



**Report Reference Number: C/20/14**

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**To: Council**  
**Date: 18 February 2021**  
**Ward(s) Affected: All**  
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**Title: Selby District Council's Members' Allowances Scheme – The Independent Remuneration Panel's (IRP) Recommendations to Council**

### **Summary:**

Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, all local authorities must convene an Independent Remuneration Panel to review and make recommendations on Members' Allowances. The local authority must then consider the recommendations of the Panel before agreeing or amending their Members' Allowances Scheme.

The last review of the Members' Allowances Scheme was undertaken in late 2016 / early 2017. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 states that if a scheme is referenced to an index (the current Members scheme is indexed to the National Joint Council (NJC) pay award) then it needs to be reviewed no later than four years from when the scheme was introduced.

In light of the above, a Panel has been convened and a review undertaken, and the recommendations of the Panel are outlined in this report.

### **Recommendations:**

**To consider the following recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel with regard to the Members Allowances Scheme:**

- i) To amalgamate the ICT allowance with the basic allowance resulting in the ICT allowance also being subject to the annual increase with the NJC pay award however retain the wording**

**relating to guidelines for Members on the usage of their ICT device.**

- ii) To retain all of the special responsibility allowances as currently weighted and outlined in the Members' Allowances Scheme.**
- iii) To incorporate wording under the Travel and Subsistence part of the scheme to allow non-Councillors appointed by the Council to outside bodies to claim mileage or travel costs for attending meetings where representing the Council provided such expenses are not re-imbursed by the respective Outside Body.**
- iv) To retain the Dependents' / Child Carers' allowance as currently worded in the Members' Allowances' Scheme.**
- v) To retain the Chairman's and Vice Chairman's allowance as currently worded in the Members' Allowances' Scheme.**
- vi) To index the overall Members' Allowances Scheme to match local government pay settlements using the NJC annual pay award until the next review of the scheme.**

## **Reasons for recommendation**

To comply with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, all local authorities must convene an Independent Remuneration Panel to review and make recommendations on Members' Allowances. The local authority must then consider the recommendations of the Panel before agreeing or amending their Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 1.2 Selby District Council's previous scheme was agreed in 2001. It was then reviewed again in late 2016 / early 2017 which was the first time it had been revised since the reduction in the number of Councillors from 41 to 31 following the completion of the review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2015.
- 1.3 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 states that if a scheme is referenced to an index (the

current Members scheme is indexed to the NJC pay award) then it needs to be reviewed no later than four years from when the scheme was introduced.

- 1.4 Due to the above, a panel was appointed and have undertaken a review of the allowances scheme. They have outlined recommendations for consideration by Council.

## **2. The Report**

- 2.1 An Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to undertake the review was established comprising of the following individuals:

- Wanda Stables – Independent Standards Member to the Council.
- Gillian Ivey – Former Deputy Leader of Selby District Council
- Richard Stiff - Former local authority Chief Executive, current Chair of the Selby College Corporation and a member of the College's remuneration committee.

- 2.2 The terms of reference of the Panel which outlined the areas and allowances it considered is attached at Appendix A. In addition, the Panel also considered the following:

- Allowances schemes from authorities comparable to Selby District Council including local authorities in North Yorkshire and other local authorities across the country.
- The views of Selby District Council Members.

- 2.3 The Panel held two meetings with the first on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and the second on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021. During its second meeting, the Panel agreed its recommendations which are included in this report.

### **2.4 Basic Allowance**

- 2.4.1 Selby District Council's current basic allowance payable to all Councillors under the current Members' Allowance Scheme is £4,584.16 as outlined in Appendix B. The Scheme is aligned with the NJC pay award therefore it increases annually as the same figure as the pay award.

- 2.4.2 Following a benchmarking exercise with both North Yorkshire neighbouring authorities and comparable authorities across the country, the Panel reviewed the benchmarking data presented to them and felt that the basic allowance for the Members of Selby District Council was considered to be in line with the average when compared against the data they were presented with indicating

that the Council's current level of basic allowance was fair. This benchmarking data has been attached at Appendix C.

