
ALLOWANCES PAID TO MEMBERS DURING 2017/18

Report by Chief Executive

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

31 May 2018

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report seeks approval for the information on allowances paid to Members during 2017/8 to be published on the Council's website to meet the publicity requirements of the Local Government (Allowances and Expenses)(Scotland) Regulations 2007.**
- 1.2 The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the Local Government (Allowances and Expenses)(Scotland) Regulations 2007, as amended, specify the levels of salary, allowances and reimbursement of expenses which may be paid to local authority Elected Members. Councillors' salaries were increased by 0.2% from 5 May 2017 in accordance with The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Amendment Regulations 2017 and therefore the annual amount payable to each Councillor increased from £16,893 to £16,927 per annum, unless he or she was entitled to one of the higher amounts payable to the Leader of the Council, the Convener or to Senior Councillors. It should be noted that where a higher payment is made that is instead of the £16,927 and not in addition to this amount.
- 1.3 The number and designation of Senior Councillors was agreed in the Scheme of Remuneration at the meeting of Scottish Borders Council held on 24 May 2012, and then amended at the meeting of Council on 30 August 2012 to take account of changes to the Scheme of Administration. At the Scottish Borders Council meeting of 25 May 2017, a new Scheme of Payment for Senior Councillors was agreed with sums payable from 18 May 2017. Detailed in Appendix 1 to this report is the remuneration and expenses paid to all Councillors from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. Detailed in Appendix 2 is Members' attendance at training events, conferences and seminars in 2017/18.
- 1.4 Total remuneration and expenses paid to Members in 2017/18 amounted to £747,698.02, compared with a total of £772, 974.98 in 2016/17. Travel expenses total £58,744.61 in 2017/18, compared to the 2016/17 figure of £44,952.88. The cost of Telephone and ICT Expenses in 2017/18 amounted to £30,133.52, compared to £49,347.79 in 2016/17.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 I recommend that the Council agrees that the information in the Appendices to this report be published on the Council's website, in order to meet the publicity requirements of the Local Government (Allowances and Expenses)(Scotland) Regulations 2007.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the Local Government (Allowances and Expenses)(Scotland) Regulations 2007, as amended, specify the levels of salary, allowances and reimbursement of expenses which may be paid to local authority Elected Members.
- 3.2 Members' salaries were increased by 0.2% from 5 May 2017 in accordance with The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Amendment Regulations 2017 and therefore the annual amount payable to each Councillor increased from £16,893 to £16,927 per annum, unless he or she was entitled to one of the higher amounts payable to the Leader of the Council, the Convener or to Senior Councillors. It should be noted that where a higher payment is made that is instead of the £16,927 and not in addition to this amount. This report covers the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 so Members who either retired or were not returned at the election on 4 May 2017 are also included.
- 3.3 The aforementioned 0.2% rise meant that, from 5 May 2017, the annual sum for the Leader increased from £33,789 to £33,857 and the sum for the Convener increased from £25,341 to £25,392 (as per the regulations. At the Scottish Borders Council meeting of 25 May 2017, the Scheme of Remuneration for Senior Councillors was agreed with sums payable from 18 May 2017. In addition to the Convener and the Leader, 14 Senior remunerated posts and sums payable were agreed as follows: the Executive Members for Adult Social Care (and Depute Convener); Children & People; Finance; Business & Economic Development; Transformation & HR; Roads & Infrastructure; Culture & Sport; Planning & Environment; Neighbourhoods & Locality Services and Community Safety received £22,240 per annum; the Chair of Adult & Scrutiny and the Locality Committee (now Area Partnerships) Chairs, who do not hold an Executive Member post, received £18,450 per annum.

