

Subject:	Review of Members Allowances - 2021		
Date of Meeting:	25 March 2021 18 March 2021 – Policy & Resources Committee		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The report details the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel with regard to the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances under the Member Allowances Scheme (the Scheme) for roles that are undertaken on a job-share basis.
- 1.2 The report also sets out the recommendations of the Panel following its review of the decision taken at the Budget Council meeting on 25th February 2021 to remove the provision for councillors to have car park passes and designated parking at the Norton Road car park.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**Policy & Resources Committee recommend to Council that:-**

- 2.1 The Scheme is revised to reflect that where a Member holds a role on a job share basis they are entitled to claim a 50% allowance for that role and that a maximum of two of two job share roles can be claimed for on this basis.
- 2.2 The Scheme is revised to make clear that a 50% allowance can be claimed for a job share Deputy Leader role in addition to a 50% allowance for a Chair of a policy committee role (which is a presumption in the Scheme and the chairing may be full time or a shared role.)
- 2.3 The revised Scheme as attached at Appendix 1 be agreed.
- 2.4 The payments for those Councillors whose responsibilities meet the criteria under the revised Scheme are backdated to the date they were appointed.
- 2.5 Full Council notes the comments of the IRP regarding their encouragement to the Council to consider further information being shared regarding the nature and practical implementation of job share roles for Councillors.

- 2.6 The Members Allowances Scheme be revised to remove Hove Town Hall as a named car park to which the reimbursement of passes is applicable, as described in Appendix 1.
- 2.7 That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any necessary amendments to the Scheme for Members' Allowances to reflect the changes set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7 above.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SRA's for Job Sharing roles

- 3.1 In November 2019 the Policy and Resources Committee considered a report on Women in Local Government and agreed a recommendation that Member positions of special responsibility are open to job share. At full Council on 23 July 2020 appointments were made to Committees and Sub-Committees, including the appointments to positions of special responsibility. This included a number of roles which were identified as job share roles. A subsequent report was submitted to the 13 August Council meeting confirming some of the details. A Chair's job share protocol was included for information with the papers for full Council.
- 3.2 In view of the above, the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) were invited to consider whether changes or clarification of the agreed Member's Allowances Scheme 2018-2023 was necessary.
- 3.3 The role of the IRP, under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, is to make recommendations to the Council as to the responsibilities or duties in respect of which allowances should be available and the amount of those allowances. The IRP may also make recommendations as to whether, in the event that the Allowances Scheme is amended at any stage, payment of allowances may be backdated. All councils are required to convene their Allowances Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their Allowances Scheme and they must 'pay regard' to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 3.4 The IRP met to consider the impact of the agreed job share roles on the Allowance Scheme on 19th January and 2nd March 2021. Representations from Councillors were sought, in addition to consideration of advice from officers. The Panel members are Mr Ken Childerhouse (Chair); Mr Martin Andrews; Mr John Bateman and Ms Rachel Potter.
- 3.5 The IRP wished to make clear in this report that they were confined to considering the allowances applicable to the posts that had been agreed by full Council in July and August 2020. The IRP made no comment on the structure or division of roles that had been agreed. They noted that it was a matter for full Council to determine the positions of responsibility and to make any changes to these, including whether or not a role could be a job share. The IRP then make recommendations about which of these roles that have been agreed by full

Council should have allowances applied to them and the amount of the allowances.

