



Northumberland County Council

COUNCIL

06 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Report of the Director of Law and Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer, Stephen Gerrard

Cabinet Member: Councillor Richard Wearmouth

1. **Purpose of report**

To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) and decide if the recommendations set out in the Panel's report should be adopted.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 **To consider and decide if the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel should be adopted, and commission the Panel to conduct a Full Review of the Members Allowance Scheme.**
- 2.2 **That the Constitution of the Council is updated with a revised Member's Allowance Scheme to reflect any changes approved by Council.**

3. **Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan**

This links with the Achieving Value for Money priority of the Corporate Plan 2023-2026.

4. **Background**

4.1 All Councils are required to convene an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their allowances scheme. Interviews were held with several Cabinet Members, Deputy Cabinet Members and Group Leaders, and to provide a more rounded and transparent approach, a survey was circulated to all 67 Members asking for feedback.

- 4.2 At the meeting of Full Council of the 4 May 2022 the IRP were asked to consider:
1. A more considered and detailed review of the Members' Allowances Scheme;
 2. The Parental Leave Policy adopted by the Council in September 2021 (subject to consideration by the IRP); and,
 3. The provision of payment of broadband / line rental allowances.
- 4.3 This has been done, however a full review of the Member Allowance scheme has not been carried out for approximately ten years and the Leader has requested that the Panel be asked to carry out a full 'root and branch' review immediately following on from consideration of the current report.
- 4.4 The final report of the Panel is attached at Appendix A and its recommendations below will be advertised in the local press.

Decision Options

The following decision options are available for consideration by Council:

Option 1 - Accept all of the recommendations and proposals;

Option 2 - Make amendments to the recommendations; or,

Option 3 - Reject some or all of the recommendations.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The Panel have prepared a report which now needs to be considered, however further work relating to the Members Allowances Scheme needs to be carried out.

5. Implications

Policy	None
Finance and value for money: eg: What are the financial implications and how will this be funded.	Implementation of the Option 1 stated above would result in a cost of £1,582,446 within 2023-24, with the current budget being £1,532,140; this results in a budget shortfall including on costs of £54,743 (full year effect). The current year pressure of £54,743 will be subject to a contingency funding bid, with 2024-25 onwards subject to a recurrent growth bid as part of the budget setting process.
Legal	Contained within the report
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None

Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?" Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	A statutory notice will be placed in a local newspaper giving notice that a report has been received and a summary of the recommendations contained therein.
Carbon reduction	None
Health and Wellbeing	None
Wards	All

6. Background papers

Benchmarking Analysis
 Summary of Survey of Members
 Questions asked at interviews with Members

7. Links to other key reports already published

Northumberland County Council Constitution
 The Local Authority (Members' Allowances (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended)
 Guidance on Member' Allowances for Local Authorities in England (The Guidance)
 Local Government Act 1972
 Northumberland County Council's Members' Allowances Scheme
 Members' Allowances Schemes of regional authorities and statistical neighbours (as defined by CIPFA)
 Northumberland County Council's Parental Leave Policy
 Northumberland County Council's Dependent Carers Policy
 Northumberland County Council's Travel and Subsistence Policy

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law and Governance/Legal	Neil Masson on behalf of Stephen Gerrard

Executive Director	N/A
Chief Executive	Dr Helen Paterson
Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Richard Wearmouth
Executive Director of Finance and Resources/s.151 Officer	Jan Willis

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