

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL: INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

REPORT ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – SUPPLEMENTARY RECOMMENDATION

12th DECEMBER 22

This report complements the comprehensive reviews of recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) that were accepted by Full Council on 10th September 2019 and 19th March 2020. Additional information can be found at Appendix A and B.

RECOMMENDATION

That the basic allowances and special responsibility allowances paid to elected representatives be increased by 4.04%, to be back dated to 1st April 22.

Overview

1. Following recommendations from the IRP, Bristol City Council's Scheme of Members Allowances (see Appendix C) includes the commitment that:

The basic councillors, special responsibility and co-optees allowances will be automatically increased in line with any officer pay increases

2. As the officer pay increase for 22/23 was a flat rate of £1925 per employee (pro rata for part time workers), the IRP were asked to make a recommendation about how this should be applied to Members for 22/23.
3. Following a request from Bath and North East Somerset Council, the Panel reviewed the uplift for both Local Authorities simultaneously as the membership of the Panels was the same, except for Keira Stobie who only sat for Bristol.
4. The Panel met and considered benchmarking for other Councils both in the Southwest and other parts of the UK. They noted that the NJC pay offer included a figure of a 4.04% increase for staff allowances such as subsistence etc (which does not apply directly to Members' allowances as they are outside the NJC scheme), but like a number of Councils, they considered this an appropriate starting point for consideration. They were advised that a number of Local Authorities hadn't yet decided how they would apply the increase, but of those that had agreed a percentage uplift, many had adopted the 4.04%, including London Councils.
5. The recommendation set out in this report will increase the overall spend on Members' allowances by approximately £63k. The Panel are aware that the Local Government sector is experiencing financial challenges but are strongly of the view that elected representatives must be remunerated fairly for the duties they undertake, particularly with the current pressures impacting the cost of living.

Next Steps

6. The Independent Remuneration Panel are planning to undertake their next full review of Members Allowances in 23/24 to conclude once details of the Committee Model of governance are available.

The Panel

7. The Panel Members are:

Wendy Stephenson - Chair
Graham Russell – Vice Chair
Ronnie Alexander
Keira Stobie

8. Support to the Panel was provided by Bryony Houlden, Chief Executive of South West Councils as an independent adviser and Lucy Fleming, Head of Democratic Engagement at Bristol City Council. Jo Morrison, Democratic Services Manager at Bath and North East Somerset Council, was also in attendance.

Appendices

Appendix A – IRP recommendations September 2019
Appendix B - IRP recommendations May 2020
Appendix C – Members Allowances Scheme