

Full Council 23rd June 2022

Report Title	Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) – Review of Members’ Allowances 2022
Report Author	Adele Wylie (Director of Governance & Human Resources/Monitoring Officer)

Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	N/A

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Copy of the IRP Report 2022

Appendix B – Copy of table showing impact of recommendations if adopted in full

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. For Full Council to consider the report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) into its review of Member Allowances conducted in 2022.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel has met to review the Allowances payable to councillors in undertaking their respective roles. It was agreed in 2021 that the current Allowance Scheme be reviewed 12-months after the creation of the new unitary authority. The outcome of that review is attached as Appendix A.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that Full Council:
- (i) Adopt the recommendations of the IRP report in full effective from 1st July 2022, as detailed in Appendix A;
- 3.2. *(Reason for Recommendations – The IRP was established to review Member Allowances in line with statute and good practise. The IRP have conducted their review and have submitted their recommendations for consideration. Full Council is entitled to approve in full or part the recommendations included in the IRP report under Appendix A).*
- 3.3. *(Alternative Options Considered –*
- (i) Adopt the recommendations in full or part effective from the 1st April 2023. There would be no additional cost in 2022/23 and any increases can be included in the budget-setting process for 2023/24;
 - (ii) Note the recommendations but hold implementation in abeyance until further notice; until instructed by Full Council;
 - (iii) Note the recommendations but reject implementation of the recommendations; the current approved scheme remaining in place until any subsequent review is commissioned.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. On 5th February 2021, the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) conducted a review to consider the role of members of North Northamptonshire Council and subsequently made recommendations on a scheme of members allowances. A scheme for North Northamptonshire Council was then adopted by the Shadow Authority at a meeting held on 25th February 2021.
- 4.2. The current scheme for North Northamptonshire Council took effect from 1st April 2021. Appendix B details the current level of allowances, which includes the 1.75% uplift for 2021/22 based on the NJC pay award.
- 4.3. It was further agreed that the adopted scheme be reviewed after 12-months.
- 4.4. A Briefing Report for the exercise was prepared and the IRP requested to consider the following areas: -
- Ward Councillors – Basic Allowance
 - The Executive
 - Leaders of Opposition Groups
 - Chairs and Vice Chairs
 - Independent Persons and Co-opted Members
 - Information Technology
 - Childcare and Dependant’s Carers’ Allowance

- Travel, Mileage and Subsistence Allowances

In addition, albeit covered by separate legislation, the IRP were requested to advise on “civic allowances” in relation to the Chair and Vice Chair of NNC.

- 4.5. To ensure that councillors had an opportunity to submit representations to the IRP for consideration, the exercise formally commenced in mid-January 2022, with a deadline for submissions of 24th February 2022. The IRP made allowance in its work programme to meet with councillors via virtual meetings on request. The Chair also was available to speak to councillors on the telephone where requested. By the close of the consultation period, the IRP had received 6 written representations from councillors, had met with the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Council, the senior statutory officers of the Council and held a virtual meeting with two other councillors and a telephone conversation with a third councillor.
- 4.6. The Democracy and Standards Committee at its meeting on 12th April 2022 received a copy of the IRP report. The Committee noted its contents without formal comment to Full Council. There was debate around whether implementation of the recommendations at this time was to be recommended, however the Committee resolved to make no recommendations at this time and allow Full Council to consider and determine.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. Full Council are required to consider the recommendations made by the IRP. The determination whether to adopt the proposals contained in the IRP are a matter for Council. Full Council may be minded to adopt the proposals in full or in part. Full Council may determine to delay implementation of the proposals to a later date, or to acknowledge receipt of the proposals and determine not to implement.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Full Council are requested to consider the IRP report and determine whether the Panel’s recommendations in full or part be implemented. If the recommendations are approved an implementation date of 1st July 2022 is suggested.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1. As detailed in Appendix B, there would be an increase of £128,671 on current SRA if the IRP’s recommendations are implemented in full over a 12-month period.

7.1.2. In addition to those detailed in Appendix B, allowance is made in the IRP report for the following sums –

Scrutiny Panel Chair's Fund - £13,230 (IRP recommendation 8)
Licensing Panel Chair's Fund - £10,000 (IRP recommendation 11)
Independent Persons - £400/meeting (IRP recommendation 16)

7.1.3. It should be noted that it is being recommended that should Full Council determine to approve the IRP's recommendations in full or part that any increases be effective from 1st July 2022.

7.1.4. Any increase in costs as a result of approval of the IRP recommendations in full, or in part, will be met from within the overall council resources.

7.2. **Legal and Governance**

7.2.1. The review was undertaken within the regulations laid down by statute. Full Council are required to consider the outcome of the review process and give appropriate consideration of the recommendations made. Full Council have final responsibility for determination of this matter and whether to approve the recommendations made in full or part.

7.2.2. The IRP are recommending in their report that following the outcome of the current Boundary Review process, Full Council may wish to reconvene an IRP to consider what if any the implications of the outcome of the Boundary Review Process may have on the local authority (IRP Recommendation 19).

7.3. **Relevant Policies and Plans**

7.3.1. The preparation and approval process for the Members' Allowance Scheme is governed by statute and the approved Scheme included within the Council's Constitution.

7.4. **Risk**

7.4.1. No specific issues relating to this report.

7.5. **Consultation**

7.5.1. Consultation with councillors and senior officers was requested by the IRP. All councillors were invited to submit written representations. The IRP indicated that it was also willing to accept telephone or virtual meeting representations.

7.5.2. By the close of the consultation period, the IRP had received 6 written representations from councillors, had met with the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Council, the senior statutory officers of the Council and held a virtual meeting with two other councillors and conducted a telephone interview with a third councillor.

7.6. **Equality Implications**

7.6.1. The Council was keen to ensure that councillors who have childcare or other caring responsibilities are not disadvantaged from fully participating in council activities. The IRP was asked to review the current annual limit of £6,500 and consider whether this allowance should be increased to ensure that it met the requirements of the Living Wage criteria. The IRP received no representations on this issue and are recommending that the currently agreed criteria stand.

7.7. **Climate Impact**

7.7.1. No specific issues relating to this report.

7.8. **Community Impact**

7.8.1. No specific issues relating to this report.

7.9. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.9.1. No specific issues relating to this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. [North Northamptonshire Council Constitution – Part 8.6 Scheme of Members' Allowances.](#)