



## **North Devon Council**

Report To: Annual Council

Report Date: 7 April 2021

Topic: Scheme of Members Allowances

Report by: Chief Executive

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. Each year all local authorities are required to set a scheme of allowances for Councillors.
- 1.2. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Member Allowances) Regulations 2003, the Independent Remuneration Panel consisting of independent people has met and made recommendations on the scheme of allowances for Councillors.
- 1.3. This report recommends the adoption of a Scheme of Members Allowances for 2021/22.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That Council considers the adoption of the Scheme of Members Allowances for 2021/22 as shown in Appendix B and C.
- 2.2. That Council consider backdating the uplifting of allowances to the 2020/21 financial year.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. To set Councillor allowances for 2021/22.

### **4. REPORT**

- 4.1. The Local Authorities (Member Allowances) Regulations require an annual scheme of Councillors' allowances to be adopted that takes into account the advice of a panel of independent people (known as the Independent Remuneration Panel).
- 4.2. At the Annual Council meeting on 16 May 2019, Council requested that the Independent Remuneration Panel review the special responsibility allowance for Vice-Chair of Committees, co-opted Harbour Board Members and Lead Members. The views of appointed Members were sought in February 2020 and presented to the Panel.
- 4.3. In March 2020, one Councillor advised that he was using an electric vehicle. The current scheme does not include any reference to electric vehicles and the Panel was therefore requested to consider and make a recommendation regarding the use of electric vehicles.
- 4.4. Therefore, the Independent Remuneration Panel has met and a copy of the Panel's report is attached as Appendix A. In accordance with the Local

Authorities (Member Allowances) Regulations requires Council to take into account the advice of the panel.

4.5. The Panel is recommending the following:

4.5.1. The Basic Allowance should be updated annually on the basis of any headline percentage increase agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government as the pay award for staff on the national pay scale (Green Book).

4.5.2. The Special Responsibility Allowances for Vice- Chairs of Committees, co-opted Board Members and Lead Members should remain as recommended in the full Independent Remuneration Panel Report 2019/20.

4.5.3. Mileage payments for fully electric cars should be made in line with the HMRC Advisory rate (currently 4p per mile).

4.6. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, an Annual Council meeting was not held during 2020/21. Therefore the Scheme of Members Allowances remained the same for 2020/21. The Panel has advised that other Local Authorities have taken the decision to backdate the uplifting of allowances to 2020/21. The pay offer to local authority staff for 2020/21 was 2.75%, therefore it is recommended that the new Basic Allowance rise to £4,884.74 and be backdated for 2020/21 year. The Chancellor has announced in his Budget a planned pay freeze across the Public Sector and therefore this would remain at the base level of £4,884.74 for the 2021/22 year.

4.7. Appendix B details the Scheme of Allowances for 2021/22 incorporating all recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

4.8. Appendix C details the Councillors' Expenses Policy which forms part of the Scheme of Members Allowances. No changes are proposed to the policy as adopted in 2019/20.

## 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. If Council approve the backdating the uplifting of Members Allowances for 2020/21 this will have a cost implication of £6,890 for that financial year and there will be an ongoing cost implication of £6,890 to the 2021/22 base budget. The recommended increase and backdating from 2020/21 onwards can be funded from within the existing revenue budget.

## 6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. There are no equalities implications anticipated as a result of this report.

## 7. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

7.1. Part 2, Article 4, Paragraph 4.5.8 of the Constitution

7.2. Council function.



## 8. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1. This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1. No reports that aren't in the public domain were used in the preparation of this report.

## 10. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

10.1. The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Chief Executive, Head of Resources, Monitoring Officer, Accountancy Services Manager and Exchequer and Technical Services Manager.