Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 July 2026

Heading/Title: Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations

Cabinet Member(s): Council Co-ordination and External Engagement (Cllr John Loudoun) and Communications and Democracy (Cllr Sarah Jackson)

Director/Assistant Director: Legal and Governance (James Docherty)

Author and Directorate: Democratic Services Manager, Legal and Governance (Andrew Melhuish)

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Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

1. Background

1.1 This report outlines the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel following their review of the Councillor Scheme of Allowances.

1.2 The report also sets out the Panel's recommendations following their review of the Special Responsibility Allowance of the Independent Person on the Standards Committee and Independent Representatives on other committees.

1.3 The Scheme of Allowances also includes some minor drafting changes which are shown in red.

2. Recommendations/Decision

2.1 That Council approves the Councillor Scheme of Allowances (Appendix 2), subject to any minor drafting changes.

2.2 That Council agree that a Special Responsibility Allowance of £1,000 is awarded to the Independent Person(s) on the Standards Committee and that the allowance awarded to the Independent Representative(s) on committees remains unchanged at £412.80.

2.3 That Council agree that the Scheme of Allowances is updated to include the following wording: The authority shall enable its members, who are eligible, to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

2.4 That Council agree that the Scheme of Allowances is updated to reflect the increase in the mileage allowance payable to the revised HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance rate of 55p per mile for the first 10,000 business miles, with effect from 1 April 2026 and to backdate any claims made.

3. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

3.1 It is important that the Scheme of Allowances for councillors is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and reflects current legislation and best practice.

3.2 The Council must have regard to the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations when setting allowances.

4. Options

4.1 To approve the Independent Remuneration Panel recommendations to update the Scheme of Allowances, award a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Independent Person(s) on the Standards Committee, keep Independent Representative(s) allowance unchanged, to add wording allowing eligible councillors to join the Local Government Pension Scheme and update the HMRC mileage rate.

4.2 To not approve the recommendations and maintain the existing arrangements.

4.3 Option 1 is the preferred option.

5. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

☐ A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure

☐ A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.

☐ A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.

☒ A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services

6. Financial Comments/Implications

6.1 There are two Independent Person(s) who are on the Standards Committee. If the changes are supported this will result in additional allowances of £1,587.20 that will be met within existing resources.

6.2 Based on previous mileage claims, it is estimated that backdating the increase from April to June 2026 would result in an additional cost of approximately £552.67, with an estimated ongoing budget increase of £2,210 for the 2026/27 financial year that will be met within existing resources.

7. Legal Comments/Implications

7.1 In accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to report and make recommendations on Councillors Allowances.

8. Risk Implications

8.1 The IRP provides independent advice and makes recommendations to Council. All legal, financial and governance implications are addressed within this report.

Activity/ plant/ materials etc	List significant hazards	People at risk	Assessment of Risk			Existing controls e.g. Safety procedures	What further action Is required to control/mitigate the risk?
			*Impact 1-4	*Likeli hood 1-4	Risk Score		
Councillor allowances	Challenge from councillors regarding fairness or affordability of allowances		1	2	2	IRP appointed to review allowances.	Provide supporting evidence from the IRP.

*Impact – Major = 4 Serious = 3 Significant = 2 Minor = 1
*Likelihood – Very Likely = 4 Likely = 3 Unlikely = 2 Remote = 1

9. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

9.1 Public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) when making decisions and setting policies. Whilst there are no specific equalities implications arising from this report, it is important that the allowances claimable are regularly reviewed.

Scope (*Provide an overview, including objectives and desired outcomes)*	Councillor Scheme of Allowances
Evidence gathered and engagement (*List stakeholders consulted and relevant processes, policies, and data sources)*	Independent Remuneration Panel meet on a regular basis to review and assess the levels of allowances and make any proposed recommendations to Council.
Relevance assessment findings *(If relevant to equality, undertake a full EIA or If no relevance to equality, explain why with supporting information)*	A full EIA is required: Yes ☐ No ☒

	If yes, this assessment has demonstrated relevance to equality with regard to: Please check relevant boxes ☐ Age ☐ Pregnancy and maternity ☐ Disability ☐ Sexual orientation ☐ Race ☐ Gender reassignment ☐ Sex ☐ Marriage or Civil Partnership ☐ Religion or Belief ☐ Armed Forces ☐ Other, e.g. carers, care leavers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc. If no, explain why: The Scheme of Allowances and the allowances claimable are for all councillors and anyone appointed to the position of Independent Person or Independent Representative.
Relevance ranking	☐ High – Very relevant to protected characteristics ☐ Medium – Somewhat relevant to protected characteristics ☒ Low – Not relevant to protected characteristics
Key findings and impacts	No adverse equality impacts have been identified.
Conclusion drawn *(i.e No major changes needed; EIA found no negative impact or adjust policy/process to remove identified barriers)*	No negative impact.
Actions (*Proposed actions to mitigate negative impacts on identified groups)*	None.
Signed off by	Andrew Melhuish

10. HR and Workforce Implications

10.1 There are none.

11. Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

11.1 There are none.

12. Climate Change Implications

12.1 There are none.

13. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

13.1 There are no Health & Safety implications.

13.2 There are no Health & Wellbeing Implications.

14. Procurement and Social Value implications

14.1 None.

15. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

15.1 There are none.

16. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

16.1 None.

17. Digital and Data

17.1 There are none.

18. Consultation and Engagement

18.1 Consultation with the Standards Committee to understand the number of Code of Conduct complaints received and to assess the associated complexities of dealing with such complaints.

19. Communications

19.1 None.

20. Next Steps

20.1 The Scheme of Allowances to be updated and published on the Council's website.
20.2 To notify Payroll of the change in allowance to Independent Person(s).

21. Appendices

21.1 Appendix 1 - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
21.2 Appendix 2 – Councillors Scheme of Allowances.

22. Background Papers

22.1 None.