



**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF
KING'S LYNN & WEST
NORFOLK- MEMBERS'
ALLOWANCES REVIEW**

2015/16

**REPORT OF THE
INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION
PANEL**

**DAVID DIXON
MARK PALMER
MIKE PRESS**

DECEMBER 2015

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 were laid before Parliament on 7 April 2003, and came into force on 1 May 2003. Under the Regulations, changes to Member allowances cannot be made by a Council without having regard to the views of an Independent Panel set up specifically to advise on the matter.
- 1.2 The Independent Panel for the Council currently consists of David Dixon, (Media Representative), Mark Palmer (South East Employers), Panel Chairman and Michael Press (Citizens Panel Representative). The Panel met to look at the current scheme of allowances and to consider any recommendations for changes for 2015/16. The effective date for the changes is proposed would be May 2016, post Annual Council.
- 1.3 Biographical information of the Panel

David Dixon – Publishing Director, Lynn News – Media Representative. Publishing Director (Retired) of East Midlands Newspapers. Festival Too Chairman of Fund Raising, King's Lynn Lions, and Treasurer.

Mark Palmer – Development Director, South East Employers. Chairman of a number of Independent Remuneration Panels and a development professional.

Mike Press – Community Representative

Retired Executive Manager, Vauxhall Motors (General Motors), and former Councillor, Chairman of Committee/s and previous Chairman and Vice-Chairman of a District Council in Bedfordshire.

- 1.4 The Panel was supported by Samantha Winter, Democratic Services Manager and Jenna Pell, Democratic Services Apprentice.

2 The Regulations

Allowances

- 2.1 The Regulations are designed to give local authorities discretion to establish remuneration schemes reflecting local circumstances.
- 2.2 Local authorities must have regard to the recommendations of their Independent Panel before making decisions on matters relating to the Member's Allowances Scheme.

3 Timetable

- 3.1 It is recommended that all the proposed allowances payable, once agreed by Council should apply from **May 2016**, after the Annual Council meeting.

4 Invitation to all Members

- 4.1 The Panel sent an invitation to all Members to either come to the Panel meetings to discuss the issue of allowances, or to complete a questionnaire. Fourteen members completed a questionnaire that was taken into account when making recommendations. The analysis of the questionnaire responses is attached as Appendix 1

- 4.2 The following Members were interviewed as part of the review on the 16th and 17th December 2015.

- Councillor M Tilbury
- Councillor K Mellish
- Councillor S Fraser
- Councillor A Tyler
- Councillor N Daubney (Leader of the Council)
- Councillor C Sampson
- Councillor C Bower
- Councillor S Squire
- Councillor G Hipperson
- Councillor R Bird
- Councillor D Tyler

5 2015/16 Review

- 5.1 The Panel undertook a full and comprehensive review. In doing so it has compared all the levels of allowances with those from other authorities across the county and the Eastern Region. The benchmark Councils include

- Breckland Council
- Broadland Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Fenland District Council
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- North Norfolk District Council
- Norwich City Council
- South Holland District Council and
- South Norfolk District Council

A summary of allowances in the above Councils are attached as Appendix 2.

- 5.2 The Panel acknowledges that the Council has to take a political decision in awarding any increases in its allowances for Members taking into account the Council's continued budgetary constraints and the national and local economic picture.
- 5.3 The Panel feels that there is a danger where by not making any increases on a reasonably regular basis the levels of allowance would be eroded, so potentially requiring a larger increase in future years.
- 5.4 In line with the practice in earlier reports, the Panel again draws attention to the fact that the role of Councillor should not be considered as salaried, and the allowances should not be considered as payment for a "job", but remuneration for costs incurred and a degree of the time spent on Council business.
- 5.5 The Regulations provide for the payment to Members of a Special Responsibility Allowance designed to take into account the additional degree of responsibility and some of the additional time spent in certain roles.

6. Panel's Detailed Recommendations

The Panel's considerations and recommendations are set out in the following sections of the report:

6.1 Regulation 4- Basic Allowance

- 6.1.1 This part of the Regulations state that an authority shall provide for the payment of a basic allowance for **every member of the Council and it will be the same amount for each such member.**

Position	Current	Recommendation
Basic Allowance	£5,140	£5,581

The Panel was keen to see the Basic Allowance linked to a formula that was robust, fair and transparent. The formula agreed was as follows

Median average hourly staff pay x Frontline Councillor hours per week x 52 weeks per year - Public Services Discount (PSD) %

£10.32 x 13 hours x 52 weeks = £6,976.32 – 20% PSD = £5,580.80

From next year the Panel recommends that the Basic Allowance be increased in line with staff annual percentage salary increases.

6.2 Regulation 5 – Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's)

- 6.2.1** This Regulation states that an authority may provide for the payment for each year for an allowance to such members of the authority as have special responsibilities in relation to the authority.
- 6.2.2** Any scheme must specify the amount of each Special Responsibility Allowance and it must provide that where an authority is divided into at least two political groups that a Special Responsibility Allowance is paid to at least one member who is not a member of the controlling group.
- 6.2.3** The allowance for the Leader of the Council is based on a multiplier of the Basic Allowance, Basic Allowance x 2.75. The other SRA's with the exception of the Vice Chairman are calculated as a percentage of the Leader of the Council's Allowance. The Vice Chairman's allowances are calculated on the basis of 40% of the Chairman's of the Committees allowance. This approach provides a clear and transparent approach to calculating the SRA's.