- 3.6 Having reviewed the written representations from Councillors and carefully considered the additional verbal representations made on 2nd March 2021 and the officer advice, the IRP concluded that the Allowances Scheme should be revised to enable two job share roles to be undertaken by a member and for each job share role undertaken to be remunerated at 50% of the SRA. The IRP came to this recommendation on the basis that it would ensure that members who could only undertake a role on a job share basis were not disadvantaged and that equally those who were undertaking the equivalent of one full role were not penalised.
- 3.7 Where two different job share roles are being undertaken by a single member, the IRP heard that this has enabled other members who are unable to undertake a full role, to share a role. This supports younger, working members and those with other responsibilities to be able to hold senior positions. The IRP consider that where a member is undertaking two job share roles they should be remunerated at 50% for both roles to reflect the responsibility and work that they are undertaking. This accords with the Fair Remuneration principle already well established in the Scheme.
- 3.8 In relation to the Deputy Leader role, this is already recognised in the Allowances Scheme as a role that may have a job share. The IRP recommend that it is clarified that where the Deputy Leader role does have a job share that both job share post holders are remunerated at 50% of the SRA for that role. In addition, as there is still a presumption in the Scheme for the Deputy Leader to hold a chairing role, 50% of the SRA for a chairing role should also be paid. Again, this accords with the Fair Remuneration principle set out in the Scheme.
- 3.9 One of the key principles considered to be important by the IRP was that the proposed amendments to the Scheme do not have a significant financial impact on the cost of the Scheme. No new allowances are created by the proposed revision to the Scheme. If the roles are undertaken as they are currently the proposals are cost neutral. If, in future a Deputy Leader role was shared and the policy chair roles were also shared this would cost up to an additional approximate £10k. The expectation of the IRP is that appointments will be made within the existing budget.
- 3.10 A revised Scheme showing the proposed changes to take into account the IRPs recommendations are set out at Appendix 1. It is proposed that the payments for those Councillors who have not been remunerated due to their undertaking more than one role are backdated to the date they were appointed at the Annual Council meeting on 23rd July 2020.
- 3.11 The IRP did note that there was a level of confusion and disagreement amongst some members about the way that the job share roles were working and the potential cost of these. The Panel wished to encourage the Council to consider communicating more detail about the job share principles and ways of working so this is fully understood. There was also concern expressed by some members about the impact on workloads for other councillors and accessibility where a member is undertaking more than one job share role. The IRP understood these

concerns. However, as set out above, the IRP's role is to consider the remuneration for the posts being undertaken as opposed to commenting on the structure in place. The IRP noted that the Council does have the mechanisms available to it should it wish to review the posts and structure in place and noted that any issues on reviewing whether there should be job sharing and how it works in practice should be reviewed through the existing mechanisms (Constitutional Working Group, Group Leaders or Group Whips).

Car parking

- 3.12 Independent Remuneration Panels have direct responsibility for making recommendations in relation to travel and subsistence and in turn, local authorities are permitted under the 2003 Regulations to set their own Travel and Subsistence Allowances
- 3.13 At the Budget Council meeting in February 2021 it was agreed that car parking provision at the Norton Road car park for councillors should be withdrawn. The IRP were asked to review the recommendations and consider the implications for the Scheme.
- 3.14 The IRP acknowledged that the decision to make a budget saving of £25,000 by enabling the Parking Team to generate further income from the car park at Hove Town Hall was agreed by full Council. The Panel noted that those councillors who had previously held a car park pass and used this in Norton Road car park would no longer be able to do so under the proposal.
- 3.15 In view of the unanimous support for this proposal, the IRP considered it was appropriate to proceed with this budget saving on the basis that it contributed to the Council's stated priorities and was unanimously approved at Budget Council. The proposed amended wording for the Scheme is attached at Appendix 1.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 In relation to all the proposals set out in the report, the IRP The Panel did state that they would review the situation as part of the next full review ahead of making recommendations for the Members Allowances Scheme to be in place for 2023-2027.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Panel sought the views of councillors and met with a number of councillors prior to making its recommendations on potential changes to the current Members Allowances Scheme to the Policy & Resources Committee and full Council.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed revisions to the Scheme are recommended to Policy & Resources Committee and to full Council for decision.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 Provided, as proposed, that no more than 100% is paid for each identified role within the Member Allowance scheme, the allowances are affordable within the existing scheme budget. While the cost would increase by £10,020, compared to currently occupied roles, if the two vacant job share policy roles were filled, this would still be within the overall scheme budget available.

Finance Officer Consulted: Nigel Manvell

Date: 10.03.21

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 These are included in the body of the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 05.03.21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The proposed revision to the Scheme in respect of job share roles will support younger members, working members and those with other responsibilities to undertaking position of responsibility. The budget saving approved by the Council does not prevent councillors from opting to use their car to attend meetings and the choice to incur associated costs lies with those councillors. There is also an option to have a bus pass and make a monthly contribution towards the cost that would then enable to travel around the city.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The use of a car has recognised environmental implications, which need to be taken into consideration when a councillor fulfils their duties and responsibilities and that is a personal choice for each councillor.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Revised Members Allowances Scheme

