



**Report of the
Independent Remuneration Panel
Appointed to make recommendations
regarding the scheme of
Members' Allowances at Breckland Council**

March 2019

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Breckland Council has appointed an Independent Remuneration Panel to consider and recommend a scheme of allowances that complies with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

1.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel is in the first year of its four year term and Membership is as follows:

- Andrew Egerton-Smith (Chairman)
- Jonathan Rogers
- Alistair Skipper
- Les Spillman
- Sam Watts

1.3 The Panel is supported by Rory Ringer, Democratic Services Manager, and Teresa Smith, Democratic Services Team Leader.

1.4 The Panel considered all areas within its remit under the regulations, which ask that recommendations be made to Council:

- On the amount of basic allowance that should be payable to its Elected Members
- About the responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a special responsibility allowance and the amount of such an allowance
- About the duties for which a travelling and subsistence allowance can be paid and the amount of this allowance
- As to the amount of any co-optees' allowance
- As to whether the authority's scheme should include an allowance for the expense of arranging for dependant and child care, the amount of such allowance and the means by which it is determined
- On whether any allowance should be backdated to the beginning of the financial year in the event of a scheme being amended
- As to whether annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index and, if so, how long such a measure should run
- On allowances for Town and Parish Councils

2. DOCUMENTATION, EVIDENCE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2.1 The Panel met on two occasions, on 6 November 2018 and 4 December 2018 and took account of the following documentation:

- The Panel's previous report (December 2016),

- Details of the existing scheme of allowances and comments made by the Council when adopting it,
- Comparative information from other local authorities.

2.2 The Panel interviewed Councillor William Nunn – Leader of the Council, and were grateful to him for the information he provided. The Panel also invited Councillor Denis Crawford the leader of the UKIP group.

3. CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

3.1 The current scheme of allowances, which runs from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2019, was agreed at Full Council on 19th January 2017. The Independent Remuneration Panel recommended an increase to all allowances in line with the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement for the two year period until 31st March 2019, which was accepted by Council.

3.2 The Panel are familiar with the culture of Breckland and had previously made it clear what was expected in terms of performance in recognition of the levels of allowance recommended.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND OBSERVATIONS

4.1 The Panel were very pleased to see that the Council are focussing on generating income rather than cutting public services, and were pleased to see that the continued entrepreneurial nature of the Council and in particular the Council's significant property portfolio which continues to contribute greatly to the council continuing to have the lowest district council tax in the country

4.2 The panel were also impressed with the continued work on developing Breckland's market towns and in particular the Shop-Appy initiative, and the launch of the new Breckworld 3D experience App. Evidence was also given to highlight the work the Council continues to undertake with its partner organisations to create employment opportunities along the A11 Cambridge-Norwich Technology Corridor.

4.3 Taking into account comparators and the current economic situation, the Panel were minded to recommend that the Members Allowances (basic and special responsibility allowances) be linked to the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement for the next 12 months, with the panel meeting again in late 2019.

4.4 The Panel acknowledged that the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council were rewarded in accordance with their roles and responsibilities.

5 BASIC ALLOWANCE

5.1 The basic allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes. (Government Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances).

5.1 The panel were keen for the basic allowance to not hinder or be a barrier for those wishing to become Councillors in the future, and in particular were keen to encourage 'younger' members of society to consider standing for election. However, it was accepted that an element of the work of a Councillor should remain voluntary.

5.3 The Panel believed that using the basic allowance as a "building block", was the best way to continue to construct the scheme.

5.4 The Panel recommend that the Basic Allowance is increased in line with the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement for the next 12 months (until 31st March 2020).

6 SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

6.1 The Panel were in agreement to recommend an increase in the special responsibility allowances in line with the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement for the next 12 months (until 31st March 2020).

6.2 The panel agreed to support the introduction of an additional allowance, for the Vice Chairman of the Council of 'half a block' to recognise the role, both in terms of chairing full Council meetings in the absence of the Chairman, and the wider role of representing the Council in a civic role.

6.3 The Panel agreed to recommend an increase in the Carer's allowance in line with 'Real living Wage' which from 1st April 2019 will be £9 per hour.

