

**INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL –
NOTE OF MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2021**

Present: Mr David Cam, Chairman

Mrs Helen Hockenhull

Mrs Karen Eaton

Tracy Manning, Director of Resources

Ian Curtis, Head of Governance

Katharine McDonnell, Democratic Services (note taker)

Ian Curtis welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Ian Curtis presented the 2022/2023 Member Allowance Scheme report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to members of the Panel.

The report covered the current level of members' allowances and the special responsibility allowances; dependent carers' allowance; and a comparison of allowances paid in 2001 and 2020. The report also provided information regarding the level of allowances adjusted to 2001 prices (the consumer price index); information regarding the different allowances, the annual budgeted amount for members' allowances and the Council's financial position. He advised that the advice from the Chief Financial Officer was that the level of future funding was uncertain.

The report provided a detailed spreadsheet comparing the allowances paid by other Lancashire authorities and authorities who operated a committee system.

It was noted by the Panel, that whilst the Fylde allowances were average in comparison to other authorities, when looking at the allowances on a per member, per resident basis, Fylde's allowances were the highest in Lancashire.

Mr Curtis discussed the current Special Responsibility Allowances, and the ability of the Panel to set an allowance and link the allowances to an index. He explained that the allowances would then increase with the index but there would be a need to review the allowances every four years rather than annually.

It was noted there had been no feedback from the group leaders regarding the allowances.

The Panel thanked Ian for his report and presentation.

The Panel considered their recommendations for the financial year 2022-23 regarding:

- The level of basic allowance payable to all councillors

- Which councillors were to receive special responsibility allowances
- The levels of special responsibility allowances
- Whether to continue to pay dependants' carers' allowance and, if so, whether to cap the rates payable; and
- whether to continue to pay travel and subsistence allowances and, if so, of how much

The Panel discussed the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic, to residents and businesses of the borough, and the uncertainty of council funding in future years. It was noted that the council finances were currently stable and in surplus.

The Panel discussed the merits of a formula approach, such as linking to an index or allowances as a percentage of, for example, the Leaders allowance, to setting the allowance scheme.

The Panel confirmed that on the balance of merits it would be prudent on this occasion to recommend no increases to the level of basic allowances or special responsibility allowances, or to the roles in receipt of special responsibility allowances. The Panel resolved to discuss the level of allowances in greater depth in twelve months' time in view of the final recommendations from the Boundary Commission review and changes to the governance system in light of those changes.

It was also acknowledged that next year may also provide a better view of the Council's longer term financial future following the anticipated Fair Funding Review.

The Panel confirmed that the dependents' carers' allowance and travel allowances be maintained as present.

Mr Cam thanked the other Panel members for their attendance and consideration of the matters at hand and thanked the officers for their work and advice.
