



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS'
ALLOWANCES 2020/21**

1. A series of meetings of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council have recently taken place. This is the report of the panel and its recommendations to the Council.
2. Following the gradual resignation of members of the previous Independent Remuneration Panel over the course of the last four years, a recruitment process was undertaken in summer 2019 to appoint a completely new panel. An advertisement was placed in the Borough Bulletin and ten expressions of interest were received. All applicants met the criteria and were deemed suitable but only nine pursued membership, one of which withdrew from the panel after the first meeting.

The remaining members of the panel were:

Mr G Grimes
Mr P Humphrey
Mr D James
Mr S Love
Mr G Newbury
Mrs L Parmar
Ms S Rumbelow
Mr K Willdig.

3. The panel was convened to review the Members' Allowance Scheme as a whole, in accordance with the recommendation of Council in December 2017. At that meeting of Council, a two year programme of increases to allowances had been agreed in order to bring HBBC in line with other similar authorities, following which there would be annual increases in all allowances in line with officer pay awards. It had been agreed by Council that the panel would review the scheme and make recommendations every four years to take effect at the start of a new Council.
4. The panel initially met on 8 October 2019 for an introductory meeting. At this meeting, Mr Keith Willdig was appointed chair of the panel. Subsequent meetings were held on 4 November, 18 November and 16 December.
5. To assist in its deliberations, the panel was provided with the following information:
 - The current Scheme of Members' Allowances
 - The terms of reference of council bodies
 - A comparison of allowances paid in other local authorities
 - Various pieces of background information including role descriptions for key councillor posts, the report arising from the last meeting of the panel and a minute extract from the meeting of Council when the report was considered

- A briefing by the Head of Finance.
6. The panel created an online member survey to inform the debate. The survey received 16 responses which exceeded previous surveys which was considered to be a high response rate in comparison with previous surveys. 40% of respondents were new councillors which, the panel felt, was likely to provide a balanced view. The panel expressed its thanks to members for their responses and appreciated the honesty and candour of respondents, particularly in response to question 10 about what could be changed in the Scheme of Allowances.
7. During discussion, members of the panel made reference to the following:
- The difficulty in making comparisons with other authorities due to the differing roles and responsibilities
 - Discomfort with members using personal IT equipment for council business
 - The requirement for a good level of basic allowance to encourage people to stand for election
 - The need for fair recompense for the work undertaken
 - The allowances for the chairmen of the Licensing Committee and Appeals Panel being similar to those of other bodies, yet the meetings were infrequent and, historically, the membership for Appeals Panels and Licensing hearings was taken from the pool of members and did not always include the chairman
 - Lack of awareness of the distinction between Audit Committee and Finance & Performance Scrutiny and concern about possible overlap of duties
 - The lack of Audit Committee in many authorities, sometimes due to it being merged with Ethical Governance or another body
 - The need for greater detail about approved duties in the scheme. This had been confirmed in responses to the survey which showed that some members were unclear about which duties they could claim for.
8. In formulating its recommendations, the panel gave consideration to and made comment upon the following:
- 8.1 The basic allowance
- The panel felt that the basic allowance (currently £5,280) was in line with other authorities and did not need to be increased, except for the previously agreed increase in line with officer pay awards.
- 8.2 Special responsibility allowances
- Whilst not wishing to make a recommendation in relation to amending special responsibility allowances at this stage, the panel expressed a need to understand the rationale for the different levels set for chairmen and felt that there would need to be a further review focussed solely on special responsibility allowances. They agreed that the review would take place within the next two years and would require their attendance at meetings to fully understand the role of the chairman as well as discussions with the members currently in those roles.
- The panel continued to express concern about the Appeals Panel and Licensing Committee and the infrequency of meetings and sought assurance that, if the councillor in receipt of the chairman's allowance for these bodies did not chair the majority of those meetings, the matter would be pursued through the relevant group leader to ensure fairness for those who were stepping up to chair. They agreed to review this at the abovementioned focussed review and would consider at that point

whether an attendance allowance for the chairmen of those bodies would be more appropriate.

