
MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2016/17

To: **Council – 31 March 2016**

Main Portfolio Area: **Corporate Governance**

By: **Committee Services Manager**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: This report gives Members the feedback from the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (EKJIRP) on the amendments to the 2016/17 Members' Allowances scheme.

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The Council is required to have regard to the recommendations of the EKJIRP in making a scheme of allowances. The 2016/17 scheme of Members Allowances was agreed by Council subject to approval by the EKJIRP at its meeting on the 4 February 2015.

2.0 East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel Review of 2016/17 Members' Allowances Scheme

2.1 Following approval at Council on 4 February 2016, the 2016/17 Members' Allowances scheme was reviewed by the EKJIRP at its meeting on 29 February 2016. The EKJIRP agreed the following motion:

“That it be recommended to Thanet District Council that the Members' Allowances Scheme 2016/17 be approved subject to a change for the index linking of the Dependent Carers Allowance from the National Minimum Wage to the National Living Wage of £7.20 per hour.”

2.2 It is for Council to decide upon whether to accept or reject this change; however it is important that Council consider a number of factors before doing so. There is sufficient funding within the Members Allowance Budget to allow for the changing of the index linking for dependents carers allowance from the national minimum wage to the national living wage. In addition, Democratic Services would recommend to Council that this change is made as the national minimum wage is being replaced by the national living wage and so would be a more appropriate indicator.

3.0 Other Changes

3.1 In addition to this change the Leader has requested a small change to the allowances scheme. This would be the removal of the words “or commercial organisations” from section e) of paragraph 1.20 under explanation of approved duty. The Leader has brought to Democratic Services' attention that there have a number of occasions where he has represented the interests of the district in interviews with commercial organisations such as the BBC. These have not been in the district and he has not been able to receive recompense for those via the current allowances scheme. Whilst a change could not be applied retrospectively, any future such meetings would be

covered.

3.0 Corporate Implications

3.1 Financial and VAT

3.1.1 The Members Allowances budget for 2016/17 had provision within it for a 1% rise in allowances; however this option of an increase was not taken up at the meeting of the 4 February Council meeting. Therefore, the change proposed at paragraph 2.1 would be able to be contained within existing budgets. This is especially the case given that there were no claims made for dependents carers allowance in 2015/16.

3.2 Legal

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

3.3 Corporate

3.3.1 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.

3.4 Equalities

3.4.1 Assessing Relevance

3.4.2 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.

3.4.3 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.

3.4.4 Equality Impact Assessment

3.4.5 N/A

4.0 Recommendation(s)

4.1 That Council agree the 2016/17 member's allowances scheme with:

- a) The change for the index linking of the Dependent Carers Allowance from the National Minimum Wage to the National Living Wage of £7.20 per hour.
- b) The removal of the words "or commercial organisations" from section e) of paragraph 1.20 under explanation of approved duty

5.0 Decision Making Process

5.1 It is for Council to agree the Members' Allowances Scheme; however Council must have regard to the views of EKJIRP when making a scheme.

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

Annex List

Annex 1	Minutes of the EKJIRP meeting of 29 February 2016
Annex 2	Draft TDC Members Allowances Scheme for 2016/17

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
None	

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Matthew Sanham, Finance Manager
Legal	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer