

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL: INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

UPDATE REPORT ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2022/23

Introduction

1. The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to make a Scheme of Allowances over which they can exercise local discretion as to the amounts being paid. Local authorities must also establish and maintain an independent Panel to make recommendations. The composition of the Panel is:
 - Jeremy Filmer-Bennett: former Chief Executive, Devon & Cornwall Business Council
 - Bryony Houlden (Chair): Chief Executive of South West Councils
 - Graham Russell: former Head of Democratic Services with Bath and North East Somerset Council.
2. The Panel undertook an annual 'light touch' review of the scheme of allowances in March 2022 as part of this review the Panel recommended, and the Council accepted, that 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)”**.
3. This uprating mechanism has stood the Council (and many other Councils) in good stead for a number of years. However, when the pay settlement for 2022/23 was settled by the National Employers and the Trade Unions instead of the 'normal' % increase all employees were awarded a flat rate increase of £1,925. This equated to an increase of between 10.5% and 4.04% for staff. Allowances for certain officers were uplifted by 4.04%.
4. This meant that there was no straightforward calculation in applying the uplift to Members allowances. The Panel met to discuss the appropriate uplift figure. In their discussions they were informed by some knowledge of deliberations in Panels across the South West and the rest of England. There has not been a consistent approach but the Panel is aware that a number of Panels have recommended the application of the 4.04% increase that applies to the officer allowances uplift and the Panel has concluded that this is the most appropriate figure to use in uplifting the Basic Allowance:
5. **The Panel Recommends that the Council apply an inflationary uplift of 4.04% for 2022/23 in line with the allowances increase for NJC Local Government Staff. For avoidance of doubt this should be backdated to 1 April 2022**

December 2022