



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	COUNCIL - 20 MAY 2026
Subject	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrea McCaskie, Director of Governance and Regulatory Services Email: andrea.mccaskie@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Ana Prelici – Senior Democratic Services Officer. Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider recommendations made to Council by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
Annexes	Annex A – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel
Recommendation(s)	<p>That the Council considers the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel, which are to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree to introduce a 0.25x Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chair of the Development Management Sub-Committee;2. Note that the Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairs of Strategic Planning Committee and Development Management Sub-Committee will be reviewed in the autumn as part of the full review of allowances;3. Note that the amount paid as the Vice-Chair’s Special Responsibility Allowances will be reviewed in the autumn as part of the full review of allowances, in respect to the amount.4. Note that following changes at national level, from the 11 May 2026, Councillors have been able to opt into the Local Government Pensions Scheme, and that pensions may be payable on a member’s basic and/or special responsibility allowance. The members allowances scheme will be updated accordingly.

Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Independent Remuneration Panel Director of Finance Director of Governance

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** As part of West Oxfordshire District Council's decision to combine its two planning sub-committees into one committee, the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) were asked to review Special Responsibility Allowances paid to the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Council's planning committees.
- 1.2** The IRP met on Monday 20 April on the request of full Council and recommended that the Council introduce an SRA of 0.25x for the Vice-Chair of the Development Management Sub-Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Members of the Council are paid an allowance in recognition of their work, which is intended to partially compensate them for their time. As the role of a Councillor is a public service rather than a form of employment, the allowance is not intended to be set at the level of a salary.
- 2.2** By law, the Council is required to appoint an IRP, which recommends the level of allowances payable for Councillors over a specific timeframe. The IRP is made up of at least three persons who are suitably skilled members of the public and who are also independent of the Council.
- 2.3** The Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require local authorities to appoint Independent Remuneration Panels to consider and make recommendations on their Allowances Schemes. The Government's "Guidance on Consolidated Regulations on Local Authority Allowances" outlines the main statutory provisions and gives non-statutory guidance.
- 2.4** The IRP is required to recommend the levels of the basic allowance (paid to all councillors), SRAs, and travel, subsistence, co-optees' and dependent carer allowances. The Council is required to have regard to these recommendations.
- 2.5** The current Scheme was adopted by Full Council on 22 March 2023 and remains in place until 1 April 2027. The Independent Remuneration Panel will meet in autumn 2026 to undertake a fuller review of the scheme and to make recommendations about a new scheme from 1 April 2027.

3. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1** The IRP considered a report from the Head of Democratic and Electoral Services and benchmarking data from other South-East Councils, provided by South East Employers. The report of the IRP highlights the issues discussed and the recommendations resulting from this.

3.2 The IRP made the following recommendations, which are explained in detail in the report at Annex A;

3.2.1 That Council agrees to introduce a 0.25x Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chair of the Development Management Sub-Committee

3.2.2 Note that the Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairs of Strategic Planning Committee and Development Management Sub-Committee will be reviewed in the autumn as part of the full review of allowances;

3.2.3 That Council notes that the amount paid as the Vice-Chair's Special Responsibility Allowances will be reviewed in the autumn as part of the full review of allowances, in respect to the amount.

3.3 The IRP also discussed and noted that changes at a national level meant that Councillors were now able to opt into the Local Government Pension Scheme. It was noted that the members allowances scheme would need to be updated accordingly and that officers would be communicating this to members. A recommendation to note this has been included in the report, to raise awareness of the change amongst members.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

1.1. Council is required to "have regard" to the recommendations of the IRP but may choose to not agree the recommendations with reasons, therefore not making alterations to the current Scheme.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

1.2. 0.25x the Basic Allowance is £1,464, this is subject to the uplift for 2026/27, which has not yet been agreed. This will be funded from the existing budget for Members allowances. The reduction from two to one planning sub-committees saves a Special Responsibility Allowance of 1.25x basic, currently £7,320.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council is required by The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to make a scheme for the allowances to be paid to Members before the beginning of each year. A scheme must include provisions for paying a basic allowance, special responsibility allowances, dependants' carers' allowance, travelling and subsistence allowance and co-optees' allowance. A scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to such index but may not rely on an index for a period of more than four years.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

1.3. There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

1.4. This report is exempt from requiring a sustainability impact assessment.

1.5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1.6. None.

(END)