

# **Senior councillors in East Lothian to receive pay rise of over 40%**

**Senior councillors in East Lothian will receive a pay rise of over 40% this year after a review of national wages for elected members.**

East Lothian Council is one of ten smaller local authorities moved from the lowest band of pay in Scotland up to the next grade by the Scottish Government on recommendations from the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC).

The move means council leader Norman Hampshire will see his annual salary go up by 40.7% from £35, 580 to £50,063 from April 1.

Provost John McMillan and five senior councillors, including members of the Labour administration cabinet and the opposition leader Councillor Lyn Jardine will receive a similar rise with their salaries going from £26,686 to £37,458.

The rest of the council's councillors will also see wages rise by more than 20% from the current pay of £21,345 to £25,982.

East Lothian Council was the first in Scotland to approve a 10% council tax increase on residents earlier this month as budgets were being set across the country. They also introduced a 6.5% rent rise on tenants.

Council leader and civic head salaries are set nationally

along with the base pay for councillors, however local authorities are allowed to decide how much senior councillors receive with a maximum of 75% of the leader's wage available.

Earlier this week Midlothian senior councillors who previously received 67% of their leader's wage saw their salary confirmed as rising by 56% after they agreed to raise it to the maximum 75% of the new improved wage.

East Lothian senior councillors already received the top 75% wage so there was no need to bring the increase to council for approval.

The Scottish Government scrapped Band A council gradings after the review recognising there was little difference in workload between the lowest grade and the one above.

Under current regulations the highest councils are a Band D and receive the top council leader salary with Band C council leaders paid 85% of the top salary and Band B leaders receiving 70%.

The new Band B councils also have the option to increase the number of senior councillors they have to 10. East Lothian currently has five and said any decision over increasing the numbers would be brought before members for approval.

A council spokesperson said: "Councillors' terms and conditions, including pay, were subject to an independent national review carried out by SLARC. This was to ensure elected members' role and responsibilities were reflected and that remuneration does not act as barrier to encouraging a diverse range of people to stand for elected office.

"It was the first such review since 2014; East Lothian has experienced significant growth since then.

"The SLARC review recommended all band A councils should move into band B from 1 April 2025. The legislation is currently

before the Scottish Parliament and we will implement the new guidelines for remuneration from 1 April.

“As this will be a matter of statute, the uplift must be applied and we will be unable to change the nationally-agreed levels. A report is currently being prepared which will outline the impacts of these legislative changes on East Lothian Council’s elected members and the authority’s overall budget.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter