

**Committee Report Checklist**

Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.

**Stage 1**

**Report checklist – responsibility of report owner**

ITEM	Yes / No	Date
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing	Yes	12/05/2026
Relevant Group Head review	Yes	29/4/2026
MAT+ review (to have been circulated <b>at least 5 working days before Stage 2</b> )	Yes	29/4/26
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	Yes	13/4/26
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments (circulate to Finance)	AS	30/4/26
Risk comments (circulate to Lee O’Neil)		
Legal comments (circulate to Legal team)	LH	29/04/26
HR comments (if applicable)	n/a	n/a

For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.

Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.

**Stage 2**

**Report checklist – responsibility of report owner**

ITEM	Completed by	Date rec’d
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least <b>5 working days before MAT</b>	L Heron	29/04/26
S151 Officer commentary – at least <b>5 working days before MAT</b>	T.Collier	30/4/26
Commissioner engagement	J. Kingston	11/05/2026
		No issues
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		12/05/2026

# Council

20 May 2026

<b>Title</b>	Independent Remuneration Panel Review of Councillors' Allowances
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Christeen Abee, Senior Democratic Services Officer
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	N/A
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a Council decision.
<b>Recommendations</b>	Council is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Note the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) report dated March 2026 (Appendix A);</li><li>2. Approve the continuation of Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee at 40% and 20% respectively of the Leader's Allowance, with no requirement for backdating;</li><li>3. Approve the application of indexation to the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for 2026/27 in line with the 4% staff salary increase agreed by the Council, applying from 1 April 2026 for one year as set out in Appendix B.</li></ol>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	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. Executive summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Independent Remuneration Panel has reviewed specific elements of the Members' Allowances Scheme.</li><li>• A summary of the Panel's recommendations can be found in Appendix A.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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 issues involved.</li></ul>

This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to Council approval, the recommendations of the Panel in regard to the level of allowances for 2026/27 will be effective immediately.</li> <li>Details of the Scheme will be published on the Council's website and included in the Constitution.</li> </ul>

## 2. Key issues

- 2.1 Elected Members are not salaried employees of local authorities but are entitled to receive allowances. These allowances are not intended to serve as a salary or an inducement to seek election, but to recognise the scale of the responsibilities of councillors and the extent of their time and commitment to their local communities. This would cover time in meetings, briefings and calls, and other council work.
- 2.2 The Council's Scheme of Members Allowances provides for both a Basic Allowance payable to all elected Members and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) which are additionally payable to Members who undertake a variety of leadership roles such as Committee Chairs with additional responsibilities. It also establishes the level of allowances for Independent Members of committees. The last full review of councillors' allowances was undertaken by the Council in February 2024.
- 2.3 The Panel's remit for this review included considering whether adjustments should be applied to allowances for 2025/26 and 2026/27 and the method of indexation, and reviewing the Special Responsibility Allowance payable to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee.
- 2.4 The Panel held a detailed meeting and produced a report, as required, attached at **Appendix A**. The report details the membership of the IRP, the range of information and data which they considered and how recommendations had been reached.
- 2.5 The Panel has made clear recommendations, which are advisory only. The responsibility for determining the final scheme remains with Council. Any alternative proposals would need to be considered in light of the legislation surrounding allowances and whether the budget is available to accommodate changes.

### Indexation

- 2.6 Included within the Panel's remit was consideration of indexation to be applied to allowances since this was last considered for the 2023/24 financial year. Although it is within the powers of the IRP to recommend indexing to cover a period of four years they chose not to do this at their previous review.
- 2.7 Due to staffing capacity with Democratic Services and Panel members' availability this particular issue was not considered and recommended in time to be implemented for the 2025/26 financial year that the adjustment would have been proposed for.

