



North Devon Council

Report To: Annual Council

Report Date: 6 April 2022

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 2022/23.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Council considers the adoption of the Scheme of Members Allowances for 2022/23 as shown in Appendix B and C
- 2.2. That following the approval of the 2022/23 pay award which will take place during 2022/23 between the Employers and Unions that the allowances agreed in paragraph 2.1 above be uplifted by the same agreed percentage and backdated to 1 April 2022.
- 2.3. That the Councillors Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental and Adoption Leave Policy as shown in Appendix D be adopted.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To set Councillor allowances for 2022/23.
- 3.2. To agree a Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental and Adoption Leave Policy for Councillors.

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. The Scheme of Allowances is required to be subject to a fundamental review every four years and the Panel is already planning to start this review in the Autumn of 2022 for recommendations to take effect from 2023/24.

- 4.3. In the years between a fundamental review, the Panel, if satisfied that the Scheme remains relevant and current, may undertake an annual “light touch” review.
- 4.4. The Panel has therefore undertaken an “light touch” review and considered:
 - 4.4.1. Whether they were still satisfied that the measure for inflationary uplift remained appropriate;
 - 4.4.2. A request from the Council to consider the introduction of a Parental Leave policy
- 4.5. Therefore, the Independent Remuneration Panel has met virtually on 8 March 2022 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.
- 4.6. Just prior to the Covid pandemic, one newly elected Councillor asked whether the Council had a Paternity Leave policy in place for Councillors. The Council does not currently have such a policy in place for Councillors, but has a policy in place for its employees. A number of Councils in the South West have now introduced or are planning to introduce Parental Leave policies. These include Devon County Council, Exeter City Council and Mid Devon District Council.
- 4.7. The Panel supported the introduction of a Parental Leave policy which they believe will help encourage democratic engagement. The Panel were keen to ensure there was no democratic deficit in any such policy and that the interests of constituents and the electorate were represented. The Panel has recommended a “Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental and Adoption Leave Policy” which is contained in Appendix D of the report which follows the Policy introduced by Devon County Council.
- 4.8. The Panel is recommending the following:
 - 4.8.1. The Basic Allowance should be uprated 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).
 - 4.8.2. The Council introduces the Parental Leave Policy set out in Appendix D.
- 4.9. The pay offer to local authority staff for 2021/22 has now been agreed at 1.75% and Members allowances have been increased in line with the Panel’s recommendation (backdated to April 2021) and have been updated to reflect this increase as detailed in Appendix B. However, the pay offer to local authority staff for 2022/23 is yet to be determined and will be negotiated between the Employers and Unions during the year.

4.10. Appendix B details the Scheme of Allowances for 2022/23 and incorporates all recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and includes the 1.75% increase incorporated for 2021/22.

4.11. Appendix C details the Councillors' Expenses Policy which forms part of the Scheme of Members Allowances. Only one minor change has been made to this policy regarding the deadline of the receipt of expenses claim forms.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The impact on the revenue budget from the 2021-22 uprating of 1.75% on members allowances is a cost increase of £3,940.

5.2. As outlined within the report, the 2022-23 uplift is dependent on the pay award negotiations which will take place in the new financial year, the Council has budgeted for a 2% estimated award within the overall budget. A 2% uprating on allowances for 2022-23 would result in a further cost increase of £5,190, however the actual impact will be dependent on the outcome of the pay award negotiations.

5.3. The additional cost impacts within 5.1 and 5.2 can be contained within the current budgetary framework for 2021-22 and 2022-23 years.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

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

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: None

8.1.2. Improving customer focus and/or : None

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development: None

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

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

9.2. Council function.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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



12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

12.1. The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Monitoring Officer, Accountancy Services Manager, Head of Governance and Head of Organisational Development.