

SUBJECT:	<i>Members' Allowances Scheme 2017/18</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Leader – Councillor Isobel Darby</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Head of Legal & Democratic Services – Joanna Swift</i>
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WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>Not ward specific</i>

1. Purpose of Report

The Council is asked to agree the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2017/18.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council confirms that the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2017/18 is:

1. Based on the automatically uplifting by 1% of the 2016/17 Scheme

OR

2. That the Scheme remains at the same level as the 2016/17 Scheme (attached).

2. Content of the Report & Reasons for Recommendations

The Members' Allowances Scheme for 2017/18 will take effect from 1 April 2017 and continue to 31 March 2018.

In accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme, agreed by Council on 26 February 2014, each year since then (up to and including the 2017/18 Scheme), the default position is that the previous year's Scheme adjusts according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at 31 December to produce the following year's Scheme. Any increase is capped at the average increase in basic pay awarded to the Council's staff.

CPI was 1.6% at 31 December 2016, and the average increase in basic pay awarded to Council staff in 2016 was 1%. The Members' Allowances Scheme for 2017/18 is therefore set to automatically increase by 1%.

Each year since 2014/15 the Council has agreed to freeze allowances so no adjustment has been made since the Scheme was last reviewed and agreed in 2014. In light of this Members are asked to agree a Scheme for 2017/18 based on either a 1% increase, or no increase so that allowances in the 2017/18 Scheme remain at the same level as the 2016/17 Scheme.

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 only allow Schemes to be index linked for a maximum of 4 years. The Scheme was last reviewed in 2014. The Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel is therefore next due to meet in autumn 2017 to consider and recommend a Scheme of Allowances for 2018-19.

3. Consultation

Not Applicable

4. Options

- 1. To agree that the Members' Scheme of Allowances for 2016/17 automatically adjusts by 1% to create the 2017/18 Scheme, or*
- 2. that the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2017/18 remains at the same level as the 2016/17 Scheme.*

5. Corporate Implications

3.1 Financial

A 1% increase in Members' Basic Allowance equates to a total increase of £1,840. This would equate to a total increase of £2,583 when the consequential increases in Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are taken into account. Some SRAs are paid per meeting rather than as a fixed allowance, and the number of meetings held each year varies.

3.2 Legal

In accordance with the Scheme agreed by Council on 26 February 2014, the Scheme for 2016/17 is set to automatically adjust by 1% to produce the Scheme for 2017/18. The Council may choose instead to freeze allowances, as it has done so since the Scheme was last reviewed in 2014. The Council can only choose to make other changes to the Scheme following consideration of a report and recommendation of the Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel.

6. Next Step

Once Council has agreed the Scheme for 2017/18 this will be published on the Council's website, and guidance notes will be made available to Members. In addition to this the Council is also required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to place an advert in one newspaper in circulation within the district showing the allowances that may be made to Members.

Background Papers:	None other than those referred to in the report.
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