

## **LCC Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations for 2018 onwards**

### **Purpose**

The County Council has commissioned the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations for 2018 onwards as required by relevant legislation - the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 1991, and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 and 2003. This paper sets out the IRP's findings and recommendations to the County Council.

### **Background**

A full review of the Members' Allowances Scheme was last conducted in 2014. However, the IRP was also convened in 2017 to consider the new roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Panels and to agree on recommendations relating to the allocation and level of Special Responsibility Allowances for these roles following a recent review of the Council's scrutiny structure.

Following two IRP resignations, a recruitment process was undertaken towards the end of 2017 to recruit to these positions and bring the Panel back up to its full complement of five members. Two candidates were selected and were confirmed by the meeting of the County Council on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

### **Allowances for 2018-19**

#### **Approach**

The IRP met informally during December to consider the upcoming Review and to determine how it would be conducted. It was agreed that the views of serving councillors should be sought on the suitability of the current scheme and that these views should be elicited either via e-mail to a dedicated IRP e-mail account or through face-to-face interview. Councillors were duly contacted and invited to contribute.

On 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018 the IRP was convened at the County Offices in Lincoln to undertake its review including the consideration of written submissions from councillors, the undertaking of face-to-face interviews with councillors and discussions with relevant officers of the Council. The IRP was also able to consider the content of role descriptions that had previously been produced for all those roles attracting a Special Responsibility Allowance.

Based on the evidence and information presented to it, the IRP considered a number of specific areas in detail. The key elements of these discussions and, where applicable, any formal recommendation, are outlined by section below.

#### Index-linking of allowances

The Panel reflected on the current level of the Basic Allowance of £10,425.50 and on the index-linking that had previously been recommended and agreed by the County Council. The IRP noted that the current index-linking for basic allowances, special responsibility allowances and co-opted members' allowances is the average % increase in pay for employees covered by the National

Joint Council for Local Government Services for the previous 12 months (usually referred to as 'Green Book' employees). Following discussions with councillors, the IRP felt that although councillors and officers were acknowledged as separate entities, the two were intrinsically linked and there was no evidence to suggest that a change to the current 'green book' indexing was necessary.

### **Recommendation**

**The IRP recommends that the Members' Allowances Scheme continues to be linked to the average % increase in pay for employees covered by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services for the last 12 months.**

### Recognition of travel time

During a number of the face-to-face interviews and included within two of the three written submissions there was reference to the extended travel time that some councillors were faced with to reach County Offices in Lincoln. It was observed that Lincolnshire was a large County and that those councillors living in or close to Lincoln could access County Offices relatively quicker than those councillors on the coast or in the north or south of the County. Some councillors could be faced with a round trip of three hours or more when visiting County Offices.

The IRP heard differing opinions on the topic, with some councillors expressing a view that those living some distance away should be compensated for the additional time lost in travel. Other councillors felt that travel time was just another part of their councillor duty and that they had taken this issue into account before standing for election. Based on the weight of evidence received the IRP was not inclined to propose any additional remuneration to compensate councillors for travel time.

### Council Chief Whip

The Panel was advised that the Council's Monitoring Officer had recently reviewed the role description of the Council Chief Whip in light of a need for the activity of the post holder to transcend the traditional concept of instilling discipline amongst the membership.

The IRP was told about the sensitivity and cross-cutting nature of the role and that the Chief Whip was expected to work between the political groups to encourage a collaborative approach to achieve positive outcomes. The role was viewed as a political one but not always party political.

The broadening of the scope of the role has included leading on projects to benefit the whole Council, such as the revision of the petition scheme and the Council's approach to engagement with the community. The role now also includes attention to the wellbeing of councillors to ensure they are able to perform their role to the best of their abilities.

## **Recommendation**

**Based on the evidence presented the IRP considers the role of Council Chief Whip to be a senior one within the Council ranks and recommends that this is reflected in the establishment of a new Allowance Band equating to an annual Special Responsibility Allowance of £10,000. On a point of administration the IRP also recommends that the Allowance Bands quoted within the Members' Allowances Scheme are consequently renumbered to reflect the inclusion of this new Band.**

### Councillor Development Group Chairman

The IRP considered the role of the Chairman of the Councillor Development Group and received evidence from senior councillors and relevant officers. The IRP was provided with detail of the oversight responsibilities of the Councillor Development Group and its pivotal role in co-ordinating all aspects of the development offer to councillors. It was established that the role of the Councillor Development Group had expanded over the last year to incorporate a significant e-learning package for councillors to help address the challenge of providing learning opportunities in a large county like Lincolnshire.

The IRP recognised that the Chairman had an essential role to play in the success of the development offer and that the Chairman would be a key part of energising the membership and innovating different learning opportunities.

## **Recommendation**

**Given the significant contribution that good quality learning and development opportunities makes to the ultimate success of an organisation the IRP recommends that a Special Responsibility Allowance should be applied to the role of Chairman of the Councillor Development Group and that this should be at the current Allowance Band 8 equating currently to £4,170.25.**

### Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Board

During the current review it was recognised that a Special Responsibility Allowance had not been applied to the role of Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Panel considered the role descriptions of both positions and considered evidence from councillors and officers in reaching its conclusion.

## **Recommendation**

**The IRP recognises the importance of the Health and Wellbeing Board, its contribution to the local health community and the formal decision-making nature of its responsibilities. It is therefore recommended that a Special Responsibility Allowance at Band 4 should be applied to the role of Chairman and a Special Responsibility Allowance at Band 9 should be applied to the role of Vice-Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board.**

## Scrutiny Panels

When setting the level of allowance for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Panels in 2017 the IRP agreed that this decision would be reviewed within 12 months and to coincide with this wider review of the Members' Allowances Scheme. Evidence was received from a number of councillors involved with the Scrutiny Panels about the activity undertaken to date and the significant response to the engagement over the Council's policy on street lighting across the County. Based on the evidence received the IRP is content to keep the allowances for Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Panels at the levels set in 2017.

## Other issues

The IRP received evidence regarding the role of **Executive Support Councillors** at the County Council. The IRP gained a greater understanding of the various facets of the role and how the role would be defined locally through agreement between each Executive Councillor and Executive Support Councillor. It was recognised as an important role and also one that could fluctuate between each incumbent in terms of profile, responsibility and activity dependent on the requirements of each portfolio.

The Panel considered the role of **Shadow Executive Councillor** and its value to the Council. Members of the Panel felt the evidence presented did not warrant a change in this band of allowance.

During discussions the Panel considered the practice of limiting councillors to only one Special Responsibility Allowance. It was agreed that retaining this limit enabled more councillors to have the opportunity to undertake additional duties on behalf of the Council.

A revised Members' Allowances Scheme incorporating the recommendations of the IRP is attached to this report.

The Independent Remuneration Panel:

Peter Clay (Chairman)

Colin Childs

Phillip Knowles

John Marsh

Richard Quirk

January 2018