
MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2014/15

To: **Council – 24 April 2014**

Main Portfolio Area: **Corporate and Regulatory Services**

By: **Harvey Patterson, Corporate and Regulatory Services Manager**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: This report will give Council the opportunity to agree a scheme of Members Allowances for the 2014/15 financial year

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This paper gives Council the opportunity to adopt a scheme of Members allowances for the 2014/15 financial year.

2.0 Draft 2014/15 scheme of Members allowances

- 2.1 Democratic Services have created a draft 2014/15 scheme of Members allowances that is very similar to the existing 2013/14 scheme of Member allowances; this draft scheme is attached at Annex 1 to this report.
- 2.2 The draft 2014/15 scheme of Members allowances does not change the level of basic allowance, special responsibility allowances or mileage rates from the 2013/14 rates. The level of dependent carers allowance has been increased in line with the rise in the national minimum wage that took place in October 2013
- 2.3 It has not yet been possible to update subsistence rates as South East Employers have yet to publish rates for 2014/15. It is suggested that rates for 2014/15 are presented to Council for consideration when the new rates have been published.
- 2.4 If Members amend the basic allowance or special responsibility allowances, it will be necessary to adjust any relevant payments Members have already received for April, as well as payments going forward.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 Council can choose
- a) To adopt the draft 2014/15 Members allowances scheme as set out at annex 1 to this report and to refer the scheme to EKJIRP for them to consider, with any amendments being reported back to Council.
 - b) To suggest amendments to the draft 2014/15 Members allowances scheme and to adopt the amended allowances scheme and to refer the scheme to EKJIRP for them to consider, with any amendments being reported back to Council.
- 3.2 It should be noted that there is provision within the budget for the rates of Members' Allowances to be increased by up to 1% for the 2014/15 financial year.

4.0 Corporate Implications

4.1 Financial and VAT

- 4.1.1 If Members agree the draft scheme of Members allowances as outlined at annex 1 to this report, then there will be no direct financial implications as a result of this report, as these proposals can be contained within the agreed budget for 2014/15.
- 4.1.2 If Members agree to increase the rate of Members' Allowances by up to 1%, then there will be no direct financial implications as a result of this report, as these proposals can be contained within the agreed budget for 2014/15.
- 4.1.3 If Members agree to increase the rate of Members' Allowances by more than 1%, then an additional budget would need to be identified to cover the increase above 1%.

4.2 Legal

- 4.2.1 The Council is required to have regard to the recommendations of EKJIRP in making a scheme of allowances.

4.3 Corporate

- 4.3.1 The level of allowances may be seen as both impacting on the public's perception of the Council and a factor in making public services as a Councillor attractive to a broad range of potential candidates.

4.4 Equalities

4.4.1 Assessing Relevance

- 4.4.2 There are no direct equalities implications to this report as although there are Councillors from the protected groups, the allowances scheme applies to all Councillors equally.
- 4.4.3 Although it does not directly relate to protected groups, the draft scheme contains the ability to pay a dependent carers allowance to Councillors. This contributes to aims 1 and 2 of the Equality Act as it removes barriers to Councillors standing who have relatives that may be in need of dependent care.

5.0 Recommendation(s)

5.1 Council should either:

- a) Adopt the draft 2014/15 Members allowances scheme as set out at annex 1 to this report and to refer the scheme to EKJIRP for them to consider, with any comments from EKJIRP being reported back to Council.
- b) Suggest amendments to the draft 2014/15 Members allowances scheme and to adopt the amended allowances scheme and to refer the scheme to EKJIRP for them to consider, with any comments from EKJIRP being reported back to Council. It should be noted that there is provision within the budget for the rates of Members' Allowances to be increased by up to 1% for the 2014/15 financial year.

6.0 Decision Making Process

- 6.1 It is for Council to agree the Members' Allowances Scheme. However, any changes to the scheme would need to be the subject of consultation with the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

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Reporting to:	Sue McGonigal, Chief Executive

Annex List

Annex 1	Draft 2014/15 Members' Allowances Scheme
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Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Sarah Martin, Financial Services Manager and Deputy S.151 Officer
Legal	Harvey Patterson, Corporate and Regulatory Services Manager