

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Mark Stinson, Executive Manager Governance

To: Council 19 January 2017

Author: Teresa Smith, Democratic Services Team Leader

Subject: Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members Scheme of Allowances 2017-2019.

Purpose: The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends to Council the Members Scheme of Allowances for the period of 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2019.

Recommendation(s):

- 1) That the new scheme is effective from 1 April 2017 until 31 March 2019
- 2) That the Basic Allowance for District Councillors is increased in line with the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement for the next two years (until 31 March 2019).
- 3) That the Special Responsibility Allowances are increased in line with the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement for the next two years (until 31 March 2019).
- 4) That the Carer's allowance is increased in line with the 'Real Living Wage' to (currently £8.45 per hour) with effect from 1 April 2017
- 5) That an allowance of £15 per month be introduced, as a contribution to the cost of Members' making their own Broadband arrangements (and in place of any current arrangements in place).

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Breckland Council appointed an Independent Remuneration Panel to consider and recommend a scheme of allowances that complies with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) regulations 2003 and associated regulations.
- 1.2 The Panel met on two occasions and also interviewed Councillor William Nunn, Leader of the Council, and invited Councillor Denis Crawford as Leader of the opposition party.
- 1.3 It should be noted that the panel does not propose any change to: travel and subsistence allowances; the approach to be taken in respect of allowances for town and parish councillors; nor the Council's ability to withdraw allowances from a member under a full or partial suspension (paragraphs 12.5 to 12.8 of the Panel's report).

2.0 OPTIONS

- 2.1 Option 1 – To accept and approve in full the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 2.2 Option 2 – To accept and approve in part the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 2.3 Option 3 – To note the recommendations and not to approve the changes.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 During their meetings and deliberations, the Independent Remuneration Panel had been mindful of the financial restraints affecting the Council and the public sector as a whole. Despite these, the authority continues to perform very well, and the Remuneration Panel wished to congratulate the Council for maintaining the lowest Council Tax in the country whilst providing good levels of public satisfaction and local service provision in times of austerity.
- 3.2 Taking into account the comparators and the current economic situation, the Panel are minded to recommend the scheme for a two-year period.

4.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

- 4.1 This report complies with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and associated regulations.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues

- 5.1.1 The scheme of Members Allowances makes provision for travel allowances for Members. There are no recommendations being made in this report in respect of these allowances.

5.2 Constitution & Legal

- 5.2.1 The duty to comply with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and associated regulations. Approval of the Members Scheme of Allowances is a duty reserved to full Council. The Council must have due regard to the recommendations when setting members' allowances.

5.3 Financial

- 5.3.1 Should the Council accept some or all of the recommendations of this report there will be an added increase to the budget for Members Allowances. There will also, however, be savings should the Council no longer provide broadband to any of its members directly, but instead give a broadband allowance.

5.4 Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales

- 5.4.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel have undertaken some consultation in considering their recommendations. If approved, the changes to remuneration will be effective from 1 April 2017.

6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

- 6.1 N/A

7.0 ACRONYMS

- 7.1 N/A

Background papers:- None

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Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Mandatory Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (December 2016)