

7. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES REVIEW 2014/15

REPORT OF: SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL AND MONITORING OFFICER
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Council
Date of meeting 6th November 2013

Purpose of Report

1. To present the recommendations of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel about the level and type of allowances to be paid to Members of Mid Sussex District Council in 2014/15.

Summary

2. The report sets out the Independent Members' Allowances Panel's recommendations for Basic and Special Responsibility, Travel and Subsistence, and Carers Allowances for 2014/15, taking into consideration the Local Government Pay increase, changes to the Committee structures, and changes to the National Minimum Wage.

Recommendations

3. **Council are recommended to:**
 - (i) **thank the Panel for their work;**
 - (ii) **consider the recommendations of the Panel (set out below); and**
 - (iii) **agree a scheme of allowances for the financial year 2014/15.**
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Background

4. In the Panel Report for 2013/14 presented to Council at its meeting on 19th December 2012, the Panel recommended that the Independent Members' Allowances Panel should meet every two years with a standing recommendation that in the intervening year the allowances should rise in line with the Local Government Pay increase. Council accepted this recommendation.
5. The Panel undertook a full review of Members' allowances in 2012; therefore, 2013 is an intervening year. In 2013/14 there is an agreed Local Government Pay increase of 1 per cent and the Panel recommend this increase shall be applied to the Basic and the Special Responsibility Allowances.

Recommendations of Members' Allowances Panel

6. The Panel's recommendations for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances are summarised in the table below. The Council, having regard to the recommendations of the Panel, may decide not to apply any increase to the allowances.

Position	Current Allowance	Recommendation	Recommended Allowance
Basic Allowance x 54	£4,501	Increase in line with the Local Government Pay settlement for 2013/14	£4,546
Leader of the Council	£20,596	As above	£20,802
Deputy Leader of the Council	No separate allowance	No separate allowance	No separate allowance
Group Leader	75% of 1/54 of the Leader of the Council's Allowance per Group Member £14,875	As above	75% of 1/54 of the Leader of the Council's Allowance per Group Member £15,028
Cabinet Member other than the Leader	£8,238	As above	£8,320
Chairman of Council	£6,572	As above	£6,638
Area Planning Committee Chairmen x2	£4,501	As above	£4,546
Vice Chairman of Council	£2,251	As above	£2,273
District Planning Committee	None	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Scrutiny Committee Chairmen x3	£3,862	As above	£3,901
Better Mid Sussex Chairman	£977	BMS Group has been abolished	Not Applicable
Audit Committee Chairman	£1,930	As above	£1,949
Licensing Committee Chairman	£977	As above	£987
Standards Committee Chairman	£475	As above	£480
Independent Persons for Standards Matters	£713	As above	£720
Total	£70,468		£70,190

The Panel considered it too early to understand the impact of the Planning Committees' restructuring, or the effect of the abolition of the Better Mid Sussex Group on the workload of the Chairman for the Scrutiny Committee for Planning and Economic Development, and noted that both these points would be considered in the next review.

Additional recommendations

7. The Panel recommends that Members should be entitled to claim only one Special Responsibility Allowance, with the exception of allowances paid to Group Leaders.

8. The Panel recommends that the Independent Members Allowances Panel should continue to meet every two years with a standing recommendation that in the intervening year the allowances should rise in line with the Local Government Pay increase.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

9. The Panel recommends that there is no change to the Travel and Subsistence Allowances. The Panel makes the following recommendation:

Detail	Recommended Rate
Vehicles	
Car Mileage	45p per mile or such other rate permitted by the Inland Revenue
Car Passenger Mileage Rate	3p per mile for 1 passenger 5p per mile for 2 or more passengers
Cycling Allowance	20p per mile
Subsistence	
Breakfast	£6.92
Lunch	£9.47
Tea	£3.77
Evening Meal	£11.78
Overnight Out of Pocket Expenses Per night	£5.57
Overnight Out of Pocket Expenses Per week	£22.21

The Council meets the costs of overnight accommodation, subject to its terms and conditions.

Childcare Allowance

10. To be payable at the National Minimum Wage (£6.31 per hour for persons 21 and over as of October 2013) for one child and £10 per hour for two or more children. In order to claim this allowance, Members will need to self-certify a claim, using a Childcare Allowance Claim Form. A Childcare Allowance may not be paid for the remuneration of family members.

Dependent Carer's Allowance

11. To be payable at the actual amount charged, with the maximum rate (currently £15 per hour) to rise in line with inflation.

Policy Context

12. The Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to review the responsibilities of Councillors and recommend the level of allowances it believes Councillors should receive, in response to Government legislation and in common with all Local Authorities. The decision on allowances must be taken by Council, taking into account the recommendations made by the Panel.

Other Options Considered

13. There are no other options available.

Financial Implications

14. There is a recommended increase of 1 per cent in relation to Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances. However, the Better Mid Sussex Advisory Group has been abolished and there is no longer a requirement to pay £977 to the Chairman, resulting in an overall small decrease in the total expenditure.

Risk Management Implications

15. There are no risk management implications.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

16. Equality of opportunity to actively engage in the democratic process is promoted through the provision of the scheme of allowances and expenses; in particular, by the availability of the childcare and carers allowances which respond to the needs of those Members with childcare or other caring responsibilities.

Other Material Implications

17. There are no other material implications to consider.

Background Papers

- Members' Allowances Review 2013/14 – Report to Council, 19th December 2012
- Mid Sussex Report of the Independent Panel on the Review of Members' Allowances 2013/14