

Report to: **Council**  
Date: **21 February 2023**  
Title: **Civic Allowance Review**  
Portfolio Area: **Leader – Cllr Neil Jory**  
Wards Affected: **All**  
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **Immediately following this meeting**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Council RESOLVES that:**

**1. the Civic Allowances be retained at:**

- **Mayor: £3,000 per annum; and**
- **Deputy Mayor: £825 per annum; and**

**2. the Civic Allowance be reviewed again as part of the detailed review to be undertaken by the Independent Panel on Members Allowances during the early Autumn of 2023.**

### **1. Executive summary**

1.1 When considering the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel at its meeting held on 22 November 2022, some Members of the Borough Council made the point that the 'Civic Allowances' (i.e. the Allowance that the serving Mayor and Deputy Mayor are entitled to claim) had been retained at the same level for in excess of 15 years.

1.2 The Council therefore **RESOLVED** that (Minute CM 54/22 refers):

*'the Head of Paid Service write to the Panel requesting it reconsiders the Civic Allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and report back to a meeting of Full Council prior to the Review due in Autumn 2023'.*

- 1.3 The purpose of this report is therefore to present the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Civic Allowances.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, it is a requirement that any changes to a Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances are considered initially by an Independent Panel appointed for that purpose which in turn then makes recommendations to the Council;
- 2.2 The Panel proceeded to meet on Monday, 20 February 2023 to consider the current Civic Allowances;
- 2.3 This Panel meeting was attended by three of the four Panel Members:

- Bryony Houlden (South West Councils' Chief Executive) (Chairman);
- Cllr Ursula Mann (Town/Parish Council Representative); and
- Karen Nolan (Community and Voluntary Sector Representative);

As a basis for its deliberations, the Panel considered a Briefing Paper that asked it to focus on the following two specific questions:

- Should the Civic Allowances be increased and, if so, by how much? and
- Should the Civic Allowances be subsumed within Schedule A of the Scheme? If so, what multiplier of the Basic Allowance should be applied to the Civic Allowances?

- 2.4 In addition, the Panel was also joined at its meeting by Cllr Mott (current serving Mayor) and Cllr Pearce (current serving Deputy Mayor) and was supported by the Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Senior Case Manager.

## **3. Panel Recommendations**

### **3.1 Civic Allowance**

- 3.1.1 In their respective submissions, it became apparent to the Panel that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had somewhat differing views on whether or not the Civic Allowances should be increased at this time;
- 3.1.2 As a consequence, the Panel was not so swayed to recommend any increases to the Civic Allowances at this time. However, this recommendation was made in the context that the Panel had already committed to undertaking a detailed review of the Scheme during the early Autumn of 2023;

3.1.3 In wishing to include specific reference to the Civic Allowance as part of this Review, the Panel has asked that:

- Specific questions be included in the Member Survey that relate to the Civic Allowances;
- An annual list of Mayor (and Deputy Mayor) Civic Engagements and Commitments be produced for its consideration; and
- The serving Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2023/24 Municipal Year be invited to attend the Panel meeting to ascertain their views and respond to questions.

#### 4. Options available and consideration of risk

4.1 In ultimately making a decision, the Council must pay due regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel. However, the Council does have the discretion to reach an alternative view on some (or all) of the Panel's recommendations if it so wishes.

#### 5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.  The Council has a statutory requirement to adopt a Scheme of Members Allowances and to consider the recommendations of its Independent Panel in doing so.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	If the Panel recommendations are approved by the Council, then there will be no financial implications.
Risk	Y	The risk implications are set out at Section 4 above.
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Council Theme – <i>Efficient and Effective Council</i>
Consultation & Engagement Strategy	Y	The Mayor and Deputy Mayor were invited to attend and make submissions to the Panel prior to it making its recommendations.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	N/A
Climate Change & Biodiversity	N	N/A

Safeguarding	N	N/A
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	N/A
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	N/A
Other implications	N	None

**Appendices:**

A: None

**Background Documents:**

The Civic Allowances Briefing Note considered by the Panel; and  
The Council Constitution