

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL –
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES FOR 2016-17 AND THE
MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

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| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillors B Hartnett, Leader and J Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Claire Felton |
| Ward(s) Affected | All |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted | N/A |
| Non-Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Each Council is required by law to have an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) which recommends the level of allowances for Councillors. The Panel is made up of five suitably skilled members of the public who are completely independent of the Borough Council. It also makes recommendations to four other District Councils in Worcestershire. The Panel’s report is enclosed for consideration by the Executive Committee and ultimately by the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to consider the report and recommendations and RECOMMEND to Council

2.1 whether or not to accept the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2016-17;

2.2 having considered the Panel’s report and recommendations, whether or not changes are required to the Council’s scheme of allowances for Members arising from this;

2.3 that the travel allowances section of the Members Allowances scheme be amended to include the following wording regarding the use of taxis:

“The rate for travel by Taxi Cab shall not exceed:

- (i) In cases of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available, the amount of the actual fare and any reasonable gratuity paid, and**
- (ii) In any other case, the amount of the fare for travel by appropriate public transport.”**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 If the Council was to accept the Panel's recommendations in full, the budget for Members' basic and special responsibility allowances for 2015-16 would be approx. £194,500. This would be an increase of £56,500 on the projected total expenditure for the same allowances in the current year.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Council is required to "have regard" to the recommendations of the Panel. However, it is not obliged to agree to them. It can choose to implement them in full or in part, or not to accept them.
- 3.3 The Council is also required to review its scheme of allowances for Councillors on an annual basis. This review usually takes place at the same time as the IRP's report is considered.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.4 Currently the Council's allowances scheme for travel expenses does not include reimbursement of taxi fares. Whilst Councillors would be expected to use the most cost effective form of transport when on Council business – usually public transport - there may be exceptional occasions when using a taxi is reasonable in the circumstances.
- 3.5 It is therefore proposed that appropriate wording is included within the Allowances Scheme, as follows:

"The rate for travel by Taxi Cab shall not exceed:

- (iii) In cases of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available, the amount of the actual fare and any reasonable gratuity paid, and
- (iv) In any other case, the amount of the fare for travel by appropriate public transport."

- 3.6 There are no direct service or operational implications arising from this report. Once the Council has agreed the allowances for 2016-17 Officers will update and publish the Members' Allowances Scheme as appropriate.

Customer/Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 None arising from this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Payments to Councillors can be a high profile issue. The main risks are reputational. However, the Council is transparent about the decisions made on allowances. The Allowances scheme and sums paid to Councillors each year are published on the Council's website.

5. APPENDICES

Report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2016-17.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Members Allowances Scheme – in the Council Constitution at part 18:
<http://moderngovwebpublic.redditchbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=379&MId=2355&Ver=4>

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