7 CO-OPTED MEMBERS AND SPECIALIST ADVISERS

7.1 Regulations permit provision within schemes of allowances for payments to co-opted members. Whereas the basic allowance for Elected Members was intended to acknowledge their wider duties, payments to co-optees are designed to cover the costs of attendances at meetings and conferences. Government guidance says that an element of the contribution of co-opted Members, like that of elected councillors, should be considered voluntary.

Governance & Audit Committee

7.2 The Panel propose an increase in line with the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement for the next 12 months (until 31st March 2020).

Independent Person - Standards

7.3 The Panel propose an increase in line with the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement for the next 12 months (until 31st March 2020).

8 CHILDCARE AND CARERS' ALLOWANCES

8.1 The Panel agreed to recommend an increase in the Carer's allowance in line with the 'Real living Wage' which from 1st April 2019 will be £9 per hour.

8.2 As far as specialist care was concerned, it can vary in scope and nature and it should be left to the Council to pay an appropriate rate upon application to ensure reasonable costs were reimbursed, rather than trying to set a standard rate.

8.3 The Panel were anxious to support carer's allowances and would not wish anyone to be deprived of the opportunity to serve as result of inadequate recompense of care charges.

9 TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

9.1 The Panel considered the list of approved duties, (Appendix B). (I.e. those activities in respect of which travel and subsistence may be paid) and agreed that no further changes were recommended. The Panel did feel however, that the Council should consider in the future introducing a scheme across the authority to encourage the use of electric cars both by staff and members, to set an example of working towards a greener environment.

10 TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

10.1 Town and Parish Councils may make payments to their members, but where they decide to do so, they must have regard to the recommendations of the district council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

10.2 Any Town and Parish Councils wishing to consider Parish Councillor Allowances, should be referred to the Panel who will consider the request on their own merits.

10.3 The Panel had not received any requests for consideration.

11 SUMMARY

11.1 During their meetings and deliberations, the Independent Remuneration Panel had been mindful of the financial restraints affecting the Council and the public sector as a whole. Despite these, the authority continues to perform very well, and the Remuneration Panel wish to congratulate the

Council for maintaining the lowest District Council Tax in the country whilst providing good levels of public satisfaction and local service provision in these times of austerity.

11.2 As a result of this the Panel are mindful to recommend the scheme for a 12 month period until 31st March 2019.

11.3 The Travel and subsistence rates are to remain unchanged.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Accordingly, the Panel's recommendations are as follows:

12.2 The new scheme is effective from 1st April 2019 until 31st March 2020.

12.3 The Basic Allowance for District Councillors is increased in line with the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement of 2% for the year 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 (Appendix A).

12.4 The Special Responsibility Allowances are increased in line with the locally agreed Breckland staff pay settlement of 2% for the year 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020. (Appendix A).

12.5 The Panel agreed to recommend an increase in the Carer's allowance in line with 'Real living Wage' which from 1st April 2019 will be £9 per hour. (Appendix A).

12.6 The introduction of a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice Chairman of the Council (Appendix A).

12.7 Travel and subsistence be payable for those "approved duties" shown at Appendix B to the report.

12.8 Travel and subsistence to be payable at the same rates as those applicable to officers under the National Conditions of Service, supported by receipts.

12.9 Requests for the payment of allowances for Town and Parish Councils to be referred to the Independent Remuneration Panel if received.

12.10 The Council to have the right to withdraw allowances from a fully or partially suspended councillor and to require the re-payment of any allowances paid during the period of suspension, such provision to be applicable to all allowances except those for dependant carers.

