

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Item No.</b>
<b>Open / Closed</b>	

<b>Meeting:</b>	Standards Committee
<b>Meeting date:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
<b>Title of report:</b>	Members Allowance Scheme
<b>Report by:</b>	Jacqui Dennis, Director Law & Governance
<b>Decision Type:</b>	N/A Report for information only
<b>Ward(s) to which report relates</b>	(Not applicable)

### **Executive Summary:**

This report sets out the terms of reference and methodology for previous Independent Review Panel (IRP) to assist in determining the terms of reference and methodology for the IRP 2024/2025.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to give consideration to the terms of reference to the Independent Remuneration Panel and the methodology for the review.

### **Background**

The current Members allowance scheme was agreed by Members in November 2021 and was implemented in May 2022. The current scheme sets out the allowances payable to Members including a basic allowance, additional responsibility allowances, carers and travel and subsistence allowances. The scheme also set out the amounts that can be paid to co - optees and Independent Persons. [Updated Members Allowance Scheme May 2021.pdf](#)

It is important the allowance scheme is regularly reviewed. The level of allowances payable under this scheme is increased annually at the same rate as the pay award agreed by the Joint Council for Local Government Services. Indexation runs for four years (2022-2026), which is the maximum length of time permitted by the 2003 Regulations.

All Councils are required to convene their IRP and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their Members' Allowances Scheme. They must 'pay regard' to their IRPs recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme. It is this requirement that provides an opportunity for IRPs to publicly scrutinise their Councils' allowances schemes and enhance public accountability.

These regulations, which arise out of the relevant provisions contained in the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to establish and maintain an advisory Independent [Members] Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances on a periodic basis. Bury has a panel which is made up of Dr Declan Hall, Andrew Roberts and John Thompson.

It is proposed that the IRP review the current scheme with a view to reporting back to Members summer 2025.

The review in 2021 considered the following -

- To make recommendations to the Council as to the amount of Basic Allowance that should be payable to its elected members.
- To make recommendations to the Council about the responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance and the amount of such an allowance.
- To make recommendations to the Council about other allowances including care of children and other dependents, travel and phone.
- To make recommendations to the Council about the level of allowance paid to co-opted members of the Council's Audit Committee and independent members of the Standards Committee.
- To make recommendations on the level of allowance paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the purpose of meeting the expenses of those offices (ie the Mayoral Allowance).
- To make recommendations on the payment of member(s) appointed to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in respect of duties and responsibilities undertaken as a member of the GMCA, and if so to specify the amount of any such allowance.
- To consider the level of Travelling, utility and Subsistence Allowances for members of Independent Education Appeals Panels.

Are there matters which Members would like the IRP to consider. In addition to the above the IRP considered carers allowances. Child care and caring responsibilities have been seen as a barrier to members of the public wishing to become a Councillor. This Council has recently adopted a maternity/paternity leave policy to supplement the members allowance scheme.

The methodology for the earlier review was as follows -

- The Panel seeks the views of Members both written and oral, with an opportunities for selected Members to meet the Panel
- Factual Briefings from Officers
- The Statutory Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances 2006.
- The 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations
- Roles and Responsibilities as contained within the Council's Constitution
- That recommendations should conform to existing legislation and anticipate likely future legislation so far as possible.
- The requirement for their report and recommended changes to the scheme of allowances to be easy to understand and adequately justifiable to the electorate. To assist in its deliberations, as background information it is suggested that the Panel be provided with comparative information from other GM authorities.
- A questionnaire was sent to all Members to obtain their views.

Would Members like to recommend changes to this methodology. On the earlier review a number of Members were interview including Leaders, Chairs of Committees and a cross section of Members not holding areas of additional responsibility.

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#### **Background papers:**

[Agenda item - REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - Bury Council](#) – November 2021.