

SUBJECT:	<i>Amendments to the Scheme of Members Allowances 2019/20</i>
RELEVANT MEMBER:	<i>Isobel Darby, Leader</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Joanna Swift, Head of Democratic and Legal Services</i>
REPORT AUTHOR	<i>Leslie Ashton, Democratic & Electoral Services Officer</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>Not ward specific</i>

1. Purpose of Report

To present the recommendations of the Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel following a proposal received to consider Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for the roles of 'Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Co-Chairman' and 'Chairman of the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre Scrutiny Sub-committee'. Full Council is asked to consider the below recommendations, following which the Council's Scheme of Allowances for Members will be amended accordingly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To consider the recommendations from the Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel summarised in the report. The Panel have recommended the introduction of SRAs for the below roles at the rates specified.**
 - **Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Co-Chairman: £1,714 pro-rata**
 - **Chiltern Lifestyle Centre Scrutiny Sub-committee Chairman: £98 per meeting**
- 2. Either:**
 - a) **agree the Panel's recommendations in full**
 - b) **agree a different level of Special Responsibility Allowance for the two roles**
- 3. To amend the Members Allowances Scheme for 2019/20 subject to the inclusion of the allowance figures agreed by the Council under recommendation 2.**
- 4. That the budget for 2019/20 for Members Allowances be amended, as required, to put into effect recommendation 2.**

2. Reasons for Recommendations

Following proposals put forward by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, the Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel was contacted with a view to reviewing the allowances for the roles of *Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Co-Chairman* and *Chairman of the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre Scrutiny Sub-committee*. The reasons for the Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel recommendations are set out later in this report.

3. Content of Report

Relevant Legislation and Council Duties

- 3.1 Every local authority must make a scheme in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Council last reviewed its scheme in February 2018 following a review completed by an Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel. In accordance with the regulations any amendments to a scheme must be made having regard to the recommendations of an independent remuneration panel.
- 3.2 The current scheme provides for the payment of a Basic Allowance (BA) to each member of the authority and a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA). The Regulations allow for an SRA to be paid to such members of the authority as have such special responsibilities in relation to the authority as are specified in the scheme and are within one or more of the following categories:
- a) Acting as leader or deputy leader of a political group within the authority;
 - b) Acting as a member of the Cabinet;
 - c) Presiding at meetings of a committee or sub-committee or joint committee;
 - d) Representing the authority at meetings of, or arranged by any other body;
 - e) Acting as a member of a committee or sub-committee which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods;
 - f) Acting as a spokesman of a political group on a committee or sub-committee;
 - g) Acting as a member of any committee or sub-committee that deals with licensing functions;
 - h) Carrying out other activities in the discharge of the authority's functions which require an amount of time and effort equal to or greater than required of a) to g) above

The amount of the SRA must be specified in the scheme.

- 3.3 The scheme may also provide for :
- a) payment of Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA) to members for the expenses they incur in arranging for the care of children or dependants when attending meetings and other official duties approved by the council;

- b) payment of travelling expenses and any subsistence incurred in undertaking official duties prescribed in the Regulations, and
- c) an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to an index specified by the authority, for up to 4 years, after which time the Council must seek a further recommendation from the Independent Panel on the application of an index to its scheme. At its meeting in February 2018, this Council opted to adjust allowances annually in line with the annual staff pay award.

3.4 Before an authority makes or amends its scheme of members allowances it must have regard to the recommendations made by its appointed Panel. The authority does, however, retain the discretion not to agree or follow those recommendations, after giving them due regard. In these circumstances the authority should give reasons for its decision.

Current Scheme of Allowances

3.5 At the time of the last review of the scheme, the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chiltern Lifestyle Centre Scrutiny Sub-committee had not been established.

Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel Report

- 3.6 The Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel was contacted to review the two roles and make recommendations on each allowance as required by the Regulations. The Panel's considerations are summarised below.
- 3.7 The Panel considered the Council's current Scheme of Members' Allowances and were provided with the Terms of Reference of each respective committee along with details such as meeting frequency and the type of issues that are dealt with by these Committees.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Co-chairman

- 3.8 As part of its consideration, the Panel recognised the importance of the work of the Committee in scrutinising the work of the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Executive Committee on items such as the Joint Local Plan and shared service arrangements. The Panel noted that the Co-Chairman is not currently in receipt of an SRA, whereby the SBDC Co-Chairman did receive an SRA for their role as the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Chairman. The SBDC Scheme limits members to one SRA.
- 3.9 Having also considered the option of a per-meeting allowance, the Panel concluded that it was appropriate to introduce an SRA equivalent to 50% of that which is presently paid to the Council's Overview Chairmen (x2). This works out at £1,714.

Chairman of the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 3.10 The Panel recognised that the Sub-Committee had an important role to play in undertaking the overall scrutiny function for the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre project and noted that the role of Chairman involved significant preparation ahead of each meeting. The Panel noted that the Chairman is not currently in receipt of an SRA.
- 3.11 Having considered the complexity of meetings and having compared the role to others that warrant an SRA, the Panel concluded that a per-meeting allowance of £98 was appropriate for the role. The Council currently pays the same per-meeting allowance for the roles of Chairman of Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee, Chairman of Licensing Sub-Committee and Chairman of Appeals and Complaints Committee.

4. Options

The Council, having considered the Independent Review of Members Allowances Panel's recommendations can choose to adopt the recommended allowances as noted in this report; agree an alternative level of allowances for the two roles outlined; or choose not to introduce any SRA for either/both of the roles.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial

The 2019/20 budget for Members BA is £195,840 and for SRAs is £80,876. The Council is therefore recommended to agree that the 2019/20 budget for Members SRAs be amended, as required, to put into effect the amendments to the Scheme of Allowances agreed by the Council.

5.2 Legal – The statutory duties relating to member allowances which the council is obliged to follow are contained in The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

The Council has a duty under the Regulations to have regard to the recommendations made to it by the Panel before making amendments to its scheme of allowances. The Council does not have to accept the Panel's recommendations but should give reasons for departing from them. The Council must publish the scheme it approves.

6 Next Steps

The Allowances scheme, and any updates made to it, as agreed by Full Council must be published on the Council's website.

Background Papers:	None other than referred to in this report
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