

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME MONITORING 2023/2024

Audit Committee – 9 July 2024

Report of: Monitoring Officer

Status: For Consideration

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of: The effective management of Council resources.

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Recommendation to Audit Committee: That Members note the contents of this report.

Reason for recommendation: This report is further to the Committee's monitoring of the Members' Allowance Scheme' and sets out the payments which were made during 2023/24.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Within the terms of reference of the Audit Committee, the Committee is required 'to monitor the implementation of the Members' Allowance Scheme'.
- 2 The Governance Committee is required 'to receive the recommendation of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel and make recommendations for changing the Members' Allowance Scheme to the Council and, if required, to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel'. The recommendations of the panel were agreed in 2023/24. This is mentioned for information purposes only and is not a matter for the Audit Committee.

Members' Allowance Scheme – 2023/24

- 3 The allowances paid to Members in each financial year are published here: https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/download/32/councillor_allowance_and_expense_payments In line with the request of Members at a previous meeting, the payments made in 2023/24 also appear as an appendix to this report.
- 4 Basic allowances were paid to 75 Members. One Member asked not to be paid the full amount and another asked for allowances to be stopped while away from the Council. It should be noted that allowances were paid to both outgoing and incoming Members, which is why payments were made to more Members than there are seats on the Council.

- 5 Travel expenses were claimed by 24 out of 75 Members (32%). In the year 2023/23 travel expenses were claimed by 33% of Members. Please note that an IT allowance was consolidated with the basic allowance from May 2019 and is not paid to Members.
- 6 Appendix G from the Constitution of Sevenoaks District Council, containing the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2023/24, is attached to this report.
- 7 All Members' expenses claims are checked by Democratic Services. Under the Constitution it is for the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer to decide any question of interpretation.

Key Implications

Financial

The cost of the Members' Allowance Scheme is contained within the approved budget.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

None.

Equality Assessment (Compulsory heading - do not delete)

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Climate Change Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to tackle the challenge of climate change. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

Conclusions

This report is for noting the operation of the scheme in the year 2023/24.

Appendices - Members' Allowances payments for the financial year 2023/24; Appendix G from the Constitution.

Background Papers - None

Martin Goodman
Monitoring Officer