

NAME OF COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	15 May 2012
REPORT TITLE	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Members' Allowance Scheme
Report of	Deputy Monitoring Officer
WARDS AFFECTED	All

Summary of report:

To advise Members of the Recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel's Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Financial implications:

The Independent Remuneration Panel has not recommended any increase in the Members' Allowances budget save for a £200 uplift per councillor in the Basic Allowance as a contribution to Members' personal IT costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Council considers the Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Members' Allowances Scheme (attached as Appendix A);
2. That the Monitoring Officer amends the Members' Allowance Scheme in the Constitution according to Members' decision

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The West Devon Independent Remuneration Panel ('the Panel') was instructed in February 2012 to review the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

- 1.2 The Panel was asked to consider the Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) and Carers' Allowance in the light of the changes which have occurred in the Council since 2008.
- 1.3 The Panel was also asked to review the exception to the rule 'no more than one SRA per councillor' which was adopted in the light of the particular circumstances of the previous council.
- 1.4 The Panel was not asked to consider travel and subsistence as this is calculated in accordance with the rates set by the National Joint Council. The Panel has not considered the Standards Committee allowances due to the forthcoming changes to the Standards regime later this year.

2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 In summary, the Panel's recommendations are:
 - The Basic Allowance should be increased by £200 and rounded to £4,300 as a contribution to Members' personal IT costs
 - The revised range of SRA's should be introduced (as set out in the table to the recommendations)
 - That members be restricted to one SRA
 - The allowances be updated each year in line with the Consumer Price Index once employees' salaries are no longer frozen
 - The Carers' Allowance remains unchanged
- 2.2 It is likely that a further, shorter review will be necessary later in the year after the new Committee system has been operating, and the new Leader and member appointments made at the Annual Meeting.
- 2.3 The Panel has also recommended that new members are progressively introduced to the Panel to replace existing members over a period of time.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Council must adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowances in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 3.2 Where any change is required to the Members' Allowance Scheme, the Council must ask the Panel to consider the issues and make recommendations to the Council.
- 3.3 The 2003 Regulations require the Council to '**have regard**' to the recommendations made by the Panel, but the Council does not have to adopt the recommendations if it had good reasons

3.4 The power to consider the Panel's Recommendations is reserved to the Council under the Delegation Scheme (set out in Part 3 of the Constitution).

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Panel has not recommended any increase in the Members' Allowances budget save for a £200 uplift per councillor in the Basic Allowance as a contribution to Members' personal IT costs. This would equate to approximately £6,358 in the overall allowances annual budget but will be offset from the savings by the Council no longer providing IT equipment to councillors.

4.2 It has further recommended that the allowances are increased in line with the Consumer Price Index but only once employees' salaries are increased in the future.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 The Risk Management implications are shown at the end of this report in the Strategic Risks Template.

6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate priorities engaged:	All
Statutory powers:	Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
Considerations of equality and human rights:	Not relevant to this report
Biodiversity considerations:	Not applicable
Sustainability considerations:	Not applicable
Crime and disorder implications:	Nor applicable
Background papers:	West Devon Members' Allowance Scheme
Appendices attached:	Appendix A: Independent Remuneration Panel Report dated 27 April 2012

STRATEGIC RISKS TEMPLATE

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status				Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
		To review the Members' allowance Scheme to ensure that it properly reflects current roles and responsibilities	2	2	4	↔	Ensure that the Allowance Scheme is reviewed regularly	Members Monitoring Officer

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ↔