

**Report Of The Independent Remuneration Panel To The
Parish/Town Councils - November 2010**

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 on the Council's scheme of allowances, the amounts to be paid and the pensionability of allowances where relevant.
- 1.2 The same 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.
- 1.3 The Parish/Town Councils have to have regard to the advice of the Panel, but its recommendations are not binding.

2 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL REMUNERATION REVIEW

- 2.1 As a result of the 2007/08 and 2008/09 reviews the Panel established a remuneration framework to recognise the relative responsibilities of Parish/Town Councils in providing services and managing budgets. It was anticipated that this would assist in increasing the diversity of elected representatives by encouraging people to stand for election who otherwise may be unable to do so.
- 2.2 The Panel recognised that application of the framework of allowances would be a matter for individual Parish/Town Councils to decide and that certain Councils may not wish to set an allowance.
- 2.3 The following framework was established, that set the maximum levels recommended for each Council. The Chairman's allowance was set at 50% of the appropriate Parish/Town Council basic allowance:-

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

- 2.4 The Panel had asked all the Parish and Town Councils whether there were any specific issues around payment levels for Parish/Town Councillors that they wished the Panel to consider for 2011/12 and responses had been received from four Councils.
- 2.5 The Panel felt that it would be appropriate for the existing framework in relation to basic allowances to be retained for 2011/12. Assuming a Rochford District Council basic allowance of £4,250, therefore, the recommended levels of Parish/Town Council basic allowances for the 2011/12 Municipal Year would be:-

Ashingdon	-	£637.50 per annum maximum
Barling Magna	-	£212.50 per annum maximum
Canewdon	-	£212.50 per annum maximum
Foulness Island	-	£212.50 per annum maximum
Great Wakering	-	£850.00 per annum maximum
Hawkwell	-	£1,062.50 per annum maximum
Hockley	-	£1,275.00 per annum maximum
Hullbridge	-	£850.00 per annum maximum
Paglesham	-	£212.50 per annum maximum
Rawreth	-	£212.50 per annum maximum
Stambridge	-	£212.50 per annum maximum
Sutton	-	£212.50 per annum maximum
Rayleigh	-	£1,275.00 per annum maximum
Rochford	-	£1,062.50 per annum maximum

- 2.6 In considering District allowances for the 2011/12 Municipal Year the Panel had regard to the Government's announcement of an indicative 7% reduction in local authority spending. Recognising that the Council would no doubt need to take account of the austere economic climate and the impact of the Government's comprehensive spending review within this year's budget considerations, the Panel agreed that it would be appropriate to communicate to Group Leaders the view that the option of a reduction in the level of allowances be included in these considerations. Parish/Town Councils should note that any reduction in the District basic allowance would mean a corresponding decrease to the recommended levels of Parish/Town Council basic allowances.
- 2.7 The Panel noted that Parish/Town Councils that had achieved 'quality status' were subject to a re-accreditation process every three years. The Panel agreed that the principle of recognising 'quality status' was something that should be maintained as it represented a significant achievement. However, it was felt that it would be appropriate for the additional 5% paid to those Councils that had achieved 'quality' status to be paid for the financial year following the year of attainment only and again, if re-accreditation is achieved, for the financial year following the year in which it is achieved.

2.8 Childcare and Carer's Allowances

The Panel recommended that childcare and carer's allowances should reflect those allowed for District Councillors.

2.9 Travelling Expenses

The Panel recommended that travelling expenses should reflect those allowed for District Councillors. This would include the introduction of a caveat that mileage allowance will only be paid in cases where use of public transport is not conveniently available, where public transport would cost more than the mileage allowance and/or where excessive travelling time would be involved.

2.10 Subsistence Allowance

The Panel recommended that subsistence allowance should reflect those allowed for District Councillors.

2.11 The Panel, therefore, recommends:-

- (1) That the existing framework for Parish/Town Council basic allowances be retained for 2011/12.
- (2) That the additional 5% paid to those Councils that have achieved 'quality status' be paid for the financial year following the year of attainment only and again, if re-accreditation is achieved, for the financial year following the year in which it is achieved.
- (3) That subsistence, childcare and dependant carer's allowances should be set at the same levels as for Rochford District Councillors for 2011/12.
- (4) That travel expenses should be set at the same levels as for Rochford District Councillors, including the caveat relating to the mileage allowance detailed above.

Owen Richards (Chairman)
Steven Chelmsford
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November 2010