

Divisions affected – All

COUNCIL
28 MARCH 2023

COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES 2022-23

Report of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Council is RECOMMENDED

To increase the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances by 5.3% with effect from 1 April 2022 in line with the percentage rise in employee costs for Oxfordshire County Council arising from the 2022-23 Local Government pay award.

Background

2. The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) recommendations on a new allowances scheme were accepted by Council on 2 November 2021 and became effective on 1 April 2022. The current allowances are shown in the Annex to this report.
3. The recommendations included linking future increases to the Local Government pay award for employees each year. They are silent on when this should begin other than to state that the link to the pay settlement should be for a period of no more than four years.
4. The IRP recommendations were originally presented at Council on 8 December 2020 but were not accepted at that time. If the recommendations had been accepted, the new allowances scheme would have become effective on 1 April 2021. From 1 April 2022, the allowances would have been increased in line with the pay award for Local Government employees effective from 1 April 2022.
5. Historically the Local Government annual pay award has been based on a percentage uplift for most employees. The award for 2022-23 agreed between the National Employers and Unions in November 2022 was for a

lump sum of £1,925 for all employees and a national percentage increase was not quoted. Other (non-salary) employee allowances were increased by 4.04% as part of the annual pay award. The £1,925 uplift resulted in a 5.3% increase in employee costs for Oxfordshire County Council in 2022-23.

Uplift from 1 April 2022

6. Views on the annual uplift in allowances have been sought from IRP members – David Shelmerdine, Martyn Hocking and Katherine Powley.
7. They note that councillor allowances would have been subject to an uplift from 1 April 2022 if the recommendations of the IRP had been accepted in December 2020. They believe that the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances should still be increased from 1 April 2022.
8. Councillors do not receive a salary and IRP members are not supportive of applying the lump sum payment of £1,925 given to employees to councillor allowances. They therefore considered two options:
 - a) Increasing the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances by 4.04% in line with other (non-salary) employee allowances in 2022-23.
 - b) Increasing the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances by 5.3% in line with the percentage rise in employee costs for Oxfordshire County Council arising from the 2022-23 Local Government pay award.
9. On balance, IRP members support b) as it is the closest alternative to what the IRP had in mind when the recommendations were made to Council in December 2020.
10. This results in the Basic Allowance increasing by £636 to £12,636 with associated Special Responsibility Allowances rising proportionately. Individual allowances are shown in the Annex to this report.
11. If supported, allowances will be updated through the Council's payroll system with the increase backdated to 1 April 2022 and shown in pay slips at the end of April 2023.

Corporate policies and priorities

12. One of the priorities in the Council's Strategic Plan is to 'Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy'. Councillor allowances should reflect the time commitment of elected members and compensate them

appropriately to ensure that local people are not dissuaded from standing for election.

Financial implications

13. The 2022-23 Revenue Budget includes provision for the annual uplift in councillor allowances and sufficient funds are available.

Legal implications

14. The IRP is appointed under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations), to consider a Councillor Allowances Scheme and to make recommendations to the Council on any changes to the scheme it believes are appropriate. The Council cannot make any amendments to the scheme without having first considered any recommendations made by the IRP.

Employee implications

15. No direct implications affecting employees

Equality and inclusion implications

16. Local people, including those from minority and protected groups, should not be discouraged from standing for election.

Anita Bradley

Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances – current and proposed 5.3% uplift.

Background papers: Councillors allowances report presented to Council on 8 December 2020.

Councillor allowances report presented to Council on 2 November 2021.

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March 2023

ANNEX

2022-23 Councillor Allowances

	Current	5.3% uplift
Basic Allowance		
All Members	£12,000.00	£12,636.00
Special Responsibility Allowances		
Leader of the Council	£36,000.00	£37,908.00
Deputy Leader	£24,000.00	£25,272.00
Cabinet Member	£19,200.00	£20,220.00
Scrutiny Committee Chair	£7,200.00	£7,584.00
Horton HOSC Chair	£5,400.00	£5,688.00
Audit and Governance Committee Chair	£7,200.00	£7,584.00
Planning and Reg. Committee Chair	£7,200.00	£7,584.00
Pension Fund Committee Chair	£7,200.00	£7,584.00
Chair of Council	£10,200.00	£10,740.00
Vice-chair of Council	£2,550.00	£2,688.00
Leader of the Opposition	£12,000.00	£12,636.00
Shadow Cabinet Members	£3,000.00	£3,156.00
Locality Committee Chairs	£1,200.00	£1,260.00
Police and Crime Panel Chair	£7,200.00	£7,584.00