

REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR 2023/2024

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision N/A
Report to: Council
26 July 2023

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the attached report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the review of Members' Allowances to be paid to Members of Mid Sussex District Council in 2023/2024. The report was initially presented to Council for consideration on 7th December 2022 but deferred by Council to be reconsidered following the election.

Recommendations

2. **Council is recommended to:**
 - (i) **consider the recommendations of the Panel, and**
 - (ii) **agree the scheme of allowances for the financial year 2023/024 as set out in paragraph 3, below.**
3. The Panel's recommendations for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances are summarised in the table below.

Role	Current Allowance (£):	Recommended Allowance (£):
Basic Allowance	5,200	5,700
Leader's Allowance	20,800	22,800
Deputy Leader's Allowance	11,000	11,400
Cabinet Member	8,500	9,120
Chairman of the Council	6,750	7,410
Vice-Chairman of Council	2,250	2,470
Planning Committee Chairman	6,500	7,125
Planning Vice-Chairman	1,625	1,781
Licensing Committee Chairman	1,040	1,140
Standards Committee Chairman	1,040	1,140
Group Leader	250 per Group Member	250 per Group Member
Scrutiny Committee Chairman	4,160	4,560
Scrutiny Vice-Chairman	1,040	1,140
Audit Committee Chairman	3,060	3,420
Independent Persons for Standard Matters	750	750

4. The Panel recommend that Members should only be entitled to claim one Special Responsibility Allowance, with the exception of allowances paid to Group Leaders.

Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances

5. Noting the reduction in the number of Councillors from 54 to 48 in May 2023, the Panel acknowledged the increase in the population notionally represented by each Councillor as well as the increased rate of the Consumer Price Index.
6. The Panel, therefore, recommended that the Basic Allowance be increased to £5,700 with effect from 1 May 2023, being as close as possible to the election of the new Council.
7. With regard to Special Responsibility Allowances, the Panel maintained the position of a linkage between the Basic Allowance and the allowances paid to the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Members and Chairman as detailed below.
8. The work of the Constitution Review Group has now been completed and approved by Council and thus the number of Scrutiny committees is reduced to 2. This results in a reduction of Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair allowances and contributes to this proposal ultimately representing a saving, as set out in paragraphs 18, 19 and 20.

Leader, Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member's Allowance

9. The Panel maintained the current position that the Leader's allowance be set at 4 times the Basic Allowance.
10. The Panel maintained the current position that the Deputy Leader's allowance be set at 2 times the Basic Allowance and that the remaining Cabinet Member Allowances are set at 1.6 times the Basic Allowance.

Chairman's Allowance

11. Acknowledging that the current rate is appropriate, the Chairman's Allowance is recommended to remain at 1.3 times the Basic Allowance.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowance

12. The Panel recommended no change for the mileage allowances, as these are in line with the HMRC guidance.

Detail	Recommended Rate
Vehicles	
Car Mileage	45p per mile
Car Passenger Mileage Rate	3p per mile for 1 passenger 5p per mile for 2 or more passengers
Cycling Allowance	20p per mile
Subsistence	
Breakfast	£7.00
Lunch	£10.00
Tea	£4.00
Evening Meal	£13.00
Overnight Out of Pocket Expenses Per night	£6.00
Overnight Out of Pocket Expenses Per week	£24.00

Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowances

Childcare Allowance

13. The Panel recommended that this allowance should remain linked to the National Living Wage rate. Therefore, payment will be on receipt-based actual costs up to a maximum rate of £11 per hour for one child, or a maximum of £22 per hour for two or more children.

Dependent Carer's Allowance

14. In line with the Childcare Allowance increase, the Panel agreed that payment of receipt-based actual costs, up to a maximum rate of £22 per hour is appropriate.

Background

15. The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to set their schemes of allowance on an annual basis after taking into account the recommendations of an independent panel.
16. The Mid Sussex Independent Remuneration Panel undertook its review of Members' allowances between September and November 2022 and its report is appended below.
17. Members are not obliged to take the allowance.

Financial Implications

18. The cost of the amendment to the basic allowance is a net saving of £7,200, with the increase per Councillor being offset by the reduced number of elected Members.
19. The reduction in Scrutiny Committees from three committees to two, results in a net saving of Chair and Vice Chair allowances of £4,200
20. Based on the number of roles with special allowances, as agreed at Annual Council, the net saving in the current financial year is £21,138 to be taken as an in-year saving and managed through the quarterly budget management process.

Risk Management Implications

21. None.

Equality and Customer Services Implications

22. In the preparation of the original report in 2022, all Members at that time were written to by the Panel and had the opportunity to provide written or verbal comments on the scheme of allowances and expenses.
23. Considerations on childcare and dependent care allowances have been fully factored in by the Panel in their deliberations.

Sustainability Implications

24. None.

Other Material Implications

25. None.

Appendices

- Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the review of the Members' Allowances for 2023/2024.
- Appendix C – SEE Members Allowance Survey 2022
- Appendix D – Committee Structure

Background Papers

26. None