

Date of meeting:	16 September 2024
Title of Report:	Independent Remuneration Panel – Recommendations for amendments to the Councillor Allowance Scheme
Author:	Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk)
Contact Email:	Ross.jago@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	IRP.24.25
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

### **Purpose of Report**

The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) is convened under the Local Authorities (Councillors' Allowances) England Regulations 2003 (SI 1021) and subsequent amendments to the regulations (SI 2003/1022 and SI 2003/1692 ['the Regulations']).

The Regulations require all local authorities to set up and maintain an advisory IRP to review and provide advice about the allowances to be paid to Councillors. All Councils are required to convene their Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their allowances scheme and they must 'pay regard' to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Councillors' Allowances Scheme.

The Panel met in August 2024 and was asked to review elements of the Councillors' allowance scheme, informed by benchmarking and other relevant information and specifically to consider –

- allowances paid to the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board;
- payments to Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Committees;
- the application of the Local Government Association's model Parental Leave Policy;
- the addition of a provision for members to forgo allowances

The IRP has undertaken a review of the Plymouth City Council Councillors' Allowances Scheme and makes the following recommendations for amendments.

1. The Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance equal to that of the current Scrutiny Panel Chairs. This allowance will be backdated to May 2024, when the current Chair took on the role.
2. The Panel does not recommend further changes to the Special Responsibility Allowance for Vice Chairs at this time.
3. The Panel is convened to review allowances for scrutiny again in 12 months to gather more information on how the new structure is working.

4. The Panel noted the cross-party approach to the review of the parental leave policy and observed that such a policy is already in place in many councils across the country. The Panel recommends that the council adopts the model scheme.
5. The Panel recommends that a provision to enable Councillors to forgo their allowances is added to the Members' allowance scheme.

### Alternative options considered and rejected

None – A full review of the allowance scheme was required to comply with regulation in reference to the index linking of allowances to staff pay awards.

### Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

None directly arising.

### Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The total cost of the scheme is likely to vary each year and is subject to number of co-optees in post and changes to the political composition of the Council..

### Financial Risks

None as a result of this report.

### Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None as a result of this report.

### Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

Key strategies, procedures and plans relating to health and safety, risk management and child poverty will be updated where necessary to reflect any relevant revisions to the Corporate Plan.

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

None as a result of this report.

### Appendices

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Independent Remuneration Panel – Recommendations for amendments to the Councillor Allowance Scheme.							

**Background papers:**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Liz Bryant									
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes									
Date agreed: 30/08/2024									