

REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Report of the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At its meeting on 27 September 2023, the Working Party considered the timing for the undertaking of a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Working Party recommended that any such review should be undertaken during the 2024/25 municipal year.
- 1.2 This report outlines the proposed arrangements for the conduct of the review.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires local authorities to make a scheme of members' allowances. Stockport's scheme was last subject to a full review during the 2016/17 municipal year, with formal approval being secured at the Council Meeting on 19 January 2017.
- 2.2 The scheme has subsequently been adopted annually as part of the council's constitution.
- 2.3 The regulations, which arise out of the relevant provisions in the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to set up and maintain an advisory Independent Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances.
- 2.4 All Councils are required to convene their Independent Remuneration Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their Members' Allowances Scheme and is under a duty to 'have regard' to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Scheme.
- 2.5 It is proposed that the Council now seeks to convene its Independent Remuneration Panel with a view to undertaking a full review of the scheme during the 2024/25 municipal year. The review would be required to examine all aspects of the scheme, including:-
 - (i) The basic allowance
 - (ii) Special responsibility allowances
 - (iii) Dependent carers allowance
 - (iv) Travel and subsistence allowances

3. TIMELINE FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE REVIEW

- 3.1 A review of the scheme is a necessarily detailed process which needs to allow time and opportunity for political groups and elected members to make representations to the Panel.

- 3.2 It is proposed the review commences in September 2024 after the school holidays with a view to it having concluded its primary activities by the end of December 2024.
- 3.3 While it is for the Panel to determine how it would wish to conduct the review, it is expected that the following core activities would be undertaken within the above timeframe:-
- Interviews with postholders of remunerated positions.
 - Interviews with members not in receipt of a special responsibility allowance.
 - Invitation to political groups to make written representations.
 - Survey of all elected members.
- 3.4 The Panel would also consider a range of written evidence to assist it in making its recommendations which will include comparative data from other local authorities.
- 3.5 The intention is for the Panel to report its findings and make its recommendations to the Council Meeting within 2024/25 and in sufficient time for any changes to be adopted and take effect from the commencement of the 2025/26 municipal year.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Working Party is recommended to comment on and endorse the approach to for the conduct of the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Damian Eaton on 0161 474 3207 or by email on damian.eaton@stockport.gov.uk