

	Full Council 27 February 2025
	Report from the Corporate Director of Law & Governance
	Lead Member – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Mili Patel)
Members Allowance Scheme Annual Review 2025-26	

Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Members Allowance Cost Analysis
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Amira Nassr, Deputy Director, Democratic Services 020 8937 5436 amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 A Members' Allowance Scheme, which sets out the allowances Members are entitled to receive for carrying out their responsibilities has to be made for the 2025-26 Financial Year.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Full Council

2.1 Considers and approves the Members Allowance Scheme in the proposed terms set out within this report for the 2025-26 Financial Year.

2.2 Authorises the Corporate Director of Law & Governance to comply with the statutory requirements to publicise the Council's Members' Allowance Scheme.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.1 The Members' Allowance scheme contributes to the delivery of the Borough Plan priorities by reducing financial barriers to public service, so as to enable a wide range of people to become a councillor and be recompensed for the time they devote to their role and to the responsibilities they carry.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 Brent Council's Members' Allowance Scheme (which is included in the Council's Constitution at Part 6 and is published on the Council's website) was subject to full formal review at the Annual Council Meeting in 2018 and since then has been subject to ongoing annual review at each of the Council's budget setting meetings.

3.2.2 These reviews have been informed by the most recently available reports from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for London Councils. The latest review and report undertaken by the IRP (entitled "[The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2023 – Report of the Independent Panel](#)") was published in December 2023. A further IRP review is currently underway but as yet has not been completed. Therefore, this year's annual review has been based on the contents of the initial 2023 report, which will continue to inform the Council's decision-making in respect of its scheme for a maximum period of four years.

3.2.3 London Councils have acknowledged their reports are published too late for some councils, and that some councils end up applying the previous year's pay increase. To avoid this, they have agreed to collate and publish this information in December each year to ensure all councils have the most recent numbers to hand. This expected to be in process in the coming year.

3.2.4 The 2023 IRP report recognises the importance of the role played by elected members not only in terms of their representational role but also given the increasing challenges and demands in managing the delivery of local services and on the allocation of financial resources. The report highlights the increasingly difficult and complex nature of choices and work faced by local councillors in terms of managing these challenges and increasing level of demand on services. In addition, reference is made to the growth in other public sector activities, increasing expectations for closer working with partners such as the health services and the voluntary sector, as well the growing role of councillors acting as a point of information, advice and reassurance for local communities. The report also recognises the increasing expectations of the public in terms of access to their local councillors supported by the growth in digital connectivity, social media etc.

3.2.5 Over the period of May 2024 to date, councillors have logged over 9,109 Members Enquiries (and housing enquiries) on behalf of their constituents, organised in the region of 532 surgeries and cumulatively attended over 558 council meetings.

- 3.2.6 Whilst considering the above factors, the Council must remain conscious of the financial challenges faced by local authorities.
- 3.2.7 It is for Full Council to make a scheme for the payment of allowances to its members specifying the amount of entitlement by way of basic allowance (which is mandatory) and other allowances (which are discretionary). Such a scheme has to be in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and the Council is required to have regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).
- 3.2.8 The scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Annual Uplift

- 3.2.9 Brent's Members Allowance Scheme states that Basic, Special and Civic allowances "shall be increased with effect from each April, by a percentage equal to the inflation pay award agreed as part of the Local Government Pay Settlement in the previous financial year, unless otherwise determined by the Council". In 2024, taking into account the recently issued Remuneration report, the decision was made to increase the basic allowance by 5% increasing it to £13,637. In the year prior to that, the basic allowance was increased by 4.04% in line with that agreed as part of the National Joint Council Government Services pay agreement.
- 3.2.10 In terms of the current financial year, the National Joint Council Government Services pay agreement has now been confirmed for 2024/25. This year, the offer was a percentage increase of 2.5% on specific pay scales. Members are therefore asked to consider applying an uplift of 2.5% across the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances within the Members Allowance Scheme for 2025/26. If this were to be agreed, it would mean an increase in the Basic Allowance from £13,637 to £13,978 (a difference of £341 for each of the 57 councillors).

Special Responsibility Allowances

- 3.2.11 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) have also been reviewed. Noting that some of the positions do not currently fall within the recommended percentage bands (i.e. the % of the Leader's allowance considered appropriate for the role) and more importantly, recognising the increased workload and scope, Members are asked to consider a 2.5% increase across all SRAs.
- 3.2.12 These figures are reflected in Appendix 1.
- 3.2.13 Benchmarking with other councils has been carried out to be able to draw comparisons to inform decision making. Westminster Council have already approved a 2.5% uplift (for Basic and SRA) for 2025/26 in line with the staff pay award, and Bexley, Croydon and Kingston Councils are likely to follow

suit with a 2.5% uplift. Tower Hamlets and Romford Councils are unlikely to have a pay uplift.

4.0 Publicity

4.1 As soon as reasonably practicable after the making or amendment of a Scheme, copies of the Scheme have to be made available for inspection at the Civic Centre and a notice has to be published in a local newspaper. It is recommended that the Corporate Director of Law and Governance be authorised to comply with these requirements.

5. Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

5.1 The outcome of the annual review has been subject to consultation (via email) with members of the Constitution Working Group.

6.0 Financial Considerations

6.1 The actual overall cost of the payment of allowances depends on which Members are appointed to the roles where an SRA is received, as only one such allowance is payable irrespective of the number of roles held. At the end of each financial year, the payments made to each Member are published in accordance with statutory rules.

6.2 Any uplift to the allowance scheme will result in additional expenditure. A table illustrating this can be found at Appendix 1. In summary, the additional expenditure should the uplift be applied would be approximately £75k inclusive of the increase in National Insurance contributions.

6.3 The current budget for members' allowances is approximately £1.2m. This growth has been accommodated in the Council's budget for 2025/26.

7.0 Legal Considerations

7.1 The Council's Members' Allowance Scheme must comply with the relevant provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003; the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 2000. In adopting or amending the scheme the Council is required to have due regard to the report published by its Remuneration Panel, which is the IRP appointed by London Councils.

7.2 The increase in the basic allowance for all members and in the Special Responsibility Allowances identified to be increased are consistent with the recommendations of The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2023 – Report of the Independent Panel, to which the council must have regard.

8.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

8.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising their functions to have 'due regard' to the need:

- a) To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity; and
- c) Foster good relations between those who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not.

8.2 This is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The ‘protected characteristics’ are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

8.3 The purpose of the duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances.

8.4 This report outlines the allowances for all Members for 2024-25. As the allowances are the same for all Members, irrespective of their background, there are no equality, diversity or inclusion implications for the proposals within this paper.

9.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

9.1 None.

10.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

10.1 None.

11.0 Communication Considerations

11.1 None.

Report sign off:

Debra Norman

Corporate Director of Law & Governance