

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING:	Council	
MEETING DATE:	14 March 2024	
TITLE:	Members' Allowances Review	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: IRP Member Biographies		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The Council is required to undertake an independent review of its Member Allowances scheme every 4 years. The last review reported its findings in 2021 so this report is about establishing the next review.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to;

2.1 Agree the re-appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel for B&NES;

2.2 Agree that the Independent Remuneration Panel be asked to conduct the next full review of the Member Allowances scheme in late summer/Autumn of 2024, with a view to any agreed changes to the scheme being implemented from April 2025;

2.3 Note the issues carried over from the last review (in paragraph 3.5);

2.4 Submit any suggestions for Panel consideration to the Monitoring Officer, before its first meeting in April 2024.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The last review took place in 2020/21 and the current scheme was approved on 4th May 2021;

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/g5958/Public%20minutes%2004th-May-2021%2018.30%20Council.pdf?T=11> (item 10)

- 3.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) now operate as a 4-person Panel and have a well-established track record of working effectively together for a number of nearby Councils. Having a 4-person Panel rather than a 3-person one brings more experience to the table and assists with convening meetings taking into account their busy calendars. Their biographies are included at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The Panel have been consulted for their availability and, subject to Council approval, would be available to undertake a review in the Autumn of 2024, with an initial scoping meeting arranged for April.
- 3.4 The initial scoping meeting will review any outstanding items from the last review which are still relevant, pick up any issues that have arisen since then, and agree the questions for the Member Survey, which will be sent out before the summer holidays.
- 3.5 Issues logged from last time that may need inclusion in scope this time;
 - Intention to review SRA bandings
 - Fostering Panel allowance (*pick up in banding review*)
 - Review Council Chair's role since reduction of duties. [*Has this increased again post covid?*]
 - Dependant Carer's allowance – effectiveness of scheme and level of support
 - Role of the Chair of the PDS Chairs & Vice Chairs Group
 - Performance management role of Group Leaders.
- 3.6 An additional item is proposed to include within the scheme the approach to take if the staff pay increase (to which the member increase is linked) is a flat rate, not a percentage rate (as has been necessary for the last couple of years).
- 3.7 In addition to the survey, there will be other opportunities for Members to input into the review process (through member interviews), but any informal suggestions for items to be included in the scope can be submitted before then to the Monitoring Officer.
- 3.8 Ultimately, it is for Council to decide whether to amend its scheme in accordance with any recommendations from the Panel, and when any such amendments should be introduced.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires local authorities to establish an independent panel with the function of providing the Local Authority with recommendations on its remuneration scheme and the amounts to be paid.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 Recommendations from the Panel may have budgetary implications and any such considerations will need to be assessed in consultation with the Section

151 Officer, Monitoring Officer (as budget holder for Members' allowances) and Cabinet Member.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

7.1 The Council may consider inviting the Panel to consider any particular provisions relating to Member travel.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None.

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 This report has been cleared by the Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer.

Contact person	Michael Hewitt, Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Background papers	<i>Link to last review findings and resolutions;</i> https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/g5958/Public%20minutes%2004th-May-2021%2018.30%20Council.pdf?T=11 <i>(item 10)</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	