

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	23 January 2024
Subject:	Scheme of Members Allowances 2024/25
Report of:	Democratic and Elections Adviser
Head of Service/Director:	Head of Service: Democratic and Electoral Services
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

The Council's current Scheme of Allowances expires on 31 March 2024. In determining a new Scheme of Allowances, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council can determine a Scheme effective for up to four years but, having determined its Scheme, it cannot make any changes to it without considering the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel.

Recommendation:

The Council is asked to determine the Scheme of Allowances to take effect on 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025 having regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out at Appendix 1.

Financial Implications:

None if the Council accepts the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Legal Implications:

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, require authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations to the authority about the allowances to be paid to Councillors.

Independent Remuneration Panels will make recommendations which must include the level of basic allowance for all Councillors, the level of SRAs, and to whom they should be paid, and on whether dependants' carers' allowance, travelling and subsistence allowances and co-optees' allowance should be paid and the levels of these allowances. Schemes must be made by 31 March for implementation in the forthcoming financial year. A scheme may be amended at any time, following consideration of the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations, but may only be revoked with effect from the beginning of a year, except in the case where a Council has begun to operate:

- (a) executive arrangements, where they are being operated in place of existing alternative arrangements;
- (b) alternative arrangements, where they are being operated in place of existing executive arrangements; or
- (c) different executive arrangements which involve an executive which takes a different form.

The 2003 Regulations place certain duties on Local Authorities in connection with publicising the recommendations made by their Independent Remuneration Panel, their Scheme of Allowances and the actual allowances paid to Councillors in any given year.

The Regulations require that, as soon as reasonably practicable after receiving a report from its Panel which sets out the Panel's recommendations, a Local Authority must ensure that copies of the report are available for inspection at its principal office at all reasonable hours. A Local Authority must also, as soon as reasonably practicable after it receives the report, publish a Notice in its area which:

- states that the authority has received recommendations from an Independent Remuneration Panel about its Scheme of Allowances;
- states that copies of the report detailing the Panel's recommendations are available for inspection at the principal office of the authority at all reasonable hours;
- states the address of the principal office;
- describes the main features of the Panel's recommendations, including the amounts of allowances the Panel has recommended should be payable to Councillors.

The 2003 Regulations also require that members of the public may take copies of the Panel's report on payment of such reasonable fee as the Local Authority may determine.

In respect of the Local Authority's Scheme of Allowances, the Regulations require that, as soon as reasonably practicable after determining a Scheme of Allowances, a Local Authority must ensure that copies of the Scheme are available for inspection at its principal office at all reasonable hours. A Local Authority must also, as soon as reasonably practicable after determining the scheme, publish a Notice in its area which:

- states that the authority has adopted a Scheme of Allowances and the period for which the scheme has effect;
- states that copies of the scheme are available for inspection at its principal office at all reasonable hours;
- states the address of the principal office;
- describes the main features of the scheme, including the amounts of allowances payable to Councillors under the scheme;
- states that, in determining the scheme, the authority had regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel;
- describes the main features of the Panel's recommendations, including the amounts of allowances the Panel had recommended should be payable to its Councillors;
- describes any responsibilities or duties in the scheme which would merit the payment of a SRA and travelling and subsistence allowance.

The final publicity requirement in the Regulations is that, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of a year to which a Scheme relates, a Local Authority must make arrangements for the publication in its area of the total sum paid by it to each Member in respect of Basic, Special Responsibility, Travelling and Subsistence, Co-optees' and Dependant Carers' Allowances.

All these publicity requirements are statutory minimum requirements. However, the guidance on the Regulations from the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also states that a Local Authority should publicise more widely the report from its Panel, its Scheme of Allowances and the sums paid to each Member. This should include, where possible, publishing this information on the Authority's website and in the Council's own newspaper (where they have one).

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

None.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

None.

Safeguarding Implications:

None.

Impact on the Customer:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel currently consists of five members. All members of the Panel live within the Borough and undertake various voluntary roles in support of the Borough.

2.0 SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2024/25

2.1 The report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel, setting out its recommendation for the 2024/25 Scheme of Allowances, is attached at Appendix 1.

2.2 The Council's existing Scheme expires on 31 March 2024 and, before making a new scheme, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel.

2.3 The Council is asked to determine a Scheme of Allowances having regard to the recommendation of the Panel.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 As set out in the Independent Remuneration Panel's report.

4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

4.1 None.

5.0 MONITORING

5.1 If there is a major change to either the operational arrangements of the Council or the Member decision-making structure/arrangements during the year, the Panel can be reconvened to consider whether any adopted scheme remains fit-for-purpose.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

6.1 None.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: 1. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.