

Shadow Council



Title of Report:	The Report of the West Suffolk Independent Remuneration Panel	
Report No:	COU/SA/19/006	
Report to and date:	Shadow Council	19 February 2019
Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Members:	Ruth Bowman FHDC: Future Governance Tel: 01638 510896 Email: ruth.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk	Carol Bull SEBC: Future Governance Tel: 01953 681513 Email: carol.bull@stedsbc.gov.uk
Lead officer:	Leah Mickleborough Service Manager (Democratic Services) and Monitoring Officer Tel: 01284 757162 Email: leah.mickleborough@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	The West Suffolk Independent Remuneration Panel has prepared a report to Shadow Council, recommending a Scheme of Allowances for West Suffolk Council. The Remuneration Panel itself cannot set the scheme of allowances – this is a decision that must be made by Council.	
Recommendations:	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Shadow Council:</p> <p class="list-item-l1">(1) agrees to recommend the Scheme of Allowances, as stated in Appendix 1 to the West Suffolk Independent Remuneration Panel's Report (Annex A to Report No: COU/SA/19/006), to West Suffolk Council;</p> <p class="list-item-l1">(2) agrees to the proposal by the West Suffolk Independent Remuneration Panel to implement the new Scheme of Allowances at 6 May 2019, and until that point, continue to pay Forest Heath District Councillors and St Edmundsbury Borough Councillors at the rates they currently receive from Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury respectively.</p>	

Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <u>do not</u> apply.)	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Consultation:	• As stated within the report and as below		
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council must take the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) into account when setting its Scheme of Allowances, but is ultimately entitled to adopt an alternative scheme if it wishes. 		
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total costs of the proposed remuneration scheme are set out in paragraph 7.22 of the IRP's report. The proposal would mean a £30,000 reduction in cost compared to the combined costs of both current schemes 		
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council must agree a scheme of allowances in line with both the Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 and the West Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018 		
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme specifically allows the Council to grant additional expenses / allowances where required where the Councillor has needs arising from a protected characteristic 		
Risk/opportunity assessment:			
<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>			
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Failure to agree a scheme of allowances means that Councillors cannot be paid allowances for their work	Medium	The Remuneration Panel sought the views of Councillors in undertaking their work and understand their concerns, and have sought to respond to such concerns within the report	Low

West Suffolk Council amends the scheme of allowances as recommended by the Shadow Council	Low	This is specifically addressed in paragraph XX of the report below	Low
The Council agrees a scheme that is unaffordable	Low	The proposals of the remuneration panel would result in savings compared to current budgetary positions	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		<p>Annex A - Report of the West Suffolk Independent Remuneration Panel (note, this includes four further appendices), namely:</p> <p>Appendix 1: Scheme of Allowances Appendix 2: Evidence Review Appendix 3: Questionnaire Summary Appendix 4: Comparative Charts</p>	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 On 12 June 2018, the Shadow Council considered a report setting out the need to agree a scheme of allowances for West Suffolk Council, the context in which the review was undertaken, and the process for undertaking the review. The report highlighted how that the existing Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils' schemes have a number of differences between them, and a new scheme could be developed to take account the different scale and nature of West Suffolk Council.
- 1.2 Following a robust recruitment process, in September 2018, Shadow Council agreed to appoint five individuals to an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), whose responsibility it is to recommend a Scheme of Allowances to the Council. As set out at the time, all members of the Panel must be truly independent from the Council. The Chair of the Remuneration Panel, Richard Cooper, will be in attendance at the Council meeting to present the findings of the Panel to Councillors. The Panel's report is included at Annex A.

2. Independent Remuneration Panel Process

- 2.1 Following an initial briefing, the Panel has met on six occasions to consider a wide range of evidence (as set out in Appendix 2 to their report) and draw together a proposed scheme. This included review of comparative councils, being those who were geographically close to West Suffolk and those who would have a similar population size in future, and review of relevant guidance and legislation.
- 2.2 In October 2018, the Panel wrote to all West Suffolk Councillors to ask for their views on the scheme of remuneration; a questionnaire was provided to aid understanding on what Members thought of the current schemes, and how Councillors may be expected to work differently within a West Suffolk Council. At the same time, all Councillors were offered the opportunity to meet with the Panel to put forward their thoughts in person. All feedback received from Councillors, whether via the survey or those who met with the Panel in person, was considered and taken into account in producing the draft scheme.
- 2.3 The Panel subsequently agreed their draft report, which was circulated to group leaders in January 2019, to raise any areas of factual inaccuracy, prior to the publication of the final report which is before members for consideration.
- 2.4 Throughout the process, the Panel has been grateful to Members for engaging with the work they have undertaken, and putting forward a wide range of proposals to them.

3. Scheme of Allowances

- 3.1 The Scheme of Allowances, as proposed by the West Suffolk Independent Remuneration Panel, is included at Appendix 1 to their report (Annex A) and it is recommended that the Council agrees this proposal.

- 3.2 The West Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018 makes clear that it is the responsibility of the Shadow Council to formulate a Scheme of Allowances for West Suffolk Council to consider. Subsequently, the Local Government (Boundary Changes) Regulations 2018 also make clear that any decisions of the Shadow Council may be continued by West Suffolk Council.
- 3.3 As such, the Shadow Council can agree a Scheme of Allowances to ensure that Councillors continue to receive remuneration for the work they undertake after 1 April 2019; however, West Suffolk Council must still formally agree a scheme which could be the same, or different, from that recommended by the Shadow Council.
- 3.4 It is therefore proposed that the following transition arrangements operate:
- To ensure minimal disruption and confusion between 1 April and 6 May 2019 (the day of retirement of Councillors following the election), Councillors continue to receive the same levels of remuneration as they currently receive from Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury respectively.
 - The new Scheme of Allowances will then come into effect for the newly elected West Suffolk Councillors on 6 May 2019.
 - West Suffolk Council will then formally agree the Scheme of Allowances, as recommended by the Shadow Council, potentially at their Annual General Meeting on 22 May 2019.
- 3.5 As there is still some uncertainty as to how Councillors will work differently within the new Council, and the potential roles within the Council, the IRP has recommended that they undertake a further review within the next civic year to ensure the scheme proposed is working effectively.
- 3.6 Councillors are requested to agree the Scheme of Allowances, as put forward by the IRP, and the arrangements for the transition to the new Scheme as set out above.