4 ALLOWANCES PAID DURING 2017/18

- 4.1 Detailed in Appendix 1 to this report is the remuneration and expenses paid to all Councillors from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. The format of the Appendix is prescribed in the Local Government (Allowances and Expenses) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2010 and the total amounts to £747,698.02. In 2016/17, this amount was £772,974.98.
- 4.2 The total amount of remuneration paid to Councillors in 2017/18 decreased to £654,740.52 compared to £675,468.00 in 2016/17. This was mainly due to a vacancy following the resignation of Councillor Ballantyne from 1 December 2017 until the election of Councillor Penman on 22 February 2018. Additionally, following the Council Elections on 4 May 2017, all Councillors were initially paid based on £16,927 until appointments were made to the senior positions on 18 May 2017 when the higher amounts payable were put into effect.
- 4.3 Travel expenses totalled £58,744.61 in 2017/18, compared to the 2016/17 figure of £44,952.88. Rail travel totalled £1,722.80 in 2017/18 compared to £1,659.03 in 2016/17 with car and van expenses £56,404.09 in 2017/18

and £43,118.90 in 2016/17. The overall travel expenses figure is expected to fluctuate year on year as claims are based on actual journeys made. The amount any one Councillor claims varies depending on whether they hold a Senior Councillor role, the distance they live from Council Headquarters, the number of meetings they attend, and whether their claims are up to date. The Induction programme for Councillors in May/June 2017 and then briefing sessions for Members from later summer 2017 will also have had an impact on travel expenses. Some Councillors may also choose not to make claims for travel expenses.

- 4.4 The cost of Telephone and ICT Expenses in 2017/18 amounted to £30,133.52 compared to £49,347.79 in 2016/17. These costs include telephone and broadband connections and can vary from Councillor to Councillor depending on the external provider used at their particular location. As technology has developed since the previous election in May 2012, rather than the Council arranging for the installation of separate telephone lines/internet connections to the homes of those new Councillors elected in May 2017, instead these Councillors were offered the opportunity to claim half the cost of their own home telephone line/broadband connection (as a taxable income) for Council business use. Some of the Councillors elected in May 2017 have yet to make a claim in this respect. From August 2015 Councillors have received electronic copies of committee papers and use i-pads instead to access the information, which has led to a saving in printing and postage costs. The costs also include the running costs of all blackberries, mobile phones, as well as electronic tablets.

5 TRAINING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

- 5.1 Detailed in Appendix 2 is Members' attendance at training events, conferences and seminars in 2017/18, in the format recommended by the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee. Fees, accommodation and travel (other than by car/van or public transport) for attendance are generally paid directly by the Council. Mileage and public transport costs to attend these events is claimed by the individual Member and included in Appendix 1 to this report. All Members were invited to Induction training after the May 2017 elections and development/training sessions are also held for Members throughout the year as part of a planned programme. The majority of the In-House training events related to Induction Training. Councillors also undertake specific/refresher training related to committees e.g. Audit, Planning and Building Standards, etc. on an ongoing basis and this tends to be carried out in-house so there is no direct cost. Where this training takes place as part of the business of committee, it is not recorded separately and not therefore included in the appendix. This also applies to briefings for Members.
- 5.2 The Induction Programme for Members comprised 12 sessions from 9 May to 23 June 2017, covering Governance, Council Services, Finance, Planning, Common Good Funds, Audit & Scrutiny, etc. The Members Development Programme began in August 2017 and comprises a number of briefing or training sessions. Eleven sessions have been held so far and they cover areas such as partnership working, economic development, waste, emergency planning, social media, etc. This Development Programme will continue, with input from Members into the content of it, at regular

intervals. Attendance at the briefing sessions is not included as training events.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to the recommendation in this report as it details the actual expenditure made in the last financial year which were contained within the budget.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

The information contained in this report, together with the associated publication of the information on the Council's website, is intended to advise stakeholders of the allowances and expenses payments to Members, thus ensuring transparency and openness.

6.3 Equalities

There is no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the recommendation in this report.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no effects on the economy, community or environment arising from the recommendation in this report.

6.5 Carbon Management

While there will be an impact on the Borders' carbon footprint from Councillor travel, where possible Members share transport, make use of the Borders railway and keep travel to a minimum. Due to the geographic spread of the Borders, travel is a factor in the duties of Councillors.

6.6 Rural Proofing

There is no adverse impact on the rural area from the recommendation in this report.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the recommendation in this report.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, and the Chief Officer HR are being consulted on this report. Any comments received will be incorporated in the final report. The Corporate Communications Unit has also been advised of the content.

Approved by

Tracey Logan
Chief Executive

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: Members Travel Claims; Invoices

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council, 25 May 2017

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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