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## **ALLOWANCES PAID TO MEMBERS DURING 2018/19**

**Report by Chief Executive**

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**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**16 May 2019**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the information on allowances paid to Members during 2018/19 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 0.4% from 1 April 2018 in accordance with The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Amendment Regulations 2018 and therefore the annual amount payable to each Councillor increased from £16,927 to £16,994 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 £16,994 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 2018 to 31 March 2019. Detailed in Appendix 2 is Members' attendance at training events, conferences and seminars in 2018/19.
- 1.4 Total remuneration and expenses paid to Members in 2018/19 amounted to £757,910.91, compared with a total of £747,698.02 in 2017/18. Travel expenses total £61,119.58 in 2018/19, compared to the 2017/18 figure of £58,744.61. The cost of Telephone and ICT Expenses in 2018/19 amounted to £29,001.12, compared to £30,133.52 in 2017/18.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 I recommend that the Council notes that the information in the Appendices to this report is to 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 0.4% from 1 April 2018 in accordance with The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Amendment Regulations 2018 and therefore the annual amount payable to each Councillor increased from £16,927 to £16,994 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 £16,994 and not in addition to this amount.
- 3.3 The aforementioned 0.4% rise meant that, from 1 April 2018, the annual sum for the Leader increased from £33,857 to £33,992 and the sum for the Convener increased from £25,392 to £25,494 (as per the regulations). At the Scottish Borders Council meeting of 25 May 2017, the Scheme of Remuneration for Senior Councillors was agreed and, in addition to the Convener and the Leader, 14 Senior remunerated posts were agreed with sums payable from 1 April 2018 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 £22,329 per annum; the Chair of Audit & Scrutiny and the Locality Committee (now Area Partnerships) Chairs, who do not hold an Executive Member post, received £18,524 per annum.

### **4 ALLOWANCES PAID DURING 2018/19**

- 4.1 Detailed in Appendix 1 to this report is the remuneration and expenses paid to all Councillors from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. The format of the Appendix is prescribed in the Local Government (Allowances and Expenses) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2010 and the total amounts to £757,910.91. In 2017/18, this amount was £747,698.02.
- 4.2 The total amount of remuneration paid to Councillors in 2018/19 increased to £661,868.30 compared to £654,740.52 in 2017/18. This was mainly due to some reduced costs in 2017/18 as a result of 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 the basic Councillor salary 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 £61,119.58 in 2018/19, compared to the 2017/18 figure of £58,744.61. Rail travel totalled £2,019.17 in 2018/19 compared to £1,722.80 in 2017/18 with car and van expenses £57,833.70 in 2018/19 and £56,404.09 in 2017/18. 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. Some Councillors may also choose not to make claims for travel expenses.

- 4.4 The cost of Telephone and ICT Expenses in 2018/19 amounted to £29,001.20 compared to £30,133.52 in 2017/18. 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. That same offer has now been made to the remaining Councillors. Some of the Councillors have yet to make a claim in this respect and some of the changes have yet to be made. 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 2018/19, 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 are invited to briefing/training sessions during the year as part of a planned programme – only those training sessions are included within Appendix 2. 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.
- 5.2 The Members Development Programme began in August 2017 and comprises a number of briefing or training sessions. Twelve sessions have been held this year and they covered areas such as Borders, Anti-Fraud, Gypsy Traveller update, Best Value, Fit for 2024, Brexit, 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 part of training events. Only one training event from this Programme was included – Dementia Friendly training.

## **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, 31 May 2018

**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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