



# Councillor Allowances and Expenses

<b>Report No:</b>	<b>AGM/WS/19/002</b>	
<b>Report to and date/s:</b>	<b>Annual Council</b>	22 May 2019
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Leader of the Council <i>(Appointment of the Leader of the Council to be confirmed at Annual Council on 22 May 2019)</i>	
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**Decisions Plan:** Referred from West Suffolk Shadow Council on 19 February 2019

**Wards impacted:** N/A

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that Council:

- (1) **Agrees the Scheme of Allowances as attached to Appendix 1 of this report; and**
- (2) **Agrees for the Independent Remuneration Panel undertakes a further review within the financial year to evaluate whether the scheme is working as intended or requires further amendment.**



## **1. Background / Context**

- 1.1 When West Suffolk Council was created, the legal order required that the Shadow Council formulate a scheme of allowances and expenses for the new Council to adopt.
- 1.2 There are specific requirements on how schemes of allowances and expenses for Councillors are formed. An Independent Remuneration Panel has to be appointed, which is made up of people who have no association or affiliations with the Council, its Councillors, or political associations. The Independent Remuneration Panel has to then consider relevant evidence and make suggestions for the Council to consider.
- 1.3 In June 2018, the Shadow Council agreed a process to formulate the scheme of allowances. In September, it approved the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel, and in February it received a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel setting out the Panel's thoughts on what allowances Councillors should be paid, and what expenses they should be allowed to claim.
- 1.4 The reports considered by the Shadow Council in February, including the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel – which sets out the rationale behind their recommendations – is available through the background documents (section 8 below)
- 1.5 As the report highlights, the Independent Remuneration Panel undertook a significant amount of work to develop their recommendations. Consideration was given to how much Councillors receive in other similar size Councils, other local Councils, the work that Councillors undertake, expected committee structures and work required.
- 1.6 The Shadow Council agreed to adopt the scheme recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel in full, and refer it to the new West Suffolk Council for its formal consideration and adoption as its scheme of Members allowances and expenses.

## **2. Proposals**

- 2.1 This report seeks the agreement of Councillors to the scheme recommended by the Shadow Council in February 2019 and attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The report also proposes that the Independent Remuneration Panel undertakes a further review within the current financial year (before 31 March 2019). This enables the Panel to hear evidence on whether the scheme is enabling members to perform their roles effectively, or whether further changes are required. The Panel have particularly requested to review whether minority group leaders should receive an allowance and, if the Council elects to make additional appointments or establish new committees, whether these would warrant an allowance.
- 2.3 In order to achieve this, the panel intend to re-meet in the Autumn and with a view to reporting to Council in January or February 2020.



### **3. Alternative Options**

- 3.1 This report asks Council to consider the recommendations of the Shadow Council from February 2019. Whilst Councillors are entitled to put forward amendments, any amendments which result in an increase in allowance payments would need to be met from existing financial resources.

### **4. Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1 The proposals submitted by the Shadow Council took into account the feedback of the Independent Remuneration Panel, who undertook surveys and interviews of Councillors at the time.

### **5. Risks**

- 5.1 The Scheme of Allowances supports Councillors in undertaking their role. Failure to adopt a scheme, or adopting a scheme that does not reflect the work undertaken by Councillors, may make it more challenging for Councillors to do their role well.

### **6. Implications arising from the proposal**

- 6.1 Financial – the proposals within the report have been incorporated into the West Suffolk Council budget for 2019/20
- 6.2 Legal Compliance – the proposals within this report are compliant with the West Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018 and the Local Government (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003
- 6.4 Equalities – the scheme specifically provides for additional support to be given to those who have needs arising from a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act 2010

### **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 **Appendix 1** – West Suffolk Scheme of Allowances and Expenses

### **8. Background documents**

- 8.1 Report of the West Suffolk Independent Remuneration Panel, considered by West Suffolk Shadow Council on 19 February 2019, and minutes of West Suffolk Shadow Council on 19 February 2019:

<https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=494&MIId=4139&Ver=4>

