
MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2016/17

To: **Council – 4 February 2016**

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

By: **Tim Howes – Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: This report will give Council the opportunity to agree a scheme of Members Allowances for the 2016/17 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 2016/17 financial year.

2.0 Draft 2016/17 scheme of Members allowances

2.1 After consulting with all the Group Leaders, Democratic Services have created a draft 2016/17 scheme of Members allowances that is very similar to the existing 2015/16 scheme of Member allowances; this draft scheme is attached at Annex 1 to this report.

2.2 The draft 2016/17 scheme of Members allowances does not change the level of basic allowance, special responsibility allowances or mileage rates from the 2015/16 rates. The level of dependent carers allowance has been increased in line with the rise in the national minimum wage to £6.70 that took place in October 2015.

2.3 The only changes to the scheme are; to update Officer job titles, removing reference to withholding allowances for suspended members as since the Localism Act 2011 members are no longer able to be suspended, removing a reference to a committee that no longer exists and updating Schedule 2 to reflect the changes made to the lists of outside bodies through the 2015/16 municipal year. These minor amendments are shown in track changes in the draft scheme at Annex 1 to the report.

2.4 Although the consultation with Group Leaders indicated that no increase was preferred, there is provision within the draft budget (to be agreed elsewhere on this agenda) for the rates of Members' Allowances to be increased by 1% for the 2016/17 financial year.

3.0 Options

3.1 Council can choose

a) To adopt the draft 2016/17 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 2016/17 Members allowances scheme such as increasing the level of basic allowance, special responsibility allowances or mileage rates by 1%, amending subsistence rates or amending travel allowances 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.

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 the proposals would be contained within the draft budget for 2016/17.
- 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 would be contained within the draft budget for 2016/17.
- 4.1.3 If Members agree to increase the rate of Members' Allowances by more than 1%, then an additional budget or savings would need to be identified in the draft budget 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

- 5.1 To adopt the draft 2016/17 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.

6.0 Decision Making Process

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

Contact Officer:	Nicholas Hughes, Committee Services Manager
Reporting to:	Tim Howes Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex List

Annex 1	Draft 2016/17 Members' Allowances Scheme
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Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Matthew Sanham, Finance Manager (Service Support)
Legal	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer