

This is an open report

Report to: Council

Date of Meeting(s): Wednesday, 21 May 2025

Subject: Report of the Independent Review Panel

Report of: Janet Davies, Assistant Director – Legal, Governance and Elections

Contact Officer: Rachel Gibbons (07739 672303)

Cabinet Portfolio Holder and area: Councillor D T Molyneux MBE, Executive Leader (Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration)

Summary:

To consider the report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and to decide whether or not to implement the recommendations of the Panel.

'Progress with Unity' Missions:

As residents, businesses, public services and community organisations of this borough we have come together to deliver two key missions:

Mission 1: Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents & businesses.

"Together, we will break down the barriers that create financial, health, education and environmental inequalities in our borough."

Mission 2: Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish for those who live and work in them.

"Together, in genuine partnership with our residents and businesses, who know our community best, we will help each town and neighbourhood in the borough celebrate and maintain their identity whilst understanding and helping to achieve what is needed to thrive."

Outline how this report supports our 'Progress with Unity' missions:

Councils retain powers to determine their own Members' Allowances, but they are required to convene their respective Independent Remuneration Panel and seek its advice before any changes or amendments are made. This provides an opportunity for IRPs to publicly scrutinise the Council's allowances schemes and enhance public accountability.

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Recommendation(s):

The Council is requested to consider the report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel and decide whether or not to implement the recommendations of the Panel in whole, in part, or not at all.

Implications:**What are the financial implications?**

If the recommendations in the report were implemented, the Council would increase its expenditure on Members' Allowances by approximately £6,265, which would be contained within the existing Members' budget.

Is budget release necessary (Capital Expenditure Only)?

No

What are the legal implications?

In setting the Members' Allowances for 2025/26, the Council must have regard to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and also the statutory guidance, both of which are appended to the report.

What are the staffing implications?

None

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason). If not required, then a relevance check needs to be completed.

EDIA not required. Relevance check completed.

What are the property implications in terms of reduction, addition or change to the council's asset base or its occupation?

None

What are the Corporate Parenting Implications?

None

Risks:

Provided that the Council has regard to the Panel's report and the guidance, then the risks are considered to be minimal.

Sustainability/Environmental/Climate implications:

None

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No

What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

In accordance with the Statutory Guidance, the Council must review its Members' Allowances Scheme.

There are no background papers for this report.

Directorate Sign-off:	Simon Ward
Date:	12 May 2025

Please list any appendices:

Appendix number or letter	Description
Appendix A	Guidance of the Secretary of State
Appendix B	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) is now complete and is attached to this report at Appendix B.
- 1.2 Before the Council amends its Scheme of Members' Allowances, it must have regard to the report of the IRP and the Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State, a copy of each is attached at Appendix A and Appendix B.
- 1.3 The Council is not obliged to follow the proposals of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

2.0 Summary of the Panel's Recommendations

- 2.1 The Panel has recommended that the Council's existing Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended as follows, with all other allowances outlined in the Scheme of Members' Allowances remaining unchanged:-

- **Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committees**

The IRP recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committees is reset and on par with the Chair of Planning, which is £13,355, subject to any annual indexation applied from Council's Annual Meeting on 21 May 2025 for the next four years.

- **Vice Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committees**

The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Vice Chair of the Licensing and Regulation Committees is reset and on par with the Vice Chair of Planning, which is £3,476, subject to any annual indexation applied from Council's Annual Meeting on 21 May 2025 for the next four years.

- **Chairing a Standards Hearing**

The IRP recommends that when a Member chairs a Standards Hearing, that the SRA they are paid is reset at £157 per meeting, subject to any indexation applied from Council's Annual Meeting on 21 May 2025 for the next four years. This SRA is also intended to recognise reading and preparation time so should be paid regardless of the length of the meeting. This SRA should also not be subject to the 1-SRA only rule and can be paid if and when a Standards Hearing is not chaired by the Chairman of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.

- **Main Opposition Group Leader**

The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group is reset and on a par with the Chairs of Scrutiny Committees, which is £8,905, subject to any annual indexation applied from Council's Annual Meeting on 21 May 2025 for the next four years.

- **The Audit Co-optees**

The IRP recommends that the Co-optees' Allowance for the two independent Co-opted Members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, is reset at £1,500 per year, subject to any annual indexation applied from Council's Annual Meeting on 21 May 2025 for the next four years.

- **Housing Advisory Panel Tenant Representatives**

The IRP recommends that the payment made to Tenant Representatives, appointed to the Housing Advisory Panel, is reset at £1,800 per year, subject to any annual indexation applied from Council's Annual Meeting on 21 May 2025 for the next four years.

- **School Admission Appeal / Exclusion Hearing Panels**

The IRP recommends that the remuneration for Members of School Admission Appeal and Exclusion Hearing Panel are reset as follows:

- School Admission Appeal Members = £50 per day
- School Exclusion Hearing Members = £75 per day

The recommended payment is inclusive of all expected preparatory work and travel unless a Member travels from outside of the Council area in which case they should be able to claim travel expenses on the same basis as elected Members.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends that the new Scheme of Allowances based on the recommendations contained in its report be adopted from 21 May 2025.
- 3.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel will meet again in 2029 to undertake a full review of Members Allowances at Wigan Council.

Relevance Check

Budget Reduction/Service Area: Legal and Finance

Service Lead: Sarah Johnston

Date: 17 April 2025

In what ways does this Budget reduction have an impact on an outward facing service? How will the service feel different to your customers or potential customers?

N/A

If not, how does it impact on staff e.g. redundancies, pay grades, working conditions? Why are you confident that these staff changes will not affect the service you provide?

N/A

Is a Customer Impact Assessment needed?
No