6.3 Cabinet Members

- 6.3.1** The responsibility of the **Leader of the Council and Deputy (Vice Chairman)** and **Cabinet Members** has been considered.

Position	Current	Recommendation
Leader of Council and Chairman of the Cabinet	£14,760	£15,345 (multiplier of Basic Allowance x 2.75)
Vice Chairman	£8,070	£8,440 (55% of Leaders allowance)
Members of Cabinet	£6,600	£6,905 (45% of the Leaders allowance)

Position	Current	Recommendation
Assistant to the Leader	£870	£870

6.4 Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

6.4.1 The Panel has in previous years made the recommendation that the allowances for these posts should reflect those of the Policy Review Panels. The Panel are still of the view that this should be the case. The Panel is also aware of a separate review of the Scrutiny Committee and Policy and Review Panels.

Position	Current	Recommendation
Chairman CSC	£2,000	£2,148
Vice-Chairman CSC	£870	£859 (40% of the Chairman's allowance)

6.5 Policy Review Panels

Position	Current	Recommendation
Chairmen Panels	£2,000	£2,148
Vice-Chairmen Panels	£870	£859 (40% of the Chairmen's allowance)

6.6 Planning Committee

6.6.1 The Panel continues to consider that the responsibilities of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee should reflect the considerable responsibility carried out behind the scenes with officers and the public as well as at the meetings of the Committee.

Position	Current	Recommendation
Chairman Planning Committee	£5,050	£6,138 (40% of the Leaders allowance)
Vice-Chairman Planning Committee	£2,200	£2,445 (40% of the Chairman's allowance)

6.6.2 In 2012/13 the Panel referred to the fact that it was very conscious of the heavy workload of the Committee, and the requirement for all members of that Committee to be present for lengthy meetings and training sessions. The Panel is still of the same view as the workload of this Committee has not diminished in any way.

6.7 Licensing Committee and Licensing and Appeals Board

6.7.1 The Panel is aware of the changing workload for the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee and the Board.

6.7.2 The current number and frequency of hearings of the Committee, the Panel were informed has reduced significantly. The Panel is of the view that the role of Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Licensing and Appeals Board is a more complex and demanding role than that of Licensing Committee. The recommendations are as follows:

Position	Current	Recommendation
Licensing and Appeals Board and Licensing Committee Chairman	£5,050	£5,050 (75% of the SRA to be provided to the Licensing Appeals Board Chairman £3,788 and 25% of the SRA to be provided to the Licensing Committee Chairman £1,262)
Vice Chairman Vice Chairman of Licensing Appeals Board Vice Chairman of Licensing Committee	£2,200	£1,515 (40% of the Chairman of the Licensing Appeals Board) £505 (40% of the Licensing Committee Chairman)

6.8 Standards Committee

6.8.1 The situation regarding a Standards Committee changed with the enactment of the Localism Act 2011. The recommendation takes note of this change

Position	Current	Recommendation
Standards Committee Chairman	£760	£767 (5% of the Leaders allowance)
Vice-Chairman	£380	£307 (40% of the Chairman's allowance)

6.9 Committee Co-Optees

6.9.1 Regulation 9 – The Co-Optees Allowance provides for payment of an annual allowance to people who are not members of the authority but who are members of a committee or sub-committee of the authority.

6.9.2 The Council currently has a small number of Co-Optees (non Borough Councillors) who support the Council.

Position	Current	Recommendation
Standards Committee Co-Optees	£200	£200

6.10 Task Groups

6.10.1 Currently Task Group Chairmen are paid a one off fee for the additional responsibility of that work (if they do not already draw a Special Responsibility Allowance). The Panel are of the view that the role of Task Group Chairman should no longer attract an SRA.

Position	Current	Recommendation
Task Group Chairman	£170	Delete SRA

6.11 Mayor and Deputy Mayor Allowances

6.11.1 The Panel considered the level of allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and in the light of representations regarding the contributions of the roles to the Council therefore proposes no change to the current allowances payable.

Position	Current	Recommendation
Mayor	£5,800	£5,800 (38% of the Leaders allowance)
Deputy Mayor	£2,030	£2,030 (no change)

6.12 Political Allowances

6.12.1 The Panel recognises the work carried out by the Opposition Group Leaders in motivating and coordinating activities and therefore recommends the following allowances for opposition and minority group members:

Position	Current	Recommendation
Larger Opp. Group Leader	£680	£767 (5% of the Leaders allowance)
Larger Opp. Group Deputy/Leader	£340	Delete SRA. The role is not significant enough to attract an SRA
Other Opp. Group Leader/s	£400	£460 (3% of the Leaders allowance)
Other Opp. Group Deputy Leader/s	£210	Delete SRA. The role is not significant enough to attract an SRA

RECOMMENDATION: The Panel recommends to the Council the above Special Responsibility Allowances.

