

Open Report on behalf of David O'Connor, Executive Director Performance & Governance

Report to:

County Council

Date:

21 February 2014

Subject:

Independent Remuneration Panel

Summary:

This report presents the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) convened in 2013 and a revised Scheme of Members Allowances for 2014-18 that implements relevant recommendations.

In addition, the IRP made recommendations to be implemented before the next IRP is convened in 2017.

Recommendation(s):

1. To consider the IRP report and recommendations.
2. To agree or amend the proposed Scheme of Members Allowances for 2014-18
3. To agree to compile role descriptions for all roles covered by the Scheme to inform the next IRP in autumn 2017.

1. Background

The County Council sets a Scheme of Members' Allowances and expenses in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ('the 2003 Regulations') and other relevant legislation.

The 2003 Regulations require that an Independent Review Panel (IRP) is convened to make recommendations to the Council. The Council is required to consider any IRP report and recommendations before setting a scheme but is not required to accept their recommendations.

The previous IRP met in early 2010 and reported to Council in May 2010 with further consideration in May 2011. Their recommendations were effectively not implemented by Council so the County Council's Scheme has not been significantly changed since before 2009 when the Council declined to raise allowances in line with the Consumer Price Index due to the economic downturn.

The IRP was convened again in October 2013. Their report, findings and recommendations are in Appendix A.

The table below shows the IRP recommendations and actions and how they have been incorporated into a draft Scheme of Allowances for 2014-18 attached as Appendix B.

Council must vote to adopt a Scheme each year. If the recommendations here are agreed then the vote for each of the next three years could, for example, be to roll forward this Scheme by applying the indexing provisions contained within it.

IRP 2013 Recommendation	Action taken / needed
Simplify the Scheme of Allowances	Draft Scheme is less than half the length of the 2013-14 Scheme. Requirements for travel and subsistence expenses linked to HMRC rates.
Implement Role Descriptions for all allowances	Recommendation to develop these in this report
Increase in Basic Allowance	Recommended increase incorporated in draft Scheme
Changes in Special Responsibility Allowances	Recommended changes incorporated in draft Scheme
Indexing –link allowances to local government 'green book' pay awards	Recommended changes incorporated in draft Scheme
Approved duties – simplify the definition	Single simplified definition in draft Scheme
Dependant's Carers' Allowance – investigate whether an alternative could be less onerous but continue to provide adequate financial controls.	Draft Scheme recommends link to Minimum Wage and payment based on receipts.
Broadband provision – reflect policy change in the Scheme	Incorporated in draft Scheme
Lunches at Council – replace with buffet	Incorporated in draft Scheme

All of the above are implemented in the revised Scheme that is presented to the meeting except the recommendation on role descriptions. Council is requested to agree that recommendation separately.

2. Conclusion

The Council is required to convene the IRP and has done so. The IRP has made recommendations that the Council must take into account when setting a Scheme of Members' Allowances.

3. Legal Comments:

Legal requirements are covered in the body of the main report and in Appendix A.

4. Resource Comments:

Provision for the additional costs is built into the recommended budget for 2014-15.

5. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

n/a

c) Scrutiny Comments

The proposals have been considered by the working group currently reviewing the Consitution. They welcomed the simplification of the Scheme. Comments to aid clarification have been implemented in the Scheme put forward to this meeting.

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

The IRP considered the impact of being a Councillor on Members with young children or other dependants and and proposed amendments to how that is covered by the Scheme.

6. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	IRP Report and Recommendations
Appendix B	Proposed Scheme of Members' Allowances 2014-18

7. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by David O'Connor, who can be contacted on 01522 552316 or david.oconnor@lincolnshire.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank