

REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR 2023/2024

REPORT OF: Interim Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer: Lucinda Joyce, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Email: lucinda.joyce@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477225
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision N/A
Report to: Council - 7 December 2022

Purpose of Report

1. 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.

Recommendations

2. **Council is recommended to:**
 - (i) **thank the Panel for its work;**
 - (ii) **consider the recommendations of the Panel, and**
 - (iii) **agree the scheme of allowances for the financial year 2023/024 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	42,500 (8,500 x 5)	45,600 (9,120 x 5)
Chairman of the Council	6,750	7,410
Vice-Chairman of Council	2,250	2,470
2 x Planning Committee Chairman	13,000 (6,500 x 2)	14,250 (7,125 x 2)
2 x Planning Vice-Chairman	3,250 (1,625 x 2) 25% of Planning Chairman's allowance	3,562 (1,781 x 2) 25% of Planning Chairman's allowance
Licensing Committee Chairman	1,040	1,140
Standards Committee Chairman	1,040	1,140
Group Leader	250 per group member	250 per group member
3 x Scrutiny Committee Chairman	12,480 (4,160 x 3)	13,680 (4,560 x 3)

3 x Scrutiny Vice-Chairman	3,120 (1,040 x 3) 25% of Scrutiny Chairman's allowance	3,420 (1,140 x 3) 25% of Scrutiny Chairman's allowance
Audit Committee Chairman	3,060	3,420
3 x Independent Persons for Standard Matters	2,250 (3 x 750)	2,250 (3 x 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 Panel suggested that discussions are underway regarding the number of Scrutiny Committees, and should a decision be taken to reduce the number of Scrutiny Committees in 2023/24, the saving arising should be taken as an in year saving on the budget for Councillors' allowances.
9. Members are aware that the possibility of reducing the number of Scrutiny Committees was first recommended for consideration as part of Phase 2 of the 2021 Governance Review. This will be considered as part of the wider work of annual Constitution Review Group when it meets in the coming months, but no discussions have otherwise taken place and no decisions will be made until the Group presents its recommendations to Full Council.

Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member's Allowance

10. The Panel maintained the current position that the Leader's allowance be set at 4 times the Basic Allowance.
11. 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

12. 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

13. 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

14. 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

15. 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

16. 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.
17. The Mid Sussex Independent Remuneration Panel undertook its review of Members' allowances between September and November 2022 and its report is appended below.
18. Members are not obliged to take the allowance.

Financial Implications

19. The additional cost of the Panel's recommendations is £1,302 representing 0.31% of the current budget.

20. The report makes reference to there being “discussions under way that might lead to a reduction from three to two of the Scrutiny Committees but that this decision was not imminent and if taken would certainly come after this report was presented to Council. Should such a decision be taken then the saving arising from the abolition of one post each of Chair and Vice Chair (£5,100 at current rates) should be taken as an in year saving on the budget for Councillors’ allowances.”
21. This will be considered as part of the wider work of annual Constitution Review Group when it meets in the coming months, but no discussions have otherwise taken place and no decisions will be made until the Group presents its recommendations to Full Council, at which time any associated financial implications can be considered.

Risk Management Implications

22. None.

Equality and Customer Services Implications

23. All Members were written to by the Panel and had the opportunity to provide written or verbal comments on the scheme of allowances and expenses.
24. Considerations on childcare and dependent care allowances have been fully factored in by the Panel in their deliberations.

Sustainability Implications

25. None.

Other Material Implications

26. None.

Appendices

- Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members’ Allowances for 2023/2024.
- Appendix A (included in Main Remuneration Panel report)
- Appendix B (included in Main Remuneration Panel report)
- Appendix C
- Appendix D