



Mar 07, 2016 14:36 GMT

Response to correct the Taxpayer's Alliance story on councillors' allowances

Moray Council today moved to correct an erroneous claim by the Taxpayers' Alliance that its elected members were the highest paid in Britain.

In a press release, the alliance stated that Moray councillors were paid the highest basic allowance - £16,722 – of any local authority in the country.

In reality, Moray councillors received exactly the same basic allowance for 2014-15 as other councillors up and down the land - £16,560.

A Moray Council spokesman said: “The basic allowance for councillors is covered by legislation and applies to all Scottish local authorities. Councils are not able to vary this level of remuneration upwards.

“However, we think we know where the Taxpayers' Alliance got it wrong. The basic pay for councillors in the financial year 2012-13 was £16,234. As with all other local authorities, there was a 1% pay award for the following two years, bring the basic allowance to £16,396 for 2013-14 and to £16,560 for 2014-15.

“The pay award was not implemented until 2014-15, however. Therefore the basic allowance was reported as £16,560 plus the backdated pay award for 2013-14, giving a total for 2014-15 of £16,722.

“But in fact the basic allowance for Moray councillors in 2014-15 was £16,560, the same as it was for all councillors elsewhere in Scotland.

"Before making this claim that councillors in Moray have the highest level of allowances in the UK, it would have been a good idea to check. It's fortunate for the TPA that some reporters have taken this basic step to get facts right before publishing a damaging claim."

Moray Council area stretches from Tomintoul in the south to the shores of the Moray Firth, from Keith in the east to Forres in the west. The council and its 4,500 employees respond to the needs of 92,500 residents in this beautiful part of Scotland, which nestles between Aberdeenshire and the Highlands.

Famous for its colony of dolphins, fabulous beaches and more malt whisky distilleries than anywhere else in Scotland, Moray is a thriving area and a great place to live.

Headquartered in Elgin, the administrative capital of Moray.

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