



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and Date of Committee	COUNCIL – 16 JULY 2025
Subject	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
Wards Affected	All
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Andrew Brown – Democratic Services Business Manager. Email: andrew.brown@westoxon.gov.uk
Report Author	Ana Prelici – Senior Democratic Services Officer. Email: ana.prelici@westoxon.gov.uk
Purpose	To consider recommendations made to Council by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
Annexes	Annex A - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel
Recommendations	That the Council considers the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel, which are to; 1. Agree to introduce a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) set at 0.25x of the Basic Allowance f(BA) for the position of Vice-Chair of Council, backdated to 21 May 2025. 2. Retain the existing Co-optees' Allowance (£75 for up to four hours and £150 for more than four hours but less than 24 hours for eligible meetings and other duties as in 5.1 of the Members Allowance Scheme 2023-2027) for Independent Members of the Audit and Governance Committee. 3. Agree that the Co-Optees' Allowance for Independent Persons who are consulted on standards matters, will be set at a flat rate of £1000 a year, backdated to 1 April 2025.

	4. Note that the next meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel will be in 2026, ahead of the next full review in 2027.
Corporate Priorities	Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Independent Remuneration Panel. Director of Governance and Regulatory Services. Director of Finance

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.** West Oxfordshire District Council's (the Council's) Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) conducted a midpoint, "light touch" review of its Members' Allowances Scheme, originally adopted in 2023 and valid until April 2027 (the Scheme). This review, carried out by the IRP in January 2025, focused on three key areas: the Vice-Chair's allowance, Co-optees' allowance, and ICT provision.
- 3.** The IRP recommend introducing an SRA for the Vice-Chair of Council at 0.25 times the BA, backdated to 21 May 2025. It also advised retaining the current Co-optees' Allowance structure and proposed a new flat-rate annual payment of £1,000 for Independent Persons involved in standards matters, backdated to 1 April 2025.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1** 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.
- 4.2** 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.
- 4.3** 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.
- 4.4** The IRP is required to recommend the levels of the BA (paid to all councillors), SRAs, and travel, subsistence, co-optees' and dependent carer allowances. The Council is required to have regard to these recommendations.
- 4.5** The current Scheme was adopted by Full Council on 22 March 2023 and remains in place until 1 April 2027. When the Council resolved to adopt this scheme, it committed to undertake a midpoint review of the scheme.
- 4.6** The Council's IRP met on 27 January 2025 to carry out this review.
- 4.7** Members were invited to make representations to the IRP to inform the review and the IRP focused the following specific areas;
 - Vice-Chair's allowance
 - Co-optees' allowance
 - ICT allowances
- 4.8** As the next comprehensive review is due in 2026 ahead of the adoption of a new scheme in 2027, the IRP did not focus in detail on other areas of the Scheme or the levels of SRA.

5. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1** 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.
- 5.2** The IRP made the following recommendations, which are explained in detail in the report at Annex A;
 - 5.2.1** That Council agrees to introduce an SRA set at 0.25x the BA for the position of Vice-Chair of Council, backdated to 21 May 2025.
 - 5.2.2** That the existing Co-optees' Allowance (£75 for up to four hours and £150 for more than four hours but less than 24 hours for eligible meetings and other duties as in 5.1 of the Scheme) be retained for Independent Members on the Audit and Governance Committee.
 - 5.2.3** That Independent Persons who are consulted on standards matters be paid a co-optees' allowance set at a flat rate of £1000 a year, backdated to 1 April 2025.
- 5.3** Upon a suggestion from a Member to do so, the IRP discussed whether an ICT allowance should be introduced. The IRP did not make a recommendation to the Council on this and suggest that options for supporting members with ICT could be re-considered at a future review.
- 5.4** The IRP also suggested that their recommendations on Vice-Chair's Allowance and Co-optee's Allowance be reviewed after they have been in place for at least 12 months to ensure that the amount that is being paid is appropriate.
- 5.5** As the current Scheme's expiry date is 2027, the next review is due to be carried out in 2026. It is suggested that the details within ICT allowances, Vice-Chair's Allowances and Co-optee's Allowances are next reviewed at this point.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1** 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.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** 0.25x the Basic Allowance is £1,418.75, this is subject to the uplift for 2025/26, which has not yet been agreed. This will be funded from the budget for Members allowances.
- 7.2** The change in expenditure for Co-optees Allowances will be covered from the existing Members allowance budget.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** 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.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

10.1 There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no climate or ecological impacts associated with this report.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None.

(END)