

Council Issues

1. Amendments to the Constitution

a) Scheme of Allowances for payment of Dependent Carer's Allowances

The current Members' Allowance Scheme as detailed in Appendix 2 of the Constitution was approved by Council on 13 October 2015 following the Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

Currently, the Scheme, as shown in Appendix 2 of the Constitution includes a provision:

'Dependent Carer's Allowances

Members with care responsibilities in respect of dependent children under 16...will be reimbursed, on production of valid receipts, for actual payments to a carer while the Member is on Approved Duties.'

The following rates will be paid in respect of Care:

Childcare	£6 per hour per child'
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This rate has been in place since at least 2011. When our scheme of allowances was reviewed in 2015, the £6 figure was left unchanged. The relevant part of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel stated:

The Dependants Carers Allowance (DCA)

129. *No representation was received suggesting that the reimbursements and levels claimable under the Dependants' Carers' Allowances needed revising.*

130. ***The Panel recommends that the current scope and level of reimbursements paid under the Dependants Carers Allowance is unaltered.***

The rate is now significantly lower than that which is paid by other local authorities.

The London authorities Independent Remuneration Panel recommends that London authorities use a rate of £10.55 per hour which is the discretionary London Living Wage. The Herts CC rate is the statutory National Living Wage for 2018/19. The National Living Wage from April 2019 is £8.21 per hour.

ECC's rate of £6 per child per hour was broadly in line with the minimum wage in 2011 and therefore seems likely to have been in line with other authorities in that time. If we increased the ECC allowance from £6 to the current statutory minimum wage for over 25s (the National Living Wage) of

£8.21 we would still pay lower than many authorities, but we would catch up with the increase in minimum wage since 2012. This would mean that childcare costs were less of an issue for potential councillors with child care needs.

Recommendation:

That the Members' Allowance Scheme in the Constitution be amended with effect from 1 May 2019 so that the maximum rate for dependent carers allowance payable for childcare per child per hour which is currently £6.00 be amended to £8.21.

b) Broadcasting of Public Questions

At present public questions at full council are not routinely broadcast as they are taken outside of the formal meeting. However, at the extraordinary meeting of Council on 12 March 2019 the Chairman permitted the broadcasting of the public questions and this did not seem to cause any difficulties.

Having considered the matter at its meeting on 9 April 2019, the Constitutional Working Group agreed to recommend to Council that public questions should become part of the business of the meeting and so be broadcast.

Recommendation:

That with effect from the close of this meeting the following amendments to the constitution take effect:

- a) paragraph 16.7.1 'Order of business at Ordinary meetings of the Council' be amended by the insertion of a new sub-paragraph (iv):

 '(iv) to deal with questions from members of the public in accordance with paragraph 16.12.9;'

and subsequent sub-paragraphs be renumbered.

- b) Paragraph 16.7.2 'Order of business at the Annual Meetings' be amended by the insertion of a new sub-paragraph (ii):

 '(ii) to deal with questions from members of the public in accordance with paragraph 16.12.9;'

and subsequent sub-paragraphs be renumbered.

- c) By the amendment of paragraph 16.12.9 sub-paragraph (i) of the constitution which currently reads:

- ‘(i) ‘Before the beginning of every meeting of the Full Council there shall be a period of up to 30 minutes to enable members of the public to ask questions.’

To read:

- ‘(i) ‘At every meeting of the Full Council there shall be a period of up to 30 minutes to enable members of the public to ask questions of which notice has been given in accordance with 16.12.9.’

c) Part 26 - Appendix 3, List of Approved Bodies

Appendix 3 of part 26 of the Constitution is a list of Approved Bodies. Members appointed as County Council representatives to Approved Bodies may claim expenses from the Council for attending meetings if they do not receive payment from any other organisation.

- The recently formed Hadleigh Country Park Forum will be seeking a representative from the council.
- The Epping Forest Locality Panel has been disbanded.

Recommendation:

- a) That the list of Approved Bodies in Appendix 3 of Part 26 of the Constitution be amended to include the newly formed Hadleigh Country Park Forum and remove Epping Forest Locality Panel.
- b) The numbering of the alphabetical list of Approved Bodies as shown in Appendix 3 of part 26 of the Constitution to be amended to take account of the changes.

3. Dates of Council

Recommendation:

That it be agreed that the meetings of the Council will be held on Tuesdays at 10am on:

9 July, 8 October and 10 December 2019;
11 February, 12 May, 14 July, 13 October and 8 December 2020.