7 *Regulation 7 – Dependants’ Carers’ Allowance*

- 7.1 The Regulations allow for a scheme to include for payment to members of the authority of an allowance in respect of such expenses of arranging for the care of their children or dependants as are necessary in performing their duties as a Councillor.
- 7.2 The present level of the Carers’ Allowance paid by the Council is £7.20 per hour which is matched to the Council's rate for employees.
- 7.3 The Panel, as in previous years, feels that the flat rate does not deal fairly with the different demands of the type of care necessary. For example, the costs involved with childcare would generally be less than those associated with the provision of agency care for more specialised attention. For these reasons the Panel recommends that the Carers' Allowances be up to **£8.25** per hour (Living Wage 2015/16, reviewed annually) for childcare and up to **£35.00** per hour for qualified Agency Care. Payment of both of these allowances must be covered by receipts. In the case of the Agency Care Allowance, medical evidence that this type of care is required must also be provided as no other carer is available.

- 7.4 **RECOMMENDATION:** 1) The Panel recommends that the Carers' Allowances be up to £8.25 per hour for childcare and up to £35.00 per hour for qualified Agency Care. Payment of these allowances must be covered by receipts. In the case of the Agency Care allowance, medical evidence that this type of care is required must also be provided and no other carer available.

8 *Regulation 8 - Subsistence Allowance*

- 8.1 This Regulation provides for the payment of an allowance in respect of travelling and subsistence. The Regulation sets out the categories within which duties must lie in order to be eligible for such payments.
- 8.2 In its report to the Council previously the Panel made recommendations that the subsistence levels should mirror those which are available to officers which are set nationally. **This is still the view of the panel.**
- 8.3 It is also acknowledged that although no specific overnight allowance is payable, the Council will pay reasonable hotel bills submitted.

9 *Travelling*

- 9.1 **RECOMMENDATION:** That the HMRC recommended figure (currently 45p per mile) apply and that the level be increased/decreased automatically in the event that this is amended.

10 *Kings Lynn Area Committee*

- 10.1 **Recommendation:** The Panel recommends that the Chairman of Kings Lynn Area Committee receives an allowance of £279 (5% of the Leaders allowance). No SRA should be paid to the Vice Chairman of the Area Committee.

11 *Communications, Broadband and Stationery Allowance*

- 11.1 The Panel were of the view that the allowance of £150 per Member for Broadband and communications should no longer be paid. Most people now have access to broadband through a telephone and television package and therefore a separate allowance for members should not be paid.

Recommendation: The Panel recommends that the communications, broadband and stationery allowance of £150 per year for each Member should no longer be paid.

12 Other Issues

12.1 Limit of the number of Special Responsibility Allowances

12.2 The Panel again considered the issue of payment of more than one Special Responsibility Allowance to any one Member.

12.3 The Panel recognises that the work carried out by a Member holding more than one position which attracts a Special Responsibility Allowance.

12.4 **RECOMMENDATION:** The Panel recommends that a Councillor is only eligible to receive one Special Responsibility Allowance (the highest).

SUMMARY OF INDEPENDENT PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS 2015/16

Allowance/SRA	Current	Recommendations for 2015/16
Basic Allowance	£5,140	£5,581
Leader of Council and Chairman of Cabinet	£14,760	£15,345
Vice Chair	£8,070	£8,440
Members	£6,600	£6,905
Asst. to Leader	£870	£870
Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Policy and Review Panels		
Chairmen	£2,000	£2,148
Vice-Chairmen	£870	£859
Planning Committee		
Chairman	£5,050	£6,138
Vice-Chairman	£2,200	£2,445
Licensing and Appeals Board		
Chairman and Licensing Committee Chairman	£5,050	£5,050 £3,778 (Chairman AB) £1,262 (Chairman LC)
Vice Chairmen	£2,200	£1,515 (VC of AB) £ 505 (VC of LC)

Standards Committee		
Chairman	£760	£767
Vice-Chairman	£380	£307
Co-Optees	£200	£200
Key Task Groups – if any		
Chairman	£170	No SRA
Mayor	£5,800	£5,800
Deputy Mayor	£2,030	£2,030
Larger Opp. Group Leader	£680	£767
Larger Opp. Group Deputy Leader	£340	No SRA
Other Opp. Group Leader/s	£400	£460
Other Opp. Group Deputy Leader/s	£210	No SRA
Chairman of Kings Lynn Area Committee	No current SRA	£279

CARERS ALLOWANCES

Up to £8.25 per hour for childcare
Up to £30.00 per hour for qualified Agency Care.

Payment of these allowances must be covered by receipts. In the case of the Agency Care allowance, medical evidence that this type of care is required must also be provided.

SUBSISTENCE – TO MIRROR OFFICER LEVELS

TRAVELLING

That the HMRC travel rates are applied (currently 45p per mile for a car). That the level be increased or decreased in accordance with HMRC recommendations.

NUMBER OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES CLAIMABLE

One Special Responsibility Allowance (the highest) for each Member

Independent Remuneration Panel

January 2016

Mark Palmer – Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel

