

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING:	Council	
MEETING DATE:	20th July 2023	
TITLE:	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix 1 Updated job description for Cabinet Project Lead role		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances were asked by Council on 25th May 2023 to specifically consider the new role of Cabinet Project Lead and whether an allowance was appropriate. They met on 19th June to consider this.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to

- 2.1 Note the comments and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on Members' Allowances, as set out in Section 3;
- 2.2 Agree that the job description for the role be slightly revised to reflect the volume of work and nature of the role, as attached at Appendix 1, and that should this be incorporated into the Councillor Roles document linked from the Code of Conduct in the Constitution;
- 2.3 Approve the Cabinet Project Lead role be paid an allowance equivalent to 1 x the basic allowance (currently £10,225);

- 2.4 Agree the necessary changes to the Constitution sections regarding Cabinet arrangements, as set out at Section 3.7 of this report to include the new allowance in Schedule 1 Part 1 of the Constitution;
- 2.5 Agree to increase the allowance rate for IRP members from £50 to £70 per meeting as set out in section 4.5; and
- 2.6 Formally thank the Panel for their work.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Panel considered a report setting out the role, accounts from previous Cabinet Assistants and comparator data with other Authorities. The Panel also had an opportunity to hear from and ask questions of Cllr Kevin Guy in his role as Leader, and Cllrs Jess David and Matt McCabe as previous Cabinet Assistants.
- 3.2 The Panel agreed that a clear rationale had been established for the role; – the scan of portfolios is large and there is a clear programme of work.
- 3.3 The Panel further agreed that the new title accurately describes the role but commented that the agreed job description did not cover the points that Cllr Guy had made in his explanation or the experience of the Councillors that the panel had interviewed, and proposed additions to appropriately describe the role, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The panel noted that Councillors had been reluctant to claim allowances for the child-care allowance to which they were entitled.
- 3.5 The Panel confirmed that their usual approach for setting an allowance amount was to work within the existing bandings of the scheme if possible. Following consideration of the evidence received and testimonials from the Councillors, they therefore proposed the rate of 1 x the basic allowance (currently £10, 225).
- 3.6 The Panel noted that evidence shows that some form of mentoring would have proved useful in the past and that such an arrangement should be considered as part of the ongoing development of these member posts.
- 3.7 The Panel were clear that the new role needed to be recognised within the Council's constitutional framework and it is proposed that the italicised wording below is added to Sections 1.6 (The Cabinet) and Section 2.2.3 (The Cabinet Composition);

The Leader may allocate Cabinet Project Leads to support Cabinet Members, in research and project work. The decision making responsibility remains with the Cabinet Member, and the Cabinet Project Lead may not substitute at Cabinet meetings for the Cabinet Member.

(link to the Constitution);

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s77259/Constitution.pdf>

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

4.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 constitute the legal framework for councillors' allowances. The Council must establish an Independent Panel to advise on these and the Council is required to have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Panel when it decides on the allowances that councillors are paid. The Council must approve the allowance to be paid to members of the panel and a small increase in allowance is recommended in para 4.5 below

4.2 The Council's existing Scheme of Allowances remains in force until it is amended by any changes approved at this meeting following consideration of the Panel's report.

4.3 The Members' Allowances budget for 2023/24 is;

Basic allowance	570,515
Superannuation	5,462
NI	91,827
Special Responsibility allowances	387,980

4.4 The revenue budget was set in February 2023 which was in advance of Independent Remuneration Panel review of Cabinet Member Allowances. As a result the Revenue Budget Contingency will be allocated recurrently to fund the additional costs, of which include the increase to the special responsibility allowances, on-costs including national insurance and pensions, plus additional costs associated with travel/conference attendance, and administrative support for the Cabinet Project Leads. Total additional cost is estimated at £60k.

4.5 Furthermore, the Panel receive a small payment per meeting. In line with neighbouring Authorities' practice, the Panel rate will increase from £50 to £70 per meeting, subject to Council approval, which is included in the estimated cost in paragraph 4.4.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment was not required.

6 EQUALITIES

6.1 Elected representatives should be remunerated fairly for the duties that they undertake and in doing so this should encourage a more diverse and broader spectrum of the community to enter public life.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

7.1 No direct impact.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Independent remuneration Panel has consulted members and considered comparator authorities members allowance schemes in making its recommendations.

9.2 The Monitoring Officer, the Chief Executive and the Chief Financial Officer have been consulted.

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Background papers	None.
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	