

Council

25 April 2024



Title	Members' Allowances Scheme 2024-25
Purpose of the report	To make a Key Decision
Report Author	Gillian Scott, Corporate Governance Support Officer
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	Not applicable
Corporate Priority	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a Committee decision.
Recommendations	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Notes the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel and agrees with the principles of the Panel's report (Appendix 1);2. Adopts the Members' Allowances Scheme (the Scheme) for 2024-25;3. Agrees an increase in the Basic Allowance by 2.8% in line with the staff pay award, to £6,849 with effect from 1 April 2024;4. Agrees increases in the Special Responsibility Allowances by 2.8% in line with the staff pay award, with effect from 1 April 2024;5. Agrees the recommended changes to the level of allowances for the Planning and Licensing Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs with effect from 1 April 2024;6. Subject to the Council having agreed the proposed Committee structure effective from 23 May 2024 earlier on this agenda, agrees the revised Special Responsibility Allowances, as recommended by the Panel at page 12 of its report, with effect from 23 May 2024.
Reason for Recommendation	The Council is required to make a scheme of allowances and the Independent Remuneration Panel is appointed by the Council to advise on the type of its allowances and the amounts to be paid.

1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Independent Remuneration Panel has reviewed the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024-25. A summary of the Panel's recommendations can be found on pages 12-13 of its report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is required to make a scheme of allowances and cannot make any changes to its Scheme of Members' Allowances without first considering the Independent Remuneration Panel's advice on the issues involved.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a matter for the Council to decide the level of members' allowances under the Spelthorne Members' Allowances Scheme, having given proper consideration to the Panel's report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to Council approval, the recommendations of the Panel in regard to the level of allowances will be effective from 1 April 2024, although the revised SRAs based on the proposed Committee re-structure (i.e. ceasing payment to the Administrative Committee Chair and Vice-Chair and members of the Development Sub-Committee and inclusion of payment to the revised Strategic Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs and Commercial Assets Sub-Committee members), will not be effective until 23 May 2024. Details of the 2024-25 Scheme will be published on the Council's website.

1.1 This report provides Council with advice from the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) on its review of the Members' Allowances Scheme (the Scheme) for 2024-25. The Panel has recommended increases in the Basic Allowance for all councillors and the Special Responsibility Allowances for specific councillor roles (subject to some changes to the proportions of the Leader's allowance received), of 2.8% to reflect the proposed staff pay award for 2024-25.

2. Key issues

2.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel met on 13 February 2024 to review the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024-25. It was necessary for the Panel to carry out a full review as this had not been done since the introduction of the Committee System in May 2021. Furthermore, the Panel considered its

deliberations on the proposed changes to the Committee System structure as recommended to the Council earlier on this agenda for implementation from the Annual Council on 23 May 2024.

- 2.2 A questionnaire was circulated to all Members, in advance of the Panel meeting to seek feedback. 29 of 39 Members completed the questionnaire and the summary responses are attached to the Panel's report. In addition, the Leader and Deputy Leader were interviewed as part of the Panel's review.
- 2.3 It is a matter for the Council to decide the level of members' allowances under the Spelthorne Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 2.4 The function of the Panel is to provide the Council with advice on the type of its allowances and the amounts to be paid.
- 2.5 The statutory position is that Spelthorne Borough Council "shall have regard to" the advice from the Panel and the Council cannot make any changes to its Scheme of Members' Allowances without first considering the Panel's advice on the issues involved. The Panel acknowledges that it is a matter for the Council to decide the level of Members' Allowances. In having regard to the Panel's advice, the Council is to "give proper consideration" to the Panel's report. In this way, the Council can take full account of its particular circumstances and be directly accountable to its electorate.

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 The proposals recommended by the Panel are set out in detail in the attached report. A summary of the Panel's recommendations can be found on pages 12 and 13 of the report.
- 3.2 However, the Council does not have to approve the recommendations made by the Panel. Council may choose to implement an alternative proposal.

4. Financial management comments

- 4.1 The annual budget for Members' Allowances for 2023-24 was £374,600 (revised budget £369,108). The budget agreed by Council in February 2024 for 2024-25 was £372,100. Taking into account the proposed increases in the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2024-25, and subject to Council approval to the proposed restructure of the Committees, the Scheme recommended by the Panel results in a saving in the annual budget of £12,430 to £359,670 for 2024-25.
- 4.2 The recommended changes in the IT Allowance from a lump sum payment of £250 for each councillor at the beginning of their four-year term to £100 per annum, will take effect during the 2025–26 financial year. The additional budget in 2025-26 will be £1,950 and in 2026-27, £3,900.

5. Risk management comments

- 5.1 There are none.

6. Procurement comments

- 6.1 There are none.

7. Legal comments

- 7.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, Spelthorne Borough Council "shall have regard to" the advice from the Panel and the Council cannot make any changes to its

Scheme of Members' Allowances without first considering the Panel's advice on the issues involved.

8. Other considerations

8.1 There are none.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 Remuneration may encourage and support a greater diversity of councillor representation.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

10.1 There are no impacts on sustainability or climate change arising from the recommendations in the Panel's report.

11. Timetable for implementation

11.1 Subject to Council approval, the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2024-2025 will take effect from 1 April 2024.

11.2 Subject to Council approval to the proposed re-structure of the Committees, revisions to those roles for which a Special Responsibility Allowance is paid will take effect from 23 May 2024.

11.3 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 the Scheme will be published on the website with details of the amounts payable in respect of each allowance.

12. Contact

12.1 Gillian Scott, g.scott@spelthorne.gov.uk

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel with appendices – February 2024.

Appendix 2 - Members Allowances Scheme 2023-24 and Schedule 1 List of Approved Duties