

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

27 FEBRUARY 2013

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Report prepared by Janet Barnes

1. **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

- 1.1 In accordance with the requirements set out in the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent Regulations, the Council is obliged to give consideration to the recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel ("JIRP").
- 1.2 Attached at Appendix A is the report of the Head of Democratic Services considered by the JIRP in January 2013. Appendix B sets out the response from the Chairman of the JIRP, having taken into account the views of the other Members of the Panel.
- 1.3 Broadband Allowance
- 1.3.1 Following an internal audit review, it is recommended that the current broadband allowance be incorporated into the Members' Allowance Scheme.
- 1.3.2 There are no financial implications with regard to the Broadband Allowance as there is no change to the claimable amounts and it is not expected that the number of Members currently claiming will increase.
- 1.4 Leader of the Opposition Allowance
- 1.4.1 It is proposed that the allocation of allowances to the Group Leaders on the current basis (£11,663 (50% of the Leader of the Council's allowance), shared between each Group Leader on basis of number of members in Political group) be scrapped and a new system be adopted, namely an amount is given to the Leader of the Opposition equivalent to 50% of the existing Group Leaders Allowance of £11,663 which would be £5,831. This would be given to the Leader of the main opposition group but which should have a minimum of ten Members.
- 1.4.2 An allowance would also be given to Group Leaders of groups of 5 or more Members which would equate to 20% of the total amount of £11,663, a

sum of £2332, and that Group Leaders for groups below 5 should receive no allowance.

1.4.3 There are no financial implications expected with this proposal as the maximum sum available remains the same.

2. **RECOMMENDED:**

2.1 That the following clause relating to Broadband Allowance be included in the Members' Allowances Scheme as a new paragraph 11:-

"Councillors are entitled to claim for the actual cost of their broadband service, up to a maximum of £23.49 per month. A copy of the Internet Service Provider's ("ISP") invoice must be supplied to the Payroll Department in May every year in order to continue to receive the allowance and should there be a change of provider, a copy of the new invoice must be sent to Payroll Department informing them of the change of supplier and, if appropriate, the associated monthly and yearly cost thereafter."

2.2 That Schedule 1 of the Members' Allowances Scheme be amended as follows:-

- a) Delete: Group Leaders Allowance;
- b) Add: Leader of the Opposition (minimum of 10 Councillors) (25% of Leader's Allowance) £5,831;
Group Leader (minimum of 5 Councillors) (10% of Leader's Allowance) £2,331.