

## **Report from the Parish and Town Councils Independent Remuneration Panel**

**January 2025**

### **1. Introduction**

The East Suffolk Council area contains 177 parished areas. Most of the parished areas have a Parish Council, and some of these parishes are grouped together to form a Grouped Parish Council. Some of the larger parished areas are split further into Parish Wards. Some parished areas have a Town Council with some of these choosing to have a Town Mayor.

A Parish Remuneration Panel was convened by East Suffolk Council as the 'Responsible Authority' pursuant to The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

The Guidance states:

"91. Parish Councils may choose to pay their members an allowance, known as 'Parish Basic Allowance', to recognise the time and effort they put into their parish duties. There is no obligation on Parish Councils to pay such allowances. Each Parish Council may make an allowance available to its Chair only, or to each of its Members. Where all Members receive an allowance, the amount payable to the Chair may be different to that paid to other Members, but otherwise the amount paid to each Member must be the same. Parish Basic Allowance is a discretionary allowance. It may be paid in a lump sum, or at intervals throughout the year.

92. If a Parish Council wishes to pay a Basic Allowance, it should have regard to a recommendation from its Parish Remuneration Panel. This is a Panel set up to make recommendations to parishes in its area. The membership of a Parish Remuneration Panel will be the same as the Independent Remuneration Panel of the District or County Council within whose area the parish is situated. The Panel will make a recommendation as to whom Basic Allowance should be paid, and the level of the allowance." (New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances, DCLG, 2003)

### **2. Terms of Reference**

The Panel was asked to consider and make recommendations to Parish and Town Councils regarding the Basic Allowance.

For completeness the Panel is also making recommendations as to:

- Chair's Allowance
- Travel and Subsistence Allowance
- Indexation

3. The Parish Independent Remuneration Panel

The Parish Independent Remuneration Panel comprised of the same membership as the Independent Remuneration Panel which met in November and December 2024 to review the allowances for East Suffolk Council.

The Panel comprised the following members:

- Tricia Bernard Hector (Chair)
- Sandra Cox
- Sue Putters

4. Approach

The Town Councils and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) were consulted.

It was established that two Town Councils in the East Suffolk district currently pay their councillors allowances. Leiston Town Council pays their Councillors £200 a year. Beccles Town Council pay their Councillors £100 a year.

Beccles Town Council, Felixstowe Town Council and Kesgrave Town Council submitted information for the Panel to consider in arriving at their recommendations.

SALC advised that they were not aware of any Parish and Town Council in the East Suffolk district, other than Beccles and Felixstowe, which had introduced or expressed an interest in possibly introducing a Member Allowances Scheme.

5. Arriving at the Recommendations

The Panel was of the view that whilst Parish Councillors did not stand for office for any financial reward, an allowance could actively support someone in the Councillor role and that it was essential to be able to attract Parish Councillors from a wide range of backgrounds. Councillors should also not be out of pocket for undertaking the role.

The Panel wishes to emphasise that any decision regarding the payment of allowances should be left to individual Parish Councils, taking into account individual local circumstances and the effect paying allowances would have on the precept.

## 6. Recommendations Basic Allowance

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 state the basic allowance recommended by a Parish Independent Remuneration Panel can be for any amount up to 100 per cent of the basic allowance paid by East Suffolk Council to District Council Members.

The Panel therefore recommends that those parishes who feel that a Basic Allowance would be appropriate should be able to pay an amount up to 5% of the Basic Allowance for East Suffolk Councillors on a sliding scale dependent on the numbers of electors in the parish as set out in the table at 6.1 below.

Number of electors in parish	Recommended % of the East Suffolk Council Basic Allowance (£9379)	Recommended Parish allowance a year for Councillors who are not Chair	Recommended allowance for the Chair – an additional 1% of basic district allowance
1 to 5,000	1%	£93.79	£187.58 (2%)
5,001 to 10,000	2%	£187.58	£281.37 (3%)
10,001 to 20,000	3%	£281.37	£375.16 (4%)
20,001 to 30,000	4%	£375.16	£468.95 (5%)
Over 30,000	5%	£468.95	£562.74 (6%)

## 7. The Chair's allowance

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 state that the Chair's allowance which can be recommended by the Parish Independent Remuneration Panel can be for any amount up to 100 percent of the Basic Allowance paid by East Suffolk Council.

The Panel therefore recommends the Chair's Allowance should be an additional 1% of the district Basic Allowance as set out in the Table at 6.1.

## 8. Travel and Subsistence

The Panel recommends that the Parish Councils should pay a mileage allowance of 45p per mile (for a car) which is in line with the HMRC recommendations.

It is recommended that subsistence allowances are not paid and that this be considered as being provided for within the Basic Allowance.

9. Indexation of Allowances

The indexation of the allowances paid to Members of the Parish and Town Councils should be in line with the indexation applied to Members Allowances at East Suffolk Council, namely linked to annual staff salary/allowances increases of East Suffolk Council employees.

10. Forgoing Allowances

A Parish/Town Councillor may choose not to receive all or part of any allowance to which they would otherwise be entitled. To do so they must give written notice to the Proper Officer of the Parish/Town Council.

11. Publicity Regarding the allowances

The Panel recommends that the Parish and Town Councils act in accordance with the following guidance (Section 5, Paragraph 30 of the Regulations (SI2003 No. 1021): “Parish Councils are required to publicise their allowances in a notice or notices conspicuous in their area. These notices must remain in place for at least 14 days. In addition, they must make a record of the allowances they have paid available for inspection at reasonable notice. They must provide copies of this record on request and may charge a reasonable fee for this. Parishes must also publish details of the Parish Remuneration Panel reports. Again, these are minimum requirements, and Parish Councils may wish to go further in making local people aware of their allowances scheme and payment levels. For example, they may wish to circulate details of their allowances in the parish newsletter, if they have one, place them on a website, or publish them in one or more local newspapers.”

12. Review

The Panel recommends that the Parish and Town Council’s Allowances be reviewed when the district council allowances are reviewed.