

COUNCIL MEETING - 8 MARCH 2022

MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To give an update in respect of the Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 1.2 To consider recommendations from the Councillors Commission in relation to the circumstances in which Members can claim mileage allowance.

2.0 Background Information

Members Independent Remuneration Panel

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, the Full Council agreed to reconvene the Independent Remuneration Panel at their meeting held on 12 October 2021.
- 2.2 The Panel had previously conducted a review in late 2020 and their final report at that time was considered by the Full Council at their meeting held on 9 March 2021. The Council approved the recommendations made by the Panel in their report, but resolved not to implement at the current time, given the pandemic, the constraints on public sector pay and the review of the Council's governance arrangements.
- 2.3 The reconvened Panel undertook this further review of Members Allowances in the context of the proposed new governance arrangements to be implemented as from May 2022.
- 2.4 In accordance with the timetable for the review, the Independent Panel submitted their report to the Council last month, with the intention that this was submitted to this meeting of the Council.
- 2.5 Their report was considered by the Councillors Commission at the meeting held on 23 February 2022.
- 2.6 The Commission had a number of queries regarding the proposals for Special Responsibility Allowances. Given that, it was agreed to ask the Panel to relook at their final report which would be further considered by the Councillors Commission, ahead of this being submitted to the Annual Council Meeting on 17 May 2022 for consideration.
- 2.7 The new Scheme of Members Allowances will need to take effect following the Annual Council Meeting.

Claiming for Travel Expenses

- 2.8 At their meeting on 23 February 2022, the Councillors Commission also considered the current provisions in respect of what Members could claim in respect of travel allowances. The issue of being able to claim mileage for attending political group meetings and for conducting ward / constituency matters had been raised with the Independent Remuneration Panel but they determined that it was for the Council to consider as such activities would need to be defined as an approved duty by the Council for the purposes of claiming allowances.

- 2.9 The position for Members wishing to claim mileage allowance for undertaking Council business is set out in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 2.10 Regulation 8.1 (h) gives the Council the ability to designate other duties as approved, provided that they are undertaken as part of the functions of the Council.
- 2.11 The Commission considered that political group meetings should be considered as an approved duty for the purposes of claiming mileage, with the definition requirement for these being – convened political group meetings (dates to be supplied to Democratic Services) for the purposes of District Council business, with all meetings to be held at Castle House or other venue within the District.
- 2.12 The Commission considered that it was not appropriate for ward / constituency matters to be defined as an approved duty.
- 2.13 In respect of claiming mileage for attending meetings of Parish Councils, the Full Council agreed at their meeting held on 21 July 2015 that these could be approved duties where:
- a) If all or part of the parish or town Council is within the ward of the District Council Member;
 - b) so long as they are not otherwise a member of that parish council; and
 - c) if the parish council has included on its agenda an item to receive reports from and raise issues (relating to the activities of the district council) with its ward councillor.

The Commission agreed that these provisions continue.

3.0 Financial Implications (FIN21-22/5892)

- 3.1 There is a proposed budget allocation of £6,000 for the 2022/23 financial year in respect of Members' travel allowances.
- 3.2 During the 2019/20 financial year (prior to the pandemic) £5,992 was claimed in respect of Members' travel allowances.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that the Council:

- (a) note the final report of the Members Independent Remuneration Panel will be submitted to the Annual Council Meeting on 17 May 2022; and**
- (b) include political group meetings which are convened for District Council business (dates to be supplied to Democratic Services) and held at Castle House or elsewhere in the District in the definition of approved duties for the purposes of the Members' Allowances Scheme.**

Background Papers

Reports to the Councillors' Commission on 23 February 2022.

For further information please contact Nigel Hill on Ext. 5243

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