



REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
TO:	COUNCIL FORUM
DATE:	26 January 2023

SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME 2022/23

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform the Council Forum of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, who met recently to discuss the Members Allowances Scheme for 2022/23 following the recent staff pay award.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Council Forum is asked to:

- 2.1 Consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (**Appendix 1**);
- 2.2 Approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel set out in section 5 of the report.

3. BACKGROUND

Following a review by the Panel in January 2022 and making recommendations to Council, the current Members' Allowance Scheme ('the Scheme') was adopted by Finance Council on 28 February 2022 and implemented in May 2022 - ([Report 28.02.22. MembersAllowances Scheme 2022-23. IRP.pdf \(blackburn.gov.uk\)](#); [REPORT \(blackburn.gov.uk\)](#); [Part 6 Members Scheme 2022.pdf \(blackburn.gov.uk\)](#)). Paragraph 5.2 of the Scheme provides for the allowances to be "*rated annually in line with the pay award for local authority NJC staff with each annual increase being reported to a Council meeting for information at the earliest opportunity*". The Scheme also states that any other amendments to it will be determined by the Council following receipt of recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Whilst in most years the NJC pay award has been determined as a percentage increase on each pay point, the pay agreement for 2022-23 reached in November 2022 was that all local government staff receive a pay award of £1925 (pro-rata for part-time employees). This equates to a 10.5% rise for the lowest paid staff and 2.72% for the highest paid on the Council's staff grading structure (for the majority of staff on 'Green Book' NJC terms and conditions).

The offer also includes a permanent extra day's leave per year for all staff from 1 April 2023, and an uprating of 4.04% on allowances (such as travel, accommodation, overtime etc).

As the main increase has been agreed as a flat rate, it became necessary to convene a meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel to consider the Members Allowances Scheme 2022-23 for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

4. REVIEW OF THE SCHEME

As outlined in the attached report from the IRP, the Panel met on 12th January 2023 to consider the Members Allowances Scheme, looking at a number of options, taking into consideration the approach taken by some comparator local authorities.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The legislative framework for members' allowances is contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ('the Regulations'). Local authorities must also have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State when setting up or operating their scheme.

Under the Regulations, local authorities are required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations on the level of basic and special responsibility allowances, and other related expenses that are paid to Councillors.

It is a function of the Council to have regard to the report and recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Scheme, and to adopt and amend the Member's Allowances Scheme.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Local authorities have discretion as to the form and amount of their scheme of allowances (save for travel allowances), subject to a minimum basic allowance for every member. Local authorities are therefore free to set their members' allowances at levels that reflect the level of responsibility and the amount of time they devote to council affairs. An up to date Member's Allowance Scheme would help encourage more diversity and representation from residents to devote time for public roles.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Panel's recommendations would be contained within existing budgets.

8. CONSULTATIONS

Officers consulted with the Panel and provided information as requested. Officers also consulted with colleagues at other local authorities on the work of their respective IRP's.

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officers: Asad Laher, Deputy Director – Legal & Governance.
Phil Llewellyn, Corporate & Democratic Lead

Date: 16th January 2023

Background Papers: None