- 2.4.3 In considering the information, the Panel took into account the size, decision making structure, population, type of indexing and number of Councillors of the other authorities. The Panel noted the allowances aligned with the NJC national pay award and felt this assisted with a fair figure for the scheme. The Panel also noted the comparisons of the basic allowance against per head of population in the benchmarking data and noted that the figure for Selby was average when compared to other authorities.
- 2.4.4 The Panel received written submissions from Members through a survey undertaken regarding the scheme. Members provided comments on a number of different elements concerning the scheme including hours worked and their opinions on the scheme. The Panel considered all of the comments received and noted the wide range of submissions concerning hours spent on Council business ranging from 6 to over 30. After taking all information into account, the Panel recommended the scheme should remain at the current figure and continue to be aligned with the NJC annual pay award.

## **2.5 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)**

- 2.5.1 In considering the SRAs, the Panel used the same benchmarking data they had considered for the basic allowance and submissions from the Members survey. The Panel considered the different roles awarded an SRA including the Leader, Deputy Leader, Executive Members, Committee Chairs and the Opposition Group Leader included the workload and responsibilities assigned to the roles.
- 2.5.2 Alongside the benchmarking data, the Panel also considered the number of Council meetings that had been undertaken for the previous four years. These included private meetings, pre meetings and site visits in relation to Planning. During their discussion, the Panel considered the comprehensive review that had been undertaken in 2017 and felt that the allowance weightings given at the time of the last review were still appropriate and correct. The Panel also noted that the SRA figures had increased in line with the NJC pay award and recommended that the figures should remain the same and continue to be aligned with the NJC living pay award.

## **2.6 Dependents' / Child Carers' Allowance**

- 2.6.1 The Panel were supportive of this allowance and felt it should remain in place with no further changes required.

## **2.7 Members' ICT Allowance**

2.7.1 The Panel noted that Members had been provided with ICT devices since the last review which had contributed to more Members moving to electronic working. This had been particularly important during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Panel were supportive of the allowance and felt it met its requirement in allowing Members to purchase consumables or use the allowance as a contribution to other costs such as broadband.

2.7.2 The Panel queried the separate allowance in relation to ICT and it was confirmed that allowance did not have to sit separately according to the legislation. The Panel therefore recommended this allowance be amalgamated into the basic allowance which would then also allow it to be increased combined with the basic allowance by the NJC pay award.

## **2.8 Members' Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

2.8.1 The Panel were satisfied with the current situation with the travel and subsistence scheme with it being aligned to the officers scheme and felt no further changes regarding this were required. They noted that not all Members claimed mileage for attending meetings however this was the decision of the respective Member.

2.8.2 The Panel highlighted that the Council did appoint a number of external non-Councillors as Council representatives to outside bodies and felt it was unfair that these individuals were not able to claim mileage and/or travel costs in attending meetings representing the Council. The Panel therefore felt this should be incorporated into the current scheme so these individuals could claim mileage and travel costs.

## **2.9 The Chairman's Allowance**

The Panel were satisfied with the structure of the Chairman's allowance and the budget for their year in office and felt no further changes were required.

## **3. Implications**

### **3.1 Legal Implications**

3.1.1 The allowances scheme has been reviewed under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

### **3.2 Financial Implications**

3.2.1 The IRP recommendations do not add additional costs to the allowances scheme however the recommendation to keep the scheme aligned with the NJC pay award will mean the figures in the scheme would increase by the pay award figure each year.

#### **4. Conclusion**

4.1 Council is asked to consider the recommendations of the IRP in relation to the Members' Allowance Scheme.

#### **5. Background Documents**

None

#### **6. Appendices**

**Appendix A – Terms of Reference**

**Appendix B – Members' Allowances Scheme**

**Appendix C – Benchmarking Data**

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