

Report of Deputy Chief Executive

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME PUBLICATION ARRANGEMENTS

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for complying with the statutory requirement and related guidance as to publicising details of the allowances paid to Members.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council has in place a scheme of Members' allowances. Regulations require that as soon as practicable after the end of a year to which the scheme relates, details are published having regard to any related guidance.

3 Appendices

None

4. Proposed Action:

- 4.1 **The Committee is invited to RESOLVE that after completion of the current years' scheme, details of allowances paid to Members is also published explicitly on the Council's web-site and within the next available edition of the Link.**

5 Background

- 5.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provide that as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of a year to which a scheme of Members allowances relates, local authorities must make arrangements for the publication in their area of the total sum paid by it to each member in respect of basic, special responsibility, travelling and subsistence, co-optees' and dependants' carers' allowances.

5 Discussion

- 5.1 At present, the Council meets this requirement through publication of a notice in a local newspaper. The last publication of this detail was July 2009. In addition, details of the allowances paid are also included in the Annual Statement of Accounts.

- 5.2 However, this statutory minimum requirement is supplemented by guidance issued by the Secretary of State which provides that:

'Local authorities should publicise more widely the report from their (independent remuneration) panel, their scheme of allowances and the sums paid to each Member. This should include where possible, publishing this information on their web site and in the council's own newspaper. Local authorities may also wish to consider including in their notice some detail about the responsibilities of elected members and the duties and time commitment which the basic allowance is intended to remunerate'.

- 5.3 The Council's web site does include a link to the Members Allowance Scheme

within the democratic services section although there is no active download. The publication of details of allowances paid has not been published on the web-site.

- 5.4 Details of the Members' Allowance Scheme can also be found on the website via the report to Council – e.g. Council report July 2009 under Council Meetings. This report details the various allowances and the amounts applicable for the current scheme. It is however not readily accessible. The summary total of allowances and expenses that appears within the Annual Statement of Accounts can be found on the website under Council Tax and Finance – again this is not readily accessible.
- 5.5 A summary of payments received by all Members was last published within the Link in 2004.
- 5.6 A previous practice of publicising special responsibility allowances in addition to the sums paid to each Member under the scheme appears to have ceased in 2005.
- 5.7 As the Council's current arrangements do not provide for the level of publicity set out in the guidance, it is recommended that after completion of the current years' scheme, the detail required by the regulations and guidance is additionally published explicitly on the Council's web-site and within the next available edition of the Link.

6 Legal Powers

- 6.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require authorities to make a scheme for the payment of allowances to Members.
- 6.2 In addition, authorities must have regard to the statutory guidance issued under section 18(5A) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989

7 Financial and Value For Money Implications

- 7.1 There are no such implications arising from this report

8 Risk Analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
Publication arrangement questioned	Adverse publicity	M	Improved publication arrangements
	Adverse audit/inspection comment	M	
	Regulatory intervention	L	

9 Implications for Resources

- 9.1 Explicit publication would reduce the time required to be spent in dealing with freedom of information act requests on this issue.

10 Implications for Stronger and Safer Communities

10.1 There are no such implications arising from this report

11 Implications for Equalities

11.1 A screening has been undertaken which determined that a full equalities impact assessment is not required.

12 Author and Contact Officer

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13 Consultees

Leadership Team

14 Background Papers

