

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Frequency of Review of Members' Allowances Scheme</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Council on 21 March 2019
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

**OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

A more effective and efficient use of Officer time and resources.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- 1) agree to move to four yearly reviews of the Members' Allowances Scheme and note that the next review would therefore take place late 2021/early 2022;
- 2) ask the Constitution Review Working Group to consider what changes are required to the Constitution to affect this change.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Due to the resource implications of carrying out a review and the current financial climate the Leader has asked for Council to consider moving to four yearly reviews of the Members' Allowances Scheme rather than the annual review which currently takes place.

## Background

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 the Council commissions an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to review the Scheme of Members' Allowances.
2. Section 2 of the Constitution currently states that a review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances will be undertaken annually.. Undertaking a review is very labour intensive both for the members of the IRP and the Officers who assist them. The review undertaken last year necessitated the IRP holding 14 meetings, which included carrying out interviews with 22 Members and three Officers. This does not take account of the amount of time taken to carry out research, the production and analysis of a survey, and the drafting of the final report.
3. In addition when Council, at its meeting in November 2018, considered the IRP's report those recommendations which put forward increases were not supported as a number of Members felt that it was the wrong time to increase Members' Allowances as this would sent a negative message to residents. As a result of this decision the IRP subsequently resigned. The Council recently advertised for interested people to come forward to join the IRP and only two applications were received by the deadline. So currently we do not have sufficient people to make up an IRP.
4. The Leader has therefore put forward the proposal that Council consider moving to a four yearly review which would mean that the next review would take place during late 2021/early 2022 with a recommendation coming forward to Council by July 2022. If however circumstances changed before this date Council could resolve to hold an earlier review.
5. Changing to four yearly reviews would require a small number of changes to be made to the Council's Constitution and therefore if agreed the Constitution Review Working Group would be asked to consider appropriate changes which would then come forward to Council in due course.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
None

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
None

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
The Council's Constitution Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003

<b>Contact</b> Anne Hunter	<b>Service</b> Governance
<b>Telephone No</b> Tel: 0118 974 6051	<b>Email</b> anne.hunter@wokingham.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank