

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on Tuesday, 28th January, 2025 at 5.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors Long (Chair), Bhondi, Blunt, Jones, Nash, Osborne, Rose, Sandell, Sayers and Spikings.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor Ring – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture
Councillor Morley – Portfolio Holder for Finance

OFFICERS:

Becky Box – Assistant Director
Alexa Baker – Monitoring Officer

CP98 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beales and Ryves.

CP99 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to Councillor Sayers being added to the list of apologies.

CP100 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest.

CP101 URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

There was none.

CP102 MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor Kunes.

CP103 CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

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The Chair read out an email relating to the Independent Remuneration Panel Report from Councillor Joyce as follows:

“As your panel has first view of the new scheme of proposed members allowances scheme and I am required elsewhere this is coming to you.

The recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel to abolish the ICT allowance has not been fully thought through. The present situation is the Council provides a mobile phone explicitly for council business use. Some councillors use it for that while others use their own personal mobile phone for council business.

With no ICT allowance (which includes a telephone allowance) why would a councillor use their own mobile? As for those who use the council’s phone what happens when the council’s mobile battery runs out? Does a councillor have to bring it into the council office for it to be charged? Or will an officer come out and collect it to be charged? At a weekend?

The council provides laptops or ipads and in a number of cases both. Several years ago, the Council removed the broadband/phone list from councillors’ homes, introducing the ICT allowance. It was a cost cutting measure which was accepted. However, with no phone/broadband line what’s the benefit of a laptop provided by the Council? It was suggested by a member of the Independent Panel that most people now have broadband in their homes for which they as individuals pay. That may very well be true. It does not alter the fact the Council is a public authority not a charity and should not be reliant on the goodwill of any councillors.

An alternative to the ICT allowance is that any communication between the Council and a councillor will have to be at all times in hard copy, and other than personal interaction any communication between constituents and groups of interested parties will have to be in hard copy with written communication sent initially via Royal Mail or to the Council for sending on via Royal Mail.”

The Chair explained that the Cabinet Report had made recommendations on the Independent Remuneration Panel’s Report and one of the recommendations was for the ICT allowance to be retained.

CP104 **CALL INS**

There were no call-ins to consider.

CP105 **CABINET REPORT - INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS ALLOWANCES**

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The Assistant Director presented the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and the covering Cabinet report which included recommendations to be considered by the Panel.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Ring highlighted section 2.1 to 2.6 Cabinet Report which set out recommendations on amendments to the IRP Report. He explained that the IRP had recommended a 20% public service discount and commented that many Councillors were unaware of this and the Cabinet recommendation was to reduce this discount to 5%. It was also recommended that the ICT allowance and the larger opposition leader and deputy allowances be retained.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director and Portfolio Holder for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Kunes addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 stating that prior to becoming a Councillor he was a Member of the IRP and provided information on the public service discount.

The Chair requested that the Panel consider the recommendations as included in the Cabinet Report. Following comments from Members of the Panel, the Chair, expressed concern that the papers had been published late.

Councillor Spikings commented that being a Councillor shouldn't be about the money and stated that she had held many positions concurrently, but only received on Special Responsibility Allowances, and she accepted that. Councillor Spikings commented that the public service discount of 20% was too high, especially when Councillors worked so many hours voluntarily and did not receive benefits such as a pension.

Councillor Sandell commented that she was unaware that a public service discount was applied to allowances and did not agree with this due to the amount of work she carried out.

The Deputy Leader clarified that it was advisory guidance that recommended deduction of a public service discount and some Councils had chosen not to have a discount at all. The Portfolio Holder requested the Panel consider making a recommendation to Cabinet on the level of public service discount they felt was appropriate, noting that the IRP had estimated that Councillors duties equated to approximately twelve hours per week.

The Monitoring Officer read out the guidance on public service discount which included ensuring that Councillors were not at a financial loss and the allowances encouraged people to stand for election.

Councillor Osborne commented that he agreed with the IRP recommendation of 20% public service discount and proposed that this

be recommended to Cabinet. Councillor Jones seconded the proposal and after being put to the vote the proposal was lost.

The Panel then debated the Cabinet recommendation that a 5% public service discount be applied.

Councillor Sayers asked if some allowances could have a 5% deduction and the basic allowance have a 10% deduction, with additional funds being added to the Councillors Community Grant Scheme. Councillor Sandell commented that the Councillor Community Grants fund was often underspent. Councillor Spikings suggested that each Councillor could be asked what level of public service discount they wished to deduct from their allowances. The Panel felt that staggering deductions would be too complicated to administer and needed a flat rate across all allowances.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance commented that the schedule of allowances should be simple to administer and noted that any Councillors who wished to forfeit their allowances, or a portion of their allowances could do so by notifying the Council. Councillor Morley also drew attention to the Carers Allowance which was included to encourage people to stand for election.

Councillor Sandell referred to the workload of Councillors and felt that those that were less active should be paid less, but acknowledged that this would be difficult to administer with Councillors having to fill in time sheets etc. The Chair also commented that, with being such a large Borough, travel time would also have to be a consideration. Councillor Sayers also commented that for dual-hatters it would be difficult to differentiate between Borough and County duties.

Councillor Spikings made reference to dual Member Wards and large Wards with lots of Parishes, which involved a lot of additional work, noting that Borough Councillors did not get paid for attending Parish Council Meetings. Councillor Kunes stated that it was his understanding that attendance at Parish Council meetings were not a requirement for Borough Councillors.

The Chair asked the Panel to consider if they would like to make a recommendation to Cabinet that Borough Councillors should be paid mileage for attending Parish Council meetings.

Councillor Bhondi commented that he did not agree with the public service discount of 20% and some Councillors chose not to claim mileage.

Councillor Sandell proposed that the Panel recommend that the public service discount be set at 0%. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Rose and after being put to the vote this additional recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Performance Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below with an additional recommendation that a public service discount of 0% be applied.

1. The content and recommendations of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel dated November 2025 are noted.
2. The Members Allowances for 2025-2026 set out in Table 3 of the report are approved, subject to a 0% public service discount being applied.
3. The Members' Allowances Scheme 2025-2029 attached as Appendix 2 is approved to come into effect on 1 April 2025 for a period of four years, subject to being updated with the members Allowances approved at recommendation 2 above.
4. Following the 2025-26 year, indexation is applied to Members Allowances for 3 years in line with the percentage increase to the national joint council for local government pay services pay grades spinal column point 43.
5. The Chief Finance Officer is delegated to approve non-material revisions to the Members' Allowances Scheme, including the levels of allowances to reflect the current figures after indexation has been applied.

CP106 **PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

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Councillor Spikings requested an update on Cemeteries and the Chair agreed to discuss this with the Chair of the Environment and Community Panel.

RESOLVED: The Panel Work Programme was noted.

CP107 **CABINET FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

RESOLVED: The Cabinet Forward Decisions List was noted.

CP108 **SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED: The Shareholder Committee Work Programme was noted.

CP109 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel was scheduled to take place on 26th February 2025 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 5.46 pm