

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL**

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – REMUNERATION PANEL

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To refer the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel to Council to enable it to approve a revised scheme of Members' Allowances for 2015/2016.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The council is required to make an annual scheme for members' allowances. It cannot make or amend a scheme without first considering advice from the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 2.2 This is the 16th year that the panel have considered members' allowances. The panel consists of members representing the multi-faith communities, the voluntary sector and business community. The panel currently consists of 4 members namely Mrs Sheila Girling, Mr Rashpal Nijjar, Mr Brian Pettifer and Mr Gordon Rowlands.
- 2.3 In May 2014, the council had decided to retain the same scheme for 2014/2015 as that it had agreed in 2013/2014. The basic allowance for all members had remained the same and the council has also retained a level of mileage claimable to a maximum of 5,000 miles and continued to pay travel allowances on the basis of the approved Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rates.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Remuneration Panel's report for 2015/2016 is attached. The regulations provide that the council must "have regard to the recommendations" of the panel when making a scheme. This allows the council to adopt the recommendations in full or to vary them so long as it has regard to them.

- 3.2 The council must now consider the recommendations of the Remuneration Panel and determine a scheme for 2015/2016.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 4.1 Financial – The recommendations of the Remuneration Panel will be contained within existing budgets.
- 4.2 Staffing, Property and IT – There are no implications associated with these areas.

5. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

- 6.1 Both political groups have been made aware of the contents of the Remuneration Panel's report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Remuneration Panel be thanked for its report.
- 7.2 That the council consider and have regard to the recommendations of the panel and approve a Members' Allowance Scheme to take effect from 21 May 2015.
- 7.3 That appropriate officers publicise the scheme in accordance with the regulations.

DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND RESOURCES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: The report of the Elected Members' Remuneration Panel

ELECTED MEMBERS' REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT

FOR NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL 2015/2016

- 1.1 This is the 16th report of the Elected Members' Independent Remuneration Panel.

1.2 **The council's response in 2014/2015**

The panel noted that the council, when considering its report in May 2014, had decided to retain the 2013/2014 Members' Allowance Scheme in its entirety. This was in line with the recommendations of the panel. The basic allowance for all members had therefore remained the same. The council has also retained the level of mileage claimable to a maximum of 5,000 miles and continued to pay travel allowances on the basis of the approved Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rates.

1.3 **Future Schemes**

The panel recognised that the council has made significant changes to the Members' Allowance Scheme over the last few years in line with the economic conditions which have prevailed. However, the panel did indicate that it would continue its work and look at various elements of the current scheme. Work has been carried out to compare the Members' Allowance Scheme in North Lincolnshire with a number of other similar local authorities across the country based on a number of factors which had previously been looked into including the number of cabinet members, the number of scrutiny panels each of these authorities has and the total member allowance spend. In previous years the panel had also carried out work in relation to the relative allowance paid to the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Planning Committee, the Licensing Committee and Scrutiny Panels. Work had also been carried out in relation to the role of Lead Members. The panel still has some concerns about the level of remuneration paid to these posts in relation to other local authorities which, particularly in relation to the Chair of the Licensing Committee and the Chairs of Scrutiny Panels remains relatively high in comparison. This also applied to the roles of Vice-Chair of those committees in comparison with others. This work will be continued in the coming year.

1.4 **Cost of Living Increase**

The panel noted the need to consider the annual cost of living increase which was normally linked to the most recent local government pay settlement. The panel continue to believe that if local government staff received an increase in pay then this should also apply to members of the council. It was noted that staff had received a 2.2% increase with effect from 1 January 2015. On the basis of this members of the council should also receive a similar increase.

1.5 Training and Development

The panel continue to note that training is compulsory for members sitting on the Planning and Licensing committees. However the panel's view is that all elected members should be trained in all aspects of their roles in order to fully represent their constituents and contribute to the success of the organisation. The Panel is aware that detailed training packages are put in place with regular training events. However, the attendance at training events is not mandatory and the take up is limited. It believes therefore that there should be a link between the basic allowance paid to members and regular attendance at training events. It proposes therefore to consider this in detail in the forthcoming year. Equally the panel continues to believe that all members should have an individual assessment of their training needs each year.

1.6 New Technology

The panel also continue to believe that providing members with the necessary tools to carry out their roles is vital. It once again noted that members have access to council mobile phones, laptop computers, other IT devices such as blackberrys and I Pads which will provide members with the tools to carry out the work. Utilisation of IT was an ongoing, developing and integral part of the council's IT strategy.