BRECKLAND COUNCIL ALLOWANCES WITH EFFECT FROM 1 APRIL 2019	
Responsibility	Allowance
Basic Allowance (Payable to all 49 members)	£5,569.26 pa
Special Responsibility Allowances	
Leader	£22,277.04 pa
Deputy Leader	£14,616.68 pa
Executive Members	£11,832.05 pa
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Commission	£11,832.05 pa
Chairman of Planning	£11,832.05 pa
Chairman of the Council	£5,569.26 pa
Chairman of Governance & Audit	£5,569.26 pa
Chairman of Licensing Committee	£2,784.63 pa
Chairman of Committee of Licensing Authority	£2,784.63 pa
Chairman of Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups	£126.09 per meeting chaired
Chairman of Licensing Panel	£257.44 per meeting chaired
Chairman of Licensing Hearing Panel	£257.44 per meeting chaired
Chairman of Disciplinary & Appointments Committee	£257.44 per meeting chaired
Chairman of Disciplinary & Appointments Appeals Committee	£257.44 per meeting chaired
Leader of Main Opposition Group (to be shared if more than one Opposition Group at the same time)	£2,784.63 pa
Leader of other Political Groups (with ten or more members)	£1,980 pa
Independent person in support of Standards requirements	£26.27 per hour
Specialist Advisers to the Audit Committee	£215.41 per session
Vice Chairman (appointed or otherwise deputising) Council	£2784.62 pa
Overview & Scrutiny	£257.44 per meeting chaired
Planning	£257.44 per meeting chaired
Audit	£126.09 per meeting chaired
Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups	£63.05 per meeting chaired
Executive Support Members	£1,980.77 pa

Carer's Allowance

Child Care: £9. per hour, normally subject to a maximum of £90 per authorised duty

Proven or qualified specialist care: To be considered upon application

Broadband Allowance

£15 per month

NOTE:

Only **one** Special Responsibility Allowance payable per member,
Special Responsibility Allowance are payable in addition to the basic allowance.

No Allowance to be paid to any suspended Councillor

There is an option for members not to claim allowances, in part or in full

Motor Car Allowance Rates - National Joint Council Car Allowances

Miles per Annum	451 – 999cc	1000-1199cc	1200cc +
Per mile, first 8,500 miles	46.9p	52.2p	65.0p
Per mile, after 8,500 miles	13.7p	14.4p	16.4p
Other Allowances	Passenger Allowance: An extra 2p per mile for each passenger taken		

Subsistence Allowances – Locally Agreed Revised Rates

Breakfast	£6.07 If leave home before 7:30am
Lunch	£8.39 Payable if you are necessarily absent from base between 12 noon and 2:30pm
Tea*	£3.31 Payable only when you are required to work after 6:30pm
Evening Meal*	£10.38 Payable only when you are required to work after 8:30pm
	*Either Tea or Evening Meal can be claimed – NOT Both
Training Subsistence	Where subsidised canteen facilities are available, lunch allowance will be restricted to £5.77, and tea allowance to £2.26

Please obtain receipts and attach to claim form -

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL'S INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL:
REPORT ON SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES FOR 2019/20**

**MEMBERS' TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES:
APPROVED DUTIES**

The approved duties are:

- Council Meetings
- Committee / Cabinet Meetings (for members of Committee)
- Ward representatives attending Committee as such
- Official Committee site visits
- Members attending Committee as proposer of motion referred by Council
- Members attending Committee at the request of the Chairman
- Members attending Committee to report back on the proceedings of an outside body
- Tender opening
- Local Authority Association meetings
- Representation on outside bodies (where travel or subsistence is not paid by that body)
- Executives meetings with officers
- Party Leaders' meetings with officers
- Joint Executive/Group Leader meetings called by the officers
- Conferences where representing, or with the authorisation of, the Council
- Overnight allowance for members attending conferences
- Ombudsman interviews
- Members attending Committees or working groups where invited or allowed to speak
- Attendance of Chairman of Cabinet at any authorised meeting.
- Attendance at Portfolio meetings
- Attendance of Members at any official meetings called by officers or an Executive Member with officers
- Attendance of Overview and Scrutiny Commission Chairman, Executive and Executive Support Members at Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups
- Attendance at Overview and Scrutiny Commission by members who have referred items to the Commission which are on the agenda under consideration
- Authorised training and development
- Required attendance at Public inquiries
- Attendance of Executive Support Members at Executive meetings
- Attendance of a member at Town or Parish Council meetings within the ward he or she represents in the capacity of ward representative
- Mileage incurred by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman on civic duties.