- 2.8 Although the Panel agreed with the principle of indexing in line with staff pay rises in 2025/26 this recommendation cannot be taken forward as it contradicts The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 10 (6) which states

*“Where an amendment is to be made which affects an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, the scheme may provide for the entitlement to such allowance as amended to apply with effect from the beginning of the year in which the amendment is made.”*

- 2.9 Guidance is clear that changes cannot be backdated beyond the beginning of the financial year.
- 2.10 The Panel's recommendation, at 3.3 of the attached report, relating to the proposal to apply increases in line with staff salary increases for the 2026/27 financial year can be implemented. Should the proposed 4% increase be accepted this would increase basic allowances to £7123, an annual increase of £274 per Councillor. This would be applied from 1 April 2026 and any back payments would be resolved as soon as possible.

### **SRAs for Audit Committee**

- 2.11 The Panel considered the current Members' Allowances Scheme and the responsibilities and workload associated with the Audit Committee roles considering the increase from an average of three meetings per year to six or more per year. Comparative information from neighbouring district and borough councils, including other Surrey authorities, were considered. The panel concluded that no changes were required based on the increased frequency of meetings alone.

## **3. Options appraisal and proposal**

- 3.1 The Council has to have regard to the Independent Remuneration Panel's report when making a new Allowance Scheme but does not have to agree with all or any of the elements of the report. As a result, the Council has the options to:
- 3.2 Option 1: Adopt recommendations 1 and 3 as set out in the report (this is the preferred option). Adopting recommendations 1 and 3 complies with Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. Approving these recommendations demonstrates transparency and adherence to statutory guidance, relies on independent advice, and supports consistency and comparability with other councils.
- 3.3 Option 2: Not to adopt the IRP recommendations, resulting in councillor allowances remaining at their current level. Although this would deliver budget savings of £14,174, it is acknowledged that, given the ongoing cost of living pressures, this option could negatively affect some councillors' wellbeing.
- 3.4 Option 3: Adopting the recommendations of the IRP in full has not been considered as adjusting and backdating the allowances into a previous financial year is in breach of the regulations.

## **4. Risk implications**

- 4.1 Adopting the recommendations in full is not possible under the 2003 Regulations. Failure to properly consider or give due weight to the Panel's recommendations could expose the Council to legal challenge under the 2003 Regulations. Accepting the recommendations mitigates legal, procedural and reputational risk.

## **5. Financial implications**

- 5.1 The current total cost of the scheme is £354,348 per annum.
- 5.2 By adopting the recommended option, this would increase to £368,522 which is an increase of £14,174. This has been budgeted for.

## **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 the Council is required to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to review and make recommendations on its Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 6.2 The Council is required to give regard to the Panel's recommendations before making any changes to the Scheme.
- 6.3 Approval, amendment, and other changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme is a function reserved to Council (Article 4 para 4.2 of the Constitution).

## **Corporate implications**

### **7. Commissioners' comments**

- 7.1 No issues.

### **8. S151 Officer comments**

- 8.1 The S151 Officer confirms that all financial implications have been taken into account and that the recommendations are fully funded from within the 2026-27 budget.

### **9. Monitoring Officer comments**

- 9.1 The Monitoring Officer confirms that the relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

### **10. Procurement comments**

- 10.1 There are none.

### **11. Equality and Diversity**

- 11.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme applies equally to all Councillors and supports the ability of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds to undertake elected office.

## **12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

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

## **13. Other considerations**

- 13.1 Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires that the amended Members' Allowance Scheme is publicised.

## **14. Timetable for implementation**

- 14.1 Subject to Council approval, the changes to the levels of basic and special responsibility allowances will take effect immediately.
- 14.2 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Scheme will be made available on the website and a notice published in a local newspaper giving details of the Scheme and the amounts payable in respect of each allowance mentioned in the Scheme.
- 14.3 The agreed Scheme will also be updated in the Council's Constitution (Part 6).

## **15. Contact**

- 15.1 Committee Services (committee.services@spelthorne.gov.uk)

***Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.***

**Background papers:** [The Local Authorities \(Members' Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)

### **Appendices:**

**Appendix A – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (March 2026)**

**Appendix B – Proposed Schedule of Allowances**