



<b>Report for:</b>	Council
<b>Title of report:</b>	Members' Allowance Scheme and Constitutional amendment
<b>Date:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2022
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Graeme Elliott, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background papers:</b>	Cabinet Report 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2021 approving the Members' Allowance Scheme
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	

**Report Author / Responsible Officer**

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<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need
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	<p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p> <p>Climate and ecological emergency</p>
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To seek approval to changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme for financial year 2023-24.</li> <li>2. To seek approval to change the deadline that members should submit written questions on notice to Council.</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Council agree to amend the Members' Allowance Scheme for financial year 2023-24 to provide for a reduced increase in Members' allowances from the September CPI rate (10.1%) to 5.92%.</li> <li>2. That Council agree to amend the deadline that Members should submit written questions on notice for council meetings to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday before the meeting and authorise the Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic) Services to make the required changes to Part 4 of the Constitution to reflect this change.</li> </ol>
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	The Constitution is kept under continuous review by the Monitoring Officer and updates are proposed to Council when required.

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Monitoring Officer is under a continuous duty to review the Constitution to ensure that it is up to date and provides an appropriate governance framework for all Council decision making.
- 1.2 Proposals for change may be prompted not only by formal internal reviews, but also by the Monitoring Officer, the Cabinet, other Members or officers and by public opinion.
- 1.3 The changes proposed in this report have been proposed and considered by the Leader of the Council and the Opposition Leader and will assist the operational effectiveness of the Council and provide a balanced and proportionate increase in members' allowances as explained further in the report.

## **2 Changes to the Members Allowance Scheme**

- 2.1 The current Members' Allowance Scheme was approved by Council in April 2021 and is valid for 4 years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.
- 2.2 In respect of increases to allowances the adopted scheme provides for increases to be aligned to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the September before the new financial year. This September CPI rate was 10.1%.
- 2.3 It is proposed that instead of applying the CPI rate for the financial year 2023/24, that a rate of 5.92% is applied; this is the average agreed pay award to Dacorum Borough Council employees and therefore provides equity between increases to the employee proposed increases and councillors.
- 2.4 The proposed changes are for 2023/24 only and will revert to the existing CPI rate for 2024/25 unless otherwise agreed by council during the year.

## **3 Procedural change to deadline for written questions**

- 3.1 Part 4 of the Constitution contains the written procedures that apply to the conduct of Council, Cabinet and its regulatory committees.
- 3.2 Rule 10.3 of Part 4 provides for questions on notice at full Council:

Subject to Rule 10.5, a member of the Council may ask:

- the Mayor
- a member of the Cabinet;
- the chairman of any committee or sub-committee

a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough.

- 3.3 This is the rule which members use to submit questions in advance of the meeting which are usually addressed to Portfolio Holders. The current deadline set in the Constitution for submitting these questions is the Friday before the meeting. It is proposed to change this deadline to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday before the meeting. This will align the deadline with the date that notice of motions are required to be submitted and will allow more time for responses to be considered and prepared. The change will also allow for the questions to be included within the agenda for the meeting.

#### **4 Consultation**

The proposals in this report have been proposed by the Leader of the Council and Opposition Leader and it is understood that further consultation has taken place with Members via political group meetings and discussions.

#### **5 Financial and value for money implications:**

The proposed change to the Members' allowances will have minimal impact on the 2023/24 budget and will be included in the budget proposals to be considered and approved by Council in early 2023.

#### **6 Legal Implications**

If Council approves the changes, the Constitution will be updated to reflect the agreed change in procedures and there are no other legal implications arising from the report.

#### **7 Risk implications:**

This report proposes minor changes to meeting procedures and there are no risks associated to this part of the decision.

The proposed changes to the basis for assessing member allowances represent a balanced response to changes in external economic factors which were not anticipated at the time the current scheme was agreed in quarter 1 of 2021.

#### **8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:**

There are no Equalities, Community Impact of Human Rights implications arising from this report.

#### **9 Sustainability implications.**

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

#### **10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)**

There are no implications arising from this report.

#### **11 Statutory Comments**

##### **Monitoring Officer:**

The proposed change to meeting procedures will help to give members more time to prepare responses to questions and allow questions to be published with the agenda which will assist the efficiency and effectiveness of Council meetings.

**S151:**

The members pay award for 2023/24 will form part of the 2023/24 budget proposals that will be submitted for final approval to cabinet and council in February 2023.

**12 Conclusions:**

The report proposes minor procedural changes to ensure the effective running of Council meetings and are recommended for approval.

The changes to members' allowances are also put forward for Council agreement for the financial year 2023/24.