

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION TO PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS – DECEMBER 2024

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require that each District Council must establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations about the level of basic allowance for all Members, the level of special responsibility allowances and to whom they should be paid, and on whether dependants carers' allowance and travel and subsistence allowances should be paid and the levels of these allowances.

1.2 The same Independent Remuneration Panel is also required to consider the remuneration schemes for Parish/Town Councils, should they wish to pay a basic allowance or travel and subsistence expenses. A formal review by the Panel of the remuneration schemes is undertaken every four years.

1.3 The Parish/Town Councils must have regard to the advice of the Independent Remuneration Panel, but their recommendations are not binding.

2 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL REMUNERATION REVIEW

2.1 In 2008/09 a remuneration framework was established that recognised the relative responsibilities of Parish/Town Councils in providing services and managing budgets. Its application would be a matter for individual decision for each Parish/Town Council and the Panel recognised that certain Councils might not wish to set an allowance. The framework set the maximum recommended for each Council.

2.2 During the current review, members and clerks of all the District's Parish/Town Councils were invited to workshops with the Panel to discuss areas relating to allowances that they wished the Panel to consider during their work.

2.3 The Parish/Town Council basic allowance is based on a percentage of the District Council basic allowance, with an additional 5% for those Councils that have achieved Local Council Award Scheme accreditation. The current bands were based on the responsibility and size of the Parish/Town Council.

2.4 The Panel, in considering the details of the common framework and acknowledging the contribution of the Councils to their communities, could see no evidence to recommend a change. The Panel did consider an 'expenses only' scheme but this was discarded due to the administrative burden it would impose on all parties.

2.5 On the 13th February 2024, Rochford District Council agreed the Panel's recommendation for the Members' basic allowance to be increased to £5820.00

It is therefore recommended:-

(1) That the existing framework, being based on a percentage of the District Council basic allowance, with an additional 5% in the year following accreditation for those Councils that had achieved Local Council Award Scheme accreditation, be retained with maximum levels indicated:-

Parish/Town Council	% of RDC Basic Allowance	Addition for Quality Status
Band 1 Barling Magna, Canewdon, Foulness Island, Paglesham, Rawreth, Stambridge and Sutton	5%	5%
Band 2 Ashingdon and Great Wakering	15%	5%
Band 3 Hawkwell, Hullbridge and Rochford	20%	5%
Band 4 Hockley and Rayleigh	25%	5%

Therefore, using the framework and considering a Rochford District Council basic allowance of £5820, the following would be recommended for the Parish/Town Council basic allowance in 2025/2026:-

Ashingdon	-	£ 873.00 per annum maximum
Barling Magna	-	£ 291.00 per annum maximum
Canewdon	-	£ 291.00 per annum maximum
Foulness Island	-	£ 291.00 per annum maximum
Great Wakering	-	£ 873.00 per annum maximum
Hawkwell	-	£1164.00 per annum maximum
Hockley	-	£1455.00 per annum maximum
Hullbridge	-	£1164.00 per annum maximum
Paglesham	-	£ 291.00 per annum maximum
Rawreth	-	£ 291.00 per annum maximum
Stambridge	-	£ 291.00 per annum maximum
Sutton	-	£ 291.00 per annum maximum
Rayleigh	-	£1455.00 per annum maximum
Rochford	-	£1164.00 per annum maximum

(2) That, in recognition of the additional responsibilities, Chairpersons receive a further 50% of the basic allowance appropriate for their Parish/Town Council.

The Panel also recommend that the key roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson be documented.

(3) Childcare and Carer's Allowances

The Panel are aware that childcare and carer's allowances are rarely claimed but believe they are a critical element in terms of ensuring that people with caring responsibilities are not discouraged from standing as councillors.

In line with a recommendation in respect of childcare allowance for District Councillors, the Panel recommend that Parish/ Town Councillors can claim for actual costs of caring for dependants whilst undertaking approved duties up to a maximum of:

£15.00 per hour for child dependents
£21.60 per hour for adult dependents

(4) Travelling Expenses

The Panel are aware that travelling expenses are rarely claimed. When attendance at a Conference, course etc is as a representative of the Council and involves travel, the Panel suggest that any claim for travelling expenses are on the same basis as for District Councillors and be based on one of the following:-

- Bus fare or second-class railway train fare.
- A mileage allowance for use of the Member's vehicle, together with an additional allowance for passengers.
 - A private car allowance of 45p per mile.
 - A passenger allowance of 5p per mile.
 - A motorcycle allowance of 24p per mile.
 - A bicycle allowance of 20p per mile.

(5) Subsistence Allowance

When attendance at a Conference, course, etc. is as a representative of the Council and involves the purchase of meals and/or overnight accommodation away from home, subsistence allowance is payable. This allowance is intended to cover expenses incurred on meals and hotel accommodation during absence from home and can only be paid when the duty is approved duty. The Subsistence Allowance rates and criteria should be the same as those applicable to District Councillors. District Councillors allowances are linked to those paid to the Officers.

3 Closing Comments

In undertaking this review the panel would like to acknowledge the work undertaken by the councillors on behalf of their respective communities and believe that consideration should be given to making the electorate aware of what the role of a councillor involves and the responsibilities of the relevant Councils.

Lyn Thompson (Chairperson)
Carol Bright
Tim Reeves
December 2024