



**Rochford District  
Council**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>Scheme of Member Allowances</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Independent Remuneration Panel</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

The Council is required to review its scheme of member allowances every four years. In doing so, it must have regard to the findings and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The scheme was last reviewed in 2019, therefore an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) was convened in December 2023 to undertake the periodic review of allowances. The IRP has also considered the impact of the Council's decision, on 23 May 2023, to move to a committee style of governance on the special responsibility allowances applicable to certain roles. The committee structure was agreed by the Council on 14 December 2023.

The IRP has met on three occasions during December 2023 and January 2024 to consider and recommend a revised scheme of allowances to the Council. The Council may choose to adopt the recommendations in their entirety, to adopt an amended scheme of allowances or to retain the current scheme.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1 -** That the Scheme of Member Allowances recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel at appendix B be agreed.
- R2 -** That a further review of allowances be undertaken during 2026, two years after the implementation of the committee system, to validate that the level of the allowances are reflective of the actual workload and responsibilities of the roles.
- R3 -** That the Council adopts a parental leave policy for members, the content of which is to be determined by the Council.

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**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The Council is required to undertake a review of the scheme of allowances every four years. The last review was undertaken in 2019, which means the review is now due. In addition the allowances need to be updated to reflect the change in governance style to the committee system.

**2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 All relevant information is contained in the report of the IRP at appendix A.

**3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 3.1 The IRP has considered a range of options before making its recommendations as set out in its report at appendix A.

**4.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 4.1 There is a risk that the Council does not have a legally compliant scheme of allowances. This risk is mitigated by the involvement of the IRP and by ensuring that the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 have been fulfilled.
- 4.2 There is a risk that the scheme of allowances does not achieve its aim of enabling a diverse range of people to perform the role of councillor. This risk has been mitigated by undertaking bench-marking for the basic allowance and ensuring that there is provision for a carer's allowance and the ability to claim for the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses.

**5.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 There is no formal consultation required for this decision.

**6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The budget for Councillor allowances in 2023/24 is £278,000 which is projected to be fully spent by year end. The cost of applying the recommendations proposed by the IRP is as follows:

<b>Element</b>	<b>Multiplier</b>	<b>Value (£)</b>	<b>Number of allowances</b>	<b>Total Value (£)</b>
Basic Allowance	1	5,820	39	226,980
Chairman of the Council	1	5,820	1	5,820
Vice-Chairman of the Council	0.5	2,910	1	2,910
Leader of the Council	1	5,820	1	5,820
Deputy Leader of the Council	0.5	2,910	1	2,910
Development Committee Chairman	0.75	4,365	1	4,365
Development Committee Vice-Chairman	0.15	873	1	873
Committee Chairman (all other committees)	0.5	2,910	8	23,280
Committee Vice-Chairman (all other committees)	0.1	582	8	4,656
Independent Member of the Audit Committee	n/a	1,250	1	1,250
Other Independent Persons	0.1	582	5	2,910
Opposition Political Group Leader 2-5 Members	0.125	727	1	727
Opposition Political Group Leader 6-10 Members	0.25	1,455	0	0
Opposition Political Group Leader 11 + Members	0.5	2,910	1	2,910
			<b>TOTAL Scheme cost:</b>	<b>285,411</b>

6.2 The above table has been based on a number of assumptions:

- a) That all of the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) will be claimed by different people, therefore there will be no ‘unclaimed’ allowances because the maximum number of allowances per person will not have been reached. In other words, this is the worst case scenario and the actual number of SRAs claimed could be lower;
- b) That the number of independent persons is five (three members of the IRP and two Independent Persons for standards complaints);
- c) The cost of the Opposition Group Leader allowances cannot be accurately confirmed at this stage as groupings are likely to change following the election in May 2024. The current groups have been entered into the table above for illustrative purposes only.

6.3 Therefore the total estimated cost of the proposed scheme is £285,411 which represents an increase of £7,411 or 2.66%. This additional cost can be accommodated in the 2024/25 revenue budget.

6.4 It is important to note that if the inflationary (index-linked) increases had been applied to the previous scheme, the cost for 2023/24 would have been £323,592. Accordingly, if not for the inflationary increase, the proposed scheme is significantly less expensive than the previous scheme. If the basic

allowance was not to increase and remained at £5,000, the total cost of the proposed scheme would be £245,375. This would be a saving of £32,625 against the 2023/24 budget.

## **7.0 LEGAL/GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require that all authorities agree scheme of allowances for councillors and that they appoint an IRP, of at least three members, to make recommendations on such a scheme. The Council must have regard to the recommendations of the IRP but they do not have to adopt the recommendations.
- 7.2 The scheme of allowances must be reviewed annually, except where an authority applies an index-linked annual increase to the allowances. In the latter case the scheme must be reviewed every four years.
- 7.3 Regulation 13 of the 2003 regulations provides that a councillor may forgo all or any part of any allowance they are entitled to by giving notice in writing to the proper officer.
- 7.4 Public notice must be given of the revised scheme, in accordance with regulation 16, by making copies of the scheme available for public inspection at the principal offices of the Council and by publishing notice of the scheme in one or more newspapers circulating in the area.

## **8.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and no discrimination or adverse impact on the protected characteristics has been identified. There are likely to be positive impacts on a number of the protected characteristics due to the proposals in the scheme that try to enable a diverse range of people to serve as councillors.

## **9.0 ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct environment and climate impacts arising from this report, however the IRP has considered how the allowances scheme could have a positive impact on the Council's carbon reduction ambitions. For example, by encouraging the use of bicycles by including a rate for bicycle mileage and incentivising car sharing through the passenger miles allowance.

## **10.0 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no economic implications relating to this report.

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Appendix A1 – Proposed Councillor Role Descriptions

Appendix B – Recommended Scheme of Member Allowances

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
N/A	N/A