8.3 Approved duties

The panel felt that this section of the Scheme of Allowances should be redrafted to make the provisions clear in order to assist both members in knowing which claims they may make, and officers when approving mileage and expense claims. The recommended revised section on approved duties is attached at appendix 1.

8.4 Other

The panel felt that, for their own convenience and for security of the information they were holding, members should not use their own IT equipment for council business and that Council should review this policy with a view to removing the requirement from the Scheme of Allowances and making alternative arrangements using Council equipment.

9. The panel made the following recommendations to Council:

- (i) the current level of allowances be maintained with annual increases in line with officer pay awards (pay award not included in the table below, predicted to be a maximum of 2%):

Role	Current allowance 2019/20 (£)
Basic allowance	5,280
Mayor	8,000
Deputy Mayor	3,000
Leader of the Council	16,830
Deputy Leader	8,250
Member of the Executive	7,260
Opposition Leader(s)	4,620
Appeals Panel chairman	2,500
Audit Committee chairman	4,620
Ethical Governance & Personnel Committee chairman	2,500
Finance & Performance Committee chairman	3,300
Licensing & Regulatory Committees chairman	2,500
Planning Committee chairman	5,500
Scrutiny Commission chairman	4,620

- (ii) members review the ICT policy in relation to use of their own equipment with a view to amending paragraph 5 of the Scheme of Allowances;
- (iii) paragraph 8.4 be replaced with the amended section on approved duties at appendix 1;
- (iv) members support the work of the panel in fully reviewing the special responsibility allowances within the next two years;
- (v) consideration be given to reviewing the committee structure in relation to Audit Committee and Ethical Governance & Personnel Committee to ensure effective and efficient working.

10. Reasons for the recommendations

- to ensure “fair pay for fair work”
- to ensure the allowances do not act as a barrier in encouraging councillors from underrepresented communities or groups
- to ensure data security
- to provide clarity on claiming mileage and expenses
- to fully understand the special responsibility areas
- to ensure effective and efficient working.

Keith Willdig (Chairman)

Gordon Grimes

Paul Humphrey

David James

Simon Love

Guy Newbury

Leena Parmar

Shelagh Rumbelow

16 December 2019

8.4 Approved duties include:

- (i) any meeting of the Council, Executive, overview & scrutiny bodies, committees or working groups of which the councillor is an appointed member or a substitute, provided it is a meeting to which members of a minimum of two political groups on the Council have been invited and more than two members have been invited;
- (ii) a meeting of a body where the councillor is not a member but attends on a matter affecting their ward which has been approved by the chairman of the body;
- (iii) on the specific invitation of the chairman of a body to attend a meeting for the purpose of giving evidence or supporting a review;
- (iv) conferences and seminars approved by the Democratic Services Manager;
- (v) training and development events to which the councillor has been invited by the council's officers;
- (vi) partnership or outside body meetings or training events of bodies to which the councillor has been appointed by the Council;
- (vii) committee pre-agenda meetings or briefings for meetings of which the councillor is a member or will be substituting at the associated meeting;
- (viii) attendance by Executive members at meetings within the borough that directly relate to their lead member role on the invitation of an officer of the council;
- (ix) attendance by Executive members at events within the borough that directly relate to their lead member role, on the invitation of an officer of the council;
- (x) meetings convened with officers with their prior agreement;
- (xi) Planning Committee site visits as notified by officers relating to a specific Planning Committee;
- (xii) parish council meetings when acting as a representative of the borough council – either in a capacity as ward councillor or Executive member;
- (xiii) in respect of the Mayor or, in their absence, the Deputy Mayor, travelling expenses for duties of a civic nature approved by the civic office in accordance with the guidance for mayoral expenditure;
- (xiv) attendance at a tribunal or similar to give evidence in relation to decisions made by a committee chaired by the councillor;
- (xv) interview panels for staffing matters where the councillor has been appointed to the panel by a committee or an officer.