

Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	1 April 2026
Report Title	Review of Members' Allowances Scheme – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Swale
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery – Director of Resources
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	Jo Millard – Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. That the Council considers the Members' Allowance Scheme proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to consider the Council's Members' Allowance Scheme and make recommendations to Full Council.
- 1.2 Allowances for the Mayor/Deputy Mayor are not subject to review by the Independent Panel and Council may consider an allowance review of these positions separately in the future.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Regulations require Councils to undertake a review of their Members' Allowances Scheme every four years. The last full review for Swale was undertaken in May 2022 when the Council moved from a Leader and Cabinet model of governance to a committee model. Council agreed to implement the IRP's recommendations at that review.
- 2.2 At the Full Council meeting held in January 2026, Members agreed the appointment of 3 local residents to act as independent members to the Remuneration panel, alongside Mark Palmer, Director of Development and Governance at South East Employers who chaired the review. The review was carried out on 2 and 3 March 2026. The panel considered the questionnaires completed by 26 members, interviewed 7 members and compared remuneration with other Kent Councils (attached at Appendix 3) and summarised below. The panel's report is attached at Appendix I.

Kent Councils Comparison Summary*

Council name	Political control	Population	Leader	Deputy Leader	Chair Audit Committee	Licensing Committee Chair	Planning Committee Chair	Committee Chair	Opposition Group Leader	Deputy Opposition Leader	Group Leader	Opposition Spokesperson
Ashford Borough Council	No Overall Control	135000	£19059.50	£12706.33	£6353.17	£1905.95	£7623.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	£293.02 per Group Member	n/a
Canterbury City Council	No Overall Control	Approx 162,400	£22513.51	£6876.05	£1109.04	£4990.68	£4990.68	£554.53	£166.36 per Cllr	£110.91per Cllr	£166.36 per Cllr	n/a
Dover District Council	No Overall Control	116400	£18000	£9000	£4500	£1125	£4500	£1125	£5061	£2250	0	0
Folkestone & Hythe District Council	No Overall Control	112500	£21842	£12812	£6697	£6697	£6697	£6697	£13106	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gravesham Borough Council	Labour	110700	£26991	£12689	£3717	£2574	£6313	n/a	£5995	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maidstone Borough Council (2024 data)	No overall control	184200	£24188.56	£14513.18	£4837.77	£4837.77	£9675.42	n/a	£n/a	n/a	£2418.82	n/a
Medway Council	Labour	292655	£41511.6	£27674.4	£9686.04	0	£16604.64	n/a	£16604.64	£8302.32	£8302.32	£8302.32
Swale Borough Council	No Overall Control	Approx 159,308	£16965	£8483	£2036	£2036	£6786	£5938	£5938	n/a	£2036	n/a
Thanet District Council	Labour	141000	£21675	£12962	£6209	£3812	£6209	Different for all committees	£9585	£3376	n/a	£3376
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	No Overall Control	133661	£22372	£16777	£2797	£2797	£1863	£1725	£4755	n/a	£4755	n/a
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Liberal Democrat	115000	£22000	0	£3500	£2800	£6000	0	£5800	0	£5800	0

*Excluding Sevenoaks, information not available

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The attached report of the panel sets out their recommendations in full and provides commentary on the reasoning behind their recommendations. Council is now asked to consider the recommendations proposed by the IRP. The table below sets out the impact of the implementation of proposals:

Role	Current	Proposal		
		Proposal from Independent Remuneration Panel	% Change	Cost Change Total ²
Basic Member Allowance (47)	£6,786	£7,335	8.1%	£25,803
Council Leader	£16,965	£18,338	8.1%	£1373
Deputy Leader	£8,483	£9,169	8.1%	£686
Chair of Planning Committee	£6,786	£7,335	8.2%	£549
Leader of the Main Opposition Group	£5,938	£6,425	8.2%	£487
Chair of Service Committees (4)	£5,938	£6,425	8.2%	£1948
Leader of the Smaller Opposition Groups¹ (2)	£2,036	£2,201	8.1%	£330
Chair Licensing Committee	£2,036	£2,201	8.1%	£165
Chair Audit Committee	£2,036	£2,201	8.1%	£165
Chair Standards Committee	£2,036	£2,201	8.1%	£165
Chair Area Committee (4)	£2,036	£1,834	-10%	-£808

¹ SRA only payable to Group Leaders with at least 10% of all Members within the Group (10% of 47 Members), 5 Members

² Actual figures may be reduced as no more than 1 SRA may be claimed by an individual Member

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Council is required to set a Members' Allowance Scheme and in doing so, it must have regard to the Panel's recommendations. However, the Council does not have to approve the recommendations made by the Panel. Council may choose to implement an alternative proposal.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 A questionnaire was circulated to all Members, in advance of the Panel meeting to seek feedback. 26 of 47 Members completed the questionnaire and the responses are attached to the IRP's report. In addition, 7 Members were interviewed as part of the Panel's review.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	None for the purposes of this report
Financial, Resource and Property	The implications are contained within the report but should Council agree to all recommendations, the total impact on the Council's annual budget is £30,863
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 set out the rules regarding allowances schemes for Members and the requirement to establish an Independent Panel and to consider their recommendations.
Crime and Disorder	None for the purposes of this report
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None for the purposes of this report
Health and Wellbeing	None for the purposes of this report
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None for the purposes of this report
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None for the purposes of this report
Equality and Diversity	Remuneration may encourage and support a greater diversity of Councillor representation.
Privacy and Data Protection	None for the purposes of this report
Local Government Reorganisation	The Local Government Reorganisation may result in uncertainty around future governance structures and member roles meaning any allowances agreed now may only be appropriate for the remainder of the current authority's term and whilst a fair scheme

	should be adopted now a further review will be required once a new authority is established
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7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel
- Appendix II: Questionnaire Analysis
- Appendix III: Comparative Data with other Kent authorities

8 Background Papers

Reports and Minutes considered by previous Council meetings:

[Agenda Council meeting 15 June 2022](#)

[SBC Council report to appoint indep panel mem Jan 2026](#)