

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>9 June 2014</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of Members' Allowances 2014</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Chair of the Members' Allowances Panel</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Proposed Members' Allowances Scheme 2014-15</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of a change to the Members' allowances review timetable for the current year, so that the Members' Allowances Panel's recommendations will be reported to Council in January 2015.
- 1.2 To seek a decision on an appropriate scheme for the payment of allowances in 2014-15, until such time as the recommendations from the current review are considered by the Council.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that
  - (1) The extension to the Members' allowances review timetable for the current review and be noted.
  - (2) Members' Allowances be frozen at the levels detailed in the 2013-14 Scheme, and set out in Appendix 1 until the recommendations from the extended review are considered by Council.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 In order to revise or maintain its Members' Allowances Scheme, the Council is required to have regard to the recommendations of the Members' Allowances Panel. The members of the Panel are: Mr Paul Corcoran (Chair), Mr Laurence King, Mrs Madeleine Townley, and Mrs Dorothy Smith.
- 3.2 In March 2013 the Council agreed to approve the Panel's recommendations to freeze Members' allowances at the rates set in the 2012-13 Scheme for a further year, until the next detailed review took place in 2014, with any changes agreed at that time to be applied to the 2014-15 Scheme.

- 3.3 The Panel began work on the detailed review in December 2014 and Members were asked to complete a questionnaire in January/February 2014. 23 out of 36 Members responded to the questionnaire, which represents a response rate of 64%. The Panel would like to thank those Members who took the time to respond and also to take the opportunity to strongly encourage all Members to respond to the questionnaire in future years as the responses have a significant influence on the proposals and it is important that all Members have a say in their allowances.
- 3.4 The Panel met on 13 February 2014 to consider the responses to the questionnaire and determine the next stage of the review. In light of the responses received and given that the review was intended to be a 'root and branch' consideration the allowances scheme, the Panel decided that it would like to interview as many recipients of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) as possible, in addition to meeting with a number of Members not in receipt of an SRA, in order to carefully explore the responsibilities and time commitment involved in each role. The Panel also undertook to consider in detail the travel, subsistence and carers' allowance elements of the scheme and had previously made a commitment to review the Quedgeley Parish Council allowances scheme in detail.
- 3.5 In view of the amount of work required and the time available in which to complete the review and report the recommendations, the Panel concluded that the timetable for the review would need to be extended in order to consider all areas of the scheme thoroughly. In consultation with Group Leaders it was agreed that the current review timetable be extended for the reasons provided and that the Panel's recommendations be reported in January 2015.

#### **Scheme of Members' Allowances 2014-15**

- 3.6 Despite the extension of the current review, the Council is still required to agree a Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2014-15. Therefore, the Panel recommends that allowances be frozen at the levels detailed in the 2013-14 Scheme and set out in Appendix 1, until the recommendations of the extended review are considered in January 2015.
- 3.8 Members are asked to note that the scheme will remain linked to the Local Government staff pay award.

#### **4.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 The Panel did not feel able to make recommendations at the present time, therefore, no other options were considered viable.

#### **5.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 5.1 In setting its Members' Allowances Scheme, the Council is required to have regard to the recommendations of the Members' Allowances Panel.
- 5.2 The change to the timetable will provide the Panel with sufficient time to formulate its recommendations in respect of the current review.

## **6.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

6.1 The detailed review of the Members' allowances scheme will continue after the local elections on 22 May 2014 and Members will be invited to attend interviews with the Panel. The Panel will also receive training prior to recommencing the review process.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

7.1 Based on the appointments made at Annual Council in May 2013 the actual annual cost of the scheme is estimated to be £281,140, but is subject to variation following appointments at Annual Council on 9 June 2014. This does not include any travelling, subsistence or carers' costs.

7.2 Travelling, subsistence and carers' costs will vary due to their nature. There is however a total budget of £3,360 provided for these in the 2014/15 budget.

7.3 Separate from the Allowance Scheme, there is also a total of £8,537 paid to the Mayor and Sheriff in respect to the associated costs of holding their respective offices. This has been provided for in the 2014/15 budget.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

## **8.0 Legal Implications**

8.1 The City Council is required to maintain an independent panel which makes recommendations to Council on the matter of Members' allowances. It is good practice to conduct an annual review.

(Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

## **9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

9.1 The Panel are satisfied that their recommendations do not present any risk to the Council.

## **10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):**

10.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

## **11.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Community Safety

11.1 There are no community safety implications arising directly from this report.

### Sustainability

11.2 There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

### Staffing & Trade Union

11.3 There are no staffing or trade union implications arising directly from this report.

**Background Documents:** None