

Item 7 (b) – Review of the Scheme for Members’ Allowances

The attached report was considered by the Governance Committee, and the relevant minute extract is below:

Review of the Scheme for Members’ Allowances (30 January 2024, Minute 12)

Members considered the report by the Members’ Allowances Working Group following the review of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP). The group considered three key elements that were different between JIRP and the SDC Scheme. It was believed that it was important to stay within the current budget and the group interviewed other councils regarding their schemes and received feedback from other Members.

The Chairman of the Working Group advised that the Deputy Leader allowance was slightly outside the norm, but that the group did not believe it appropriate to reduce it mid-term. As an alternative, it was felt that the allowance should be brought in line by being frozen until it fell within 10% of the average. In terms of the opposition allowances the group agreed it was fairer to continue to keep it as per member to be reviewed in the future, and that the subsistence allowance remain the same.

The Monitoring Officer took the opportunity to also thank the working group for the work carried out and subject to the JIRP workload it was hoped a future review would take place before the 2027 elections. The next review would also consider the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Board. The JIRP worked on averages from the figures provided by South East Employers.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that the recommendations of the Members’ Allowances Working Group set out in the report be adopted, as set out below

(a)

- i. The Deputy Leader continue to be remunerated at £13,269 but this allowance be frozen until such a time as the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel determines the sum to fall within 10% of the Kent Councils Deputy Leader allowance mean;
- ii. Opposition Group Leaders continue to be remunerated at £298 per group Member;

- iii. Subsistence allowances be maintained at the £9.86/£12.21 for lunch/evening meal, subject to the Member being on Council business out of the District;
- (b) The Joint Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to undertake the next review of allowances in advance of the next election cycle.