

REPORT TO: Council
DATE: 8th December 2021
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services
SUBJECT: Members Allowances Review
WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The report is to bring to the attention of Council the need to review the Members Allowances Scheme and to suggest the process to be followed.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) that Council approves the process for the review of the Members Allowances Scheme set out.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Under the Local Authority (Members¹ Allowances) Regulations 2003 the Scheme of Members¹ Allowances, which was approved in March 2019, is due for review. It must be reviewed tri-annually by an independent panel. This is a legal requirement.

The Council proposes to invite three independent and respected private sector representatives to sit as an Independent Panel (the Panel) to review the Council's Scheme of Members Allowances and to make recommendations to the Council with regard to the matters to be included in the scheme.

It is suggested that the Independent Panel for the 2021 Tri-Annual Review will consist of :-

- Rachael Owen (Chief Executive - Halton Chamber)
- John Lewis (MD - SOG Ltd)
- John Downes (MD - Langtree)

The Panel will be supported by :-

- David Parr (Chief Executive - Halton Council)
- Mark Reaney Monitoring Officer - Halton Council)
- Ed Dawson (Operational Director - Finance - Halton Council)
- Such other persons as the Panel may request to assist them.

The Independent Panel will review the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances and make recommendations to the Council with regard to the matters to be included in the Scheme.

4.0 PROCESS

4.1 It is envisaged that most of the work will be done off line.

The Council will provide advice and support as required, and as requested by the Panel.

The Council will also provide background information to help the Panel consider all they need to complete the task and make their recommendation to Council.

The following arrangements would be suggested to the Panel :-

- An initial Panel set up/introductory meeting (approx. 1 hour) with information circulated in advance.
- A Panel meeting with each of the Political Group Leaders (approx. 2 hours-in total) - we could do this in one session, broken down into 3 discrete meetings.
- An opportunity to all Councillors to comment.
- A Panel meeting to discuss the Panel's recommendations.
- Panel sign off Final Report offline (additional meeting if required).
- Panel Report to Council for consideration and approval.
- Complete the advertising and legal processes.

The Council will do all the administration and drafting. However, the content and final recommendations will be for the Panel to determine and approve.

The process will be completed in March 2022 when the Panel report to Full Council.

5.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1 To assist the Panel and as background before the first meeting of the Panel they will be provided with the following:

- Report to Council from the Independent Panel in 2018/19.

- Minute of Council considering the report/recommendations of the Independent Panel in 2018/19.
- Current Members Allowance Scheme.
- The amounts paid to members under the Current Members Allowance Scheme for 2021/22.
- Comparative data on Members Allowance Schemes for neighbouring local authorities.

The process set out above seeks to provide an opportunity for all Councillors to share any views they may have in respect of the review of Members Allowances, with the Panel members.

If any member wishes the Panel to consider their views they should provide these to the Chief Executive no later than the 20th December 2021.

Alternatively, members can share any views they have with the Leader of their Group who will be meeting with the Panel (dates - tbc) and can communicate on their behalf their comments to the Panel.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The Council is required by law to have a Members Allowances Scheme, which must be reviewed at least every three years, and the process must involve consideration and recommendation by an Independent Review Panel.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** There are no financial implications arising directly from this report, although there may be later in the process.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- 8.1** No background papers within the meaning of the Act have been used in the preparation of this report. The documents to be provided to the Panel are set out above.