

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Members' Allowances Scheme – Variation to Support Guidelines
Meeting/Date:	Corporate Governance Panel – 23rd July 2014 Council – 30th July 2014
Executive Portfolio:	Strategic Economic Development and Legal Councillor T D Sanderson
Report by:	Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

The Members' Allowances Scheme is enclosed in Part 6 of the District Council's Constitution. It is reviewed every four years by an Independent Remuneration Panel. When the Scheme was last reviewed in 2011, the Panel considered that, for completeness, the Scheme also should reflect the type and levels of other support received by Councillors from the Council such as IT and telephone equipment.

At its meeting on 10th April 2014, the Cabinet reviewed the provision of IT support for Members and agreed to withdraw IT equipment and broadband connections for Members and offer, as an alternative, the opportunity to purchase iPads from Member Allowances in a move towards electronic delivery of agenda for Council meetings. As part of this decision, the Cabinet recommended that the Members' IT and Telephone Support Guidelines referred to in the Scheme be varied to reflect the new proposal. Although subject to call in by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), this decision was reaffirmed by the Cabinet.

As review of the Constitution and recommending any consequential changes to the Council forms part of the Panel's terms of reference, this report describes the minor changes that are required to be made to the Scheme, and principally, the Guidelines to reflect the Cabinet's decision.

Recommendation(s):

That paragraph 10 of the Members Allowances Scheme and the Members' IT and Telephone Support:Guidelines appended to the Scheme be updated to reflect the changes approved by the Cabinet to the level of IT support etc to be provided to Councillors by the Council and that the Council be recommended to approve the appropriate adjustments.

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1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

- 1.1 As the Panel is responsible for reviewing and recommending to Council proposed changes to the Constitution, this report describes the minor adjustment to be made to Part 6 - the Members' Allowance Scheme following the decision by the Cabinet to approve changes to Member' IT provision.
- 1.2 The Cabinet recommended that the Members IT and telephone support guidelines be varied accordingly to reflect the decision.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Paragraph 10 of the Scheme entitled 'Members IT Support' currently states –

'District Councillors shall be entitled to IT and telephone support to assist them in their roles as Members of the authority. Such support shall include ICT, telephone equipment and consumables which shall be issued in accordance with the guidelines appended to this scheme.'
- 2.2 The proposed new arrangements have a minor impact on this wording. IT and telephone support will continue, although in terms of IT, perhaps in a more limited way. Under the 'Facing the Future' exercise it was proposed that the the provision of IT sundries and consumables should be discontinued. The use of iPads and withdrawal of individual home printers should, in any event, remove the need for Members to print documents so the demand for paper, toner and ink cartridges should also reduce. It is suggested therefore that the term 'consumables be deleted but that in its widest sense the remainder of the paragraph remains current.
- 2.3 It is the Guidelines which require the most radical change. These are included as an appendix to the Scheme for Members' convenience and ease of reference. Their inclusion is not a requirement of a modular Constitution. The Guidelines have been updated to reflect the new arrangements and a copy is enclosed as an Appendix.

3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

- 3.1 The 'Future of Members' IT' was considered on two occasions by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). The Panel recommended to the Cabinet that 'the current terms of the Constitution be reviewed and, if necessary, revisions (to it) be implemented in the normal way'.
- 3.2 This report addresses the conclusions of the Panel.

4. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Should the Panel recommend to the Council that the the word 'consumables' be deleted from paragraph 10 of the Members' Allowances Scheme and that the changes made to the general guidelines for Members' IT and Telephone Support be endorsed, the amendments can be subsumed within the Constitution with immediate effect.

5. APPENDIX INCLUDED

Appendix – Members' IT and Telephone Support: Guidelines

BACKGROUND PAPERS

District Council's Constitution

Minutes of the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well Being)

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