

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Council

**DATE:** 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Janine Jenkinson – Senior Democratic Services Officer  
**(For all Enquiries)** (07511 048406)

**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR DECISION**

#### **REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To present the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in respect of the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

Council is requested to:

- (a) consider the Independent Remuneration Panel's report and recommendations (attached at Appendix A), a summary of which is set out in paragraph 5.1 of this report, and to resolve what action should be taken in respect of these recommendations; and
- (b) resolve that the agreed recommendations be implemented from April 2021, following consideration as part of the Council's forward budget-setting process for 2021-2022 municipal year.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

The Members' Allowances Scheme helps to ensure that as many people from a wide range of backgrounds, experience and skills can serve as councillors and that they are not barred from standing due to financial pressures. In addition, the Scheme aims to ensure that councillors are not financially disadvantaged by serving as Members. By attracting and enabling people of the right calibre to stand for election the Council will be able to further its key priorities effectively.

4. **Other Implications**

Financial

The Council leadership does not wish to implement the recommendations during the current year. Recommendations agreed by Full Council will be implemented from April 2021, following consideration as part of the Council's forward budget-setting process for 2021-2022 municipal year.

## Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the 2003 Regulations) require local authorities to make a Scheme of Allowances for their Members and to establish and maintain an Independent Panel to make recommendations to the Council about the Scheme in respect of which it must have regard before amending the Scheme.

There are no human rights implications and there are no significant staffing implications other than amending the Members' Allowances Scheme and implementing any resultant changes to allowance payments made to members.

### 5. **Supporting Information**

An Independent Remuneration Panel (the IRP) was convened for Slough Borough Council to advise the Council on its current Members' allowances scheme, with particular reference to the Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for the Cabinet Members on the Commercial Sub-Committee and Vice Chairs of the Scrutiny Panels.

The IRP was asked to convene (remotely) as soon as possible, with a view to its report being submitted to the Council as soon as practicable but by July 2020 at the latest. However, in view of the current Covid-19 situation – November Council was agreed as the revised date for the report.

The IRP was convened under *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)* (the 2003 Regulations). These regulations require all local authorities to set up and maintain an Independent Members' Remuneration Panel to periodically review and provide advice on Members' allowances. All Councils are required to convene their Remuneration Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their allowances scheme and they must 'pay regard' to the IRP's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

- 5.1 The recommendations contained within the IRP's report are set out below for ease of reference:

#### **Recalibrating the Basic Allowance 2020**

The IRP has chosen to recommend the recalibrated the Basic Allowance as:

- It is methodologically robust and replicates and updates the original basis of the current Basic Allowance.
- While it is less than the benchmarked mean Basic Allowance in the SEE Survey and CIPFA benchmarking groups and somewhat higher than the mean paid in the other Berkshire Unitary Councils it is approximately mid-way between the two Berkshire Councils comparable to Slough, namely Bracknell Forest (£8,687) and Windsor and Maidenhead (£8,143).

The IRP recommends that the Basic Allowance is set at £8,438.

## **Members appointed to the Commercial Sub-Committee**

The IRP was asked to specifically consider the impact of the Commercial Sub-Committee on the workload and responsibilities of members appointed to it.

During the review the IRP heard that it was a reasonable expectation for all Cabinet Members to sit on and occasionally chair outside bodies, partnership organisations and other stakeholder bodies. Moreover, while the Commercial Sub-Committee is responsible for focusing on and overseeing the Council's commercial activities the broader risk is being held by the whole Cabinet. The IRP recognised that there may well be discrepancies in the workloads and responsibilities held by individual Cabinet Members but it also recognises that some of this is a case of 'swings and roundabouts' – what may be a smaller portfolio currently could become larger in the future depending on central government priorities for local government and the fallout of the on-going Coronavirus crisis.

As such, the Panel took the view that the SRAs for all the Executive Members needed to be revised and recommended the following:

### **The Leader of the Council**

The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Leader is set at £21,939.

### **The Deputy Leader**

The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Deputy Leader is set at £15,357.

### **The other Lead (Cabinet) Members (6)**

The IRP recommends that the SRA for the other Lead (Cabinet) Members is set at £12,066.

### **Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Panels (3)**

The IRP is not recommending that the Vice Chairs of the three Scrutiny Panels are paid an SRA.

## **Issues Arising**

### **Members sitting on the Licensing Sub-Committees**

The IRP is not recommending that Members sitting on the Licensing Sub-Committee are paid an SRA.

### **Co-optees' Allowance**

The IRP recommends no change to the Co-optees' Allowance.

### **The Dependants' Carers' Allowance**

The IRP recommends the current annual cap annual cap of £520 on the DCA is raised to £1,040 per year.

The IPR recommends that for clarification purposes it would assist potential claimants if at the end of paragraph 9. (4) (Dependants Carers' Allowance) of the allowances scheme that the following qualifier was inserted –

“The DCA can be claimed for care provided by informal carers as long as it is receipted”.

6. **Conclusion**

The Council is asked to consider the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel set out in the attached report (Appendix A) and to agree what action should be taken in respect of them.

7. **Appendices Attached**

A - Independent Remuneration Panel Report (July 2020)

8. **Background Papers**

None