
Subject:	MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2023-24
Meeting and Date:	COUNCIL – 25 JANUARY 2023
Report of:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (CORPORATE AND REGULATORY)
Classification:	UNRESTRICTED

Purpose of the report: To consider the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023-24

Recommendation: To make the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023-24

1. Summary

Under Regulation 10 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003/1021 the Council is required to make a scheme for the payment of allowances to Members.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Council is required to make its Members' Allowance Scheme on an annual basis. In making its Scheme the Council must have regard to the non-binding recommendations of its appointed Independent Remuneration Panel. However, other than having regards to these recommendations it may set its allowances at any level that it decides.

2.2 The allowances that are payable as part of the Members' Allowance Scheme are established in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. In summary, this provides for the following allowances to be made to councillors:

- Basic Allowance (to be received by all Members of the Council);
- Special Responsibility Allowances (for specific positions);
- Travel and Subsistence Expenses
- Dependent Carers Allowance
- Co-Optees' Allowance

2.3 The Council can also decide to index link uplifts in allowances (for example, but not limited to, the Consumer Prices Index or the Retail Price Index). The Council has previously made such arrangements but at the meeting of the full Council held on 4 March 2015 reference to Index Linking was removed as the allowances at the time had been frozen since 2011.

2.4 The levels of allowance for the Independent Persons, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are set out for transparency purposes only as they do not form part of the Scheme.

Dependant Carers' Allowance

2.5 The Dependant Carers' Allowance Scheme is an actual cost reimbursement. The revised scheme has operated successfully since its introduction in 2021.

East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel

- 2.6 The East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (EKJIRP) is a joint body appointed by Dover District Council, Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (Regulation 20(b)). The Council must have regard to its recommendations in setting its Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 2.7 The East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel has previously made a set of recommendations as to the levels of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance that it felt were appropriate for Dover District Council. These are for reference set out at Appendix 3 of this report.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option 1: To make the Members' Allowances Scheme 2023-24 as set out in Appendix 1. This represents no change to the levels set for 2022-23.
- 3.2 Option 2: To make the Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Appendix 1 with amendments. This could include increasing the levels of allowance or reducing the levels or a combination of both.

Members could make the Members' Allowances Scheme as set out in Appendix 1 subject to minor changes. In the event of a more significant change, it is recommended that Members request a further report setting out the changes and the resource implications arising.

A significant change in the Members' Allowances Scheme may also require a further consultation with the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel prior to the Council being able to adopt it.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Option 1 is cost neutral and would result in no direct resource implications or changes to the existing Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 4.2 Option 2 would place additional budgetary pressure on the required 2023-24 budgetary provision if any increase in allowances were to be adopted. Conversely, a reduction in allowances would result in budgetary savings.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct resource implications if Option 1 is adopted.
- 5.2 If Members wish to make significant changes the Members' Allowances Scheme it is recommended that, unless discussed with officers prior to the Council meeting to enable accurate costings to be developed, any proposals be subject to a further report setting out the financial implications of the changes.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The Council is required to make arrangements for a Members' Allowances Scheme on an annual basis.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct climate change implications arising from the report.
- 7.2 The Members' Allowances Scheme does make provision for a cycling mileage allowance and travel by public transport as an alternative to using individual cars and motorbikes.

8. **Corporate Implications**

- 8.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Accountancy has been consulted and has no further comment. (JS)
- 8.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 8.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report regarding the Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24 does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

9. **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Draft Members' Allowances Scheme 2023-24
- Appendix 2 – Comparison of the draft Members' Allowance Scheme 2023-24 against the last Quadrennial Review of the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel
- Appendix 3 – Comparison of the draft Members' Allowance Scheme 2023-24 against other Kent authorities.
- Appendix 4 – East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations in respect of the draft Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24 (to follow)

10. **Background Papers**

Constitution of the Council – Issue 24

Contact Officer: Rebecca Brough, Democratic and Corporate Services Manager, 01304 872304