

## **COUNCIL – 2 APRIL 2019**

### **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

**Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Council is RECOMMENDED to endorse the following recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for amendments to the Scheme of Allowances and the future operation of the Panel:**

- (1) a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) should be paid to the Chairman of Horton Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that the allowance should be 75% of the SRA for the Chairman of a (permanent) scrutiny committee;**
- (2) an SRA should be paid to an Oxfordshire County Council representative who is Chairman of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel equivalent to the allowance for the Chairman of a (permanent) scrutiny committee;**
- (3) the uplift for allowances for 2019/20 should be at the same rate as the annually agreed pay award for staff; and**
- (4) the Panel should conduct its next review in the autumn of 2019 and it should meet annually after that or whenever structural changes are made;**
- (5) the next recruitment process should create a pool of seven panel members.**

#### **Introduction**

2. The Independent Remuneration Panel was asked to consider whether changes should be made to certain aspects of the Scheme of Members' Allowances. These were in relation to:
  - a. if a Special Responsibility Allowance should be paid to the Chairman of Horton Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Horton HOSC) and if so at what level: the Horton HOSC was a new committee that the Council was required to set up in law to scrutinize the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's proposals regarding consultant-led maternity services at the Horton General Hospital. The Committee's duration is

expected to last only as long as necessary for the matters above to be considered. However, the work is not inconsiderable.

- b. whether the amounts payable to the Council’s representative on the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel (TVPCP) – as ordinary member, vice-chairman or chairman - are at the right levels.
- c. whether an index for the uprating of members’ allowances should continue and if so what this should be: the index previously agreed by the Council (same as the pay award for local government employees) had reached the end of its statutory four-year point of application. The Panel needed to meet in order to consider this.

**The Panel’s report**

- 3. The Panel’s report is at Annex 1 and sets out the issues and the Panel’s rationale for each of the recommendations it is making. The relevant regulations say that it is for the Council itself to determine its own Scheme of Allowances and any amendments to it, and that before doing so it must take account of the recommendations of its Independent Panel.
- 4. The Panel has made recommendations on each of the points concerned. It has also made some additional recommendations about the future working of the Panel.

**Financial Implications**

- 5. The financial implications of the Panel’s recommendations are as follows.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current cost</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Total additional cost per annum</b>
Chairman of Horton HOSC – (£4,824)	No current allowance	£4,824	£4,824
Chairman of Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (£6,432)	£3,678	£2,754	£2,754

- 6. Special Responsibility Allowances are paid pro rata in twelve monthly instalments (i.e. for as long as the special responsibility lasts within the year).
- 7. The application of a 2% index increase for the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2019/20, if the recommendations in this report are agreed, would mean an additional cost to the Council of £26,315.92 (assuming the payment of the SRAs in paragraph 5 above). The costs can be funded within the current members’ allowances budget for 2019/20.

8. As regards the future working of the Panel, if the Panel were to be formed (as recommended) of seven members and all of these met in any review (there would need to be at least three members per review, legally, drawn from the pool) the costs would be:
  - (a) £300 per panel member per review = £2,100 total maximum cost per review
  - (b) Up to £1200 per year limit per panel member = £8,400 maximum cost per year
  
9. Not all panel members will opt to claim their allowance but if they did, costs can be met from within existing members' allowances budget for 2019/20.

**NICK GRAHAM**

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Background papers: Nil

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