

Some local councils can't afford to increase allowance - Zuraida

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Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin today said a coordinated nationwide increase to local councillors allowances remains an unfeasible move.

Online portal *Free Malaysia Today* quoted Zuraida as saying that any increase to allowances for city, municipal and district councillors remain dependent on the respective local authority's financial strength.

"The ministry sees a need for coordination but I myself cannot instruct it because there are local authorities that are still (financially) weak, there are local authorities that could not afford to increase, and the ministry also could not afford to cover the increase," she told reporters after a football match in Ampang this morning.

She said this when asked for comments on reports of the latest increase in monthly allowances for local councillors in Johor beginning Jan 1.

Johor exco in charge of local government Tan Chen Choong yesterday announced that allowances for all city councillors has been doubled from RM900 to RM1,800, taking into account increased challenges and increased cost of living.

Tan said that allowances for municipal councillors have also been increased from RM800 to RM1,300, and district councillors from RM600 to RM1,000.

According to the Housing and Local Government website, there are at present 149 local authorities nationwide, including Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

The figure represented 12 city councils, 39 municipal councils and 98 district councils.