration set out in last year's report to increase the Basic Allowance to meet the Living Wage Foundation's calculation of the Living Wage, based upon a 10.5 hour working week. It still considered this to be an aspiration to work towards. It also noted the comments by both Group Leaders.
5. The Panel did, however, feel that the extraordinary circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic had to be taken into account when deciding what level of remuneration was appropriate. In light of the challenges caused by the pandemic the Panel did not feel an increase in the levels of remuneration was appropriate. When balanced with its long term aspiration to bring the Basic

Allowance in line with the Living Wage, the Panel recommended that all allowances remain unchanged for the 2021/22 financial year.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning

None specific.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning

Finance (Includes ICT and Property and Facilities)

The recommendations will be reflected in the proposed 2021/22 budget. Should any increase be approved, provision will have to be made within the 2021/22 budget prior to its approval.

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive

Housing

As outlined in the report.

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

None specific.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Governance (Includes HR)

As set out within the report.

Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance

Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Councillor's Allowance Scheme 2021/22

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

IRP – Independent Remuneration Panel

SRA – Special Responsibility Allowance