1.7 Travel Allowances

In relation to travel allowances the panel continues to note that the council had harmonised mileage rates for both members and officers and was continuing to use Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rates for motor cars and motor cycles. It also noted that the reduced maximum amount of mileage claimable to 5,000 miles was still in place. However, whilst the maximum amount of mileage claimable to 5,000 had been successful it lacked an element of flexibility particular in relation to out of area travel. The Panel would therefore consider this as part of its work in 2015/2016. The panel also noted that the council had successfully introduced the use of the Car Plan E-Claims system for making travel claims and that members of the council now make such claims using the system which was now common to both members and officers.

1.8 Future Work Arrangements

The Panel believes that it has a valuable role in considering the full range of members allowances and recommending any changes to the council. It will therefore consider how its working arrangements can be reviewed to enable it to be an effective body. For example it will consider starting its work much earlier in the council year so that it can carry out meaningful investigations and discussions. It will then consult with all members and seek their views/comments/suggestions about what they would wish the panel to

consider. Having done this the panel will carry out further investigations and then consult on its recommendations with a view to submitting its report to the council at an earlier date in the council year. This will ensure that a Members Allowance Scheme is in place well before the start of any new Council Year.

In line with this the Panel proposes to meet in September 2015 to discuss the above in more detail and prepare a detailed timetable for its work which will be communicated to all members. This will be the start of its process of arriving at clear and meaningful recommendations, following detailed work and consultations.

The Panel is also of the view that, although the council is only required to “have regard to its recommendations” when making a scheme, if the council deviates from those recommendations in its subsequent decision making, it should explain the reasons why it has done this to the Panel.

1.9 2015/2016 Members’ Allowance Scheme

In view of the comments made within the report, the panel now ask the council to consider and have regard to the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.10 below.

1.10 Recommendations

- (i) That the current members’ allowance scheme attached as an appendix to the report be approved as the scheme for 2015/2016, subject to an increase in line with the increase paid to local government staff.
- (ii) That the council notes the contents of the report particularly in relation to the panel’s proposals on its future working arrangements and areas to be focussed on.

MEMBERS ALLOWANCES APPROVED SCHEME 2014/2015

APPENDIX A

	2014/2015	
Group	Special Responsibility Allowance	Proposed New Allowance £
1	Leader of the Council	16,799
2	Deputy Leader of the Council	11,127
	Mayor	11,781
3	Cabinet Members (x 4)	10,162
	Chairman of Planning Committee	9,146
	Chairman of Licensing Committee	8,130
	Chairman of Scrutiny Panels (x 4)	8,637
	Leader of Minority Group	8,400
4	Chairman of Audit Committee	5,312
	Deputy Mayor	5,902
	Deputy Leader of Minority Group	5,563
5	Vice Chairman of Planning Committee	4,461
	Vice Chairman of Licensing Committee	3,965
	Vice Chairman of Scrutiny Panels (x 4)	4,213
	Lead Members (x 8)	4,957
	Appeals Committee	£253 per annum
	Co-optees Allowance	£42.00 per meeting attended
	Basic Allowance	£6,874
		The dependants' carers allowance (including child care) will no longer be included in the scheme

(1) Mileage Rates

Travel to be paid at the following approved Her Majesty's Revenue and Custom (HMRC) rates -

Cars - 45p per mile

Motorcycles - 24p per mile

An additional 5p per mile can be claimed in respect of each passenger carried to whom a travelling allowance would otherwise be paid.

A maximum of 5,000 miles has been set as eligible for claim.

In addition, the actual cost of tolls, ferries and parking fees may be claimed. Receipts, must be provided. Discounted Humber Bridge tickets are available from the Political Group Offices and should be used.

(2) Public Transport

If you are using public transport for journeys out of the council's area you may use standard class travel only. Wherever possible travel arrangements should be pre-booked in advance in order to allow better access to discounts. Only as a last resort should warrants for rail travel be used. These can be obtained through the group office. Receipts or used tickets (train tickets tube fare tickets etc) should be retained and produced as receipts. The reimbursement of public transport costs is not taxable or subject to NI contributions.

(3) Hired transport

If you wish to hire a vehicle, please contact your group PA who will ensure that the best possible rates are obtained.

(4) Bicycle - Travel to be paid at the approved HMRC rate of 20p per mile.

(5) Subsistence

Subsistence allowances will no longer be included in the member allowance scheme and members will not therefore be able to claim.

(6) Overnight rates

Actuals, claimed to a maximum of

London £100.50

Elsewhere £88.10

Out of pocket expenses £4.39 per night

Overseas allowance £20.50 per night

Accommodation should be pre booked by group office staff in order for the council to reclaim VAT and take advantage of discounts.