

**MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT  
OF  
THE INDEPENDENT PANEL  
ON THE  
REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2011/12  
  
TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS REPORT**

**5 November 2010**

**Mr Anthony Cox (Chairman)  
Mr Anthony Bellringer  
Mr Adam Haynes**

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## **1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That the recommended Allowances for Members of Town and Parish Councils decrease in line with the recommended decrease in the Basic Allowances for District Councillors.
- 1.2 That there be a commensurate decrease in the level of enhanced Allowances for the Chairmen of Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.3 That Councils send the minutes of the meetings when the report is considered to Member Support at Mid Sussex District Council.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Panel has been appointed by Mid Sussex District Council to consider and make recommendations for the financial year, 2011/12, on the amount of allowances that should be paid to Town and Parish Councillors and the travelling and subsistence expenses to which they should be entitled.
- 2.2 The Panel comprises three members, Anthony Bellringer, Anthony Cox (Chairman) and Adam Haynes. The terms of appointment and background of the panel are attached at Appendix A to the report.
- 2.3 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003, the Panel is obliged, "to produce a report in relation to the members of the authorities in respect of which it was established, making recommendations".
- 2.4 Town and Parish Councils themselves determine the amount of allowances paid to Councillors, however, the regulations require that the decision be taken with due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

## **3. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 3.1 The Panel's Terms of Reference are to make recommendations on:
  - a) The level of Basic Allowance which should be payable to Town and Parish Councillors.
  - b) Whether or not an enhanced level of Basic Allowance should be paid to Chairmen, and if so, the level of that enhanced Basic Allowance.
  - c) The level of travel and subsistence allowances that should be paid to Town and Parish Councillors and the duties to which they should relate.

## **4. WORK OF THE PANEL**

- 4.1 The Panel met on five occasions in September and October 2010, and also communicated extensively over this period by e-mails. The Panel considered the allowances schemes for both the District Council and the Parish and Town Councils in the area.
- 4.2 Although the Scheme of Allowances for the District Council and Town and Parish Councils were considered separately, travelling and subsistence allowances were considered jointly.
- 4.3 The Panel noted that the Government appointed Councillors Commission took the view that, "Allowances should be set at a level that enables people to undertake the

role of councillor while not acting as an incentive to do so. Allowances are not shown by polls to be something that influences councillors to take on the role though they are instrumental in making it possible for some people to do so. If it is important that there are no financial incentives to being a councillor, it is equally important that there should not be a financial disincentive.”

## **5. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW**

- 5.1. In October/November 2010, the Panel received updated information from some of the clerks on the allowances currently paid by the Town and Parish Councils. The most recent information is attached as Appendix B of the report.
- 5.2 The Panel was aware that several of the Parish Councils still choose not to pay allowances, but instead to reimburse specific expenses incurred on Council business. As with previous reviews the Panel recognise that this is accepted practice and accountable through the Town and Parish Council’s normal audit process.
- 5.3 Not all of the Councils were offering allowances, and where allowances were available not all Councillors claimed them. It is still the case that the majority of Town and Parish Councillors in Mid Sussex do not receive an allowance.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Panel believes that public service is the key factor in serving on Town and Parish Councils and the recommendations that have been made reflect this. However, the Panel agrees that Councillors should not be out of pocket and the recommendations have been set at levels that hopefully ensure that Councillors’ expenses are met.
- 6.2 As in last year’s report, the Panel still believe that paying different allowances to Parish Councils according to their relative electorate sizes is the most appropriate way of assessing allowances in a district with such a wide variety of Towns and Parishes.
- 6.3 In line with recommendations for District Council Allowances the Panel recommends a slight decrease in the levels of Allowances for Town and Parish Councils. This is a consequence of the recommended 5% reduction to the District Councillors’ Basic Allowance, which would reduce Town and Parish Allowances as they are linked to the Basic Allowance for District Councillors.

- 6.4 The allowance for Town Councillors is £1,031 (22.9% of MSDC recommended basic allowance). The allowances for Parish Councillors are as set out below:

<b>Electorate (1/12/10)</b>	<b>Allowance</b>	<b>% of MSDC recommended Basic Allowance *</b>
Up to 1000	£104	2.3%
1001 – 2500	£257	5.7%
2501 and above	£516	11.45%

- 6.5 The Panel recognises the significant amount of extra work that a Chairman of a Parish or Town Council is required to undertake over and above the duties of other Councillors. The Panel therefore recommends that, in place of the standard Basic Allowance, Chairmen of Town and Parish Councils should continue to be paid an enhanced Basic Allowance, representing an uplift of 50% on the standard rate of Basic Allowance. The enhanced Basic Allowance for the Chairmen of Town Councils is £1,545 (34.31% of MSDC recommended basic allowance) and for the Chairmen of Parish Councils are as set out below:

<b>Electorate (1/12/10)</b>	<b>Allowance</b>	<b>% of MSDC recommended Basic Allowance *</b>
Up to 1000	£156	3.45%
1001 – 2500	£387	8.59%
2501 and above	£774	17.18 %

\* Legislation requires the Panel to set out the recommendations as a percentage of the recommended Mid Sussex District Council Basic Allowance.

- 6.6 Based on provisional figures for the electoral register to be published on 1 December 2010<sup>†</sup>, Parish Councils' electorates fit into the bands as set out below:

<b>Electorate Banding</b>	<b>Parishes</b>
Town Councils	Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath.
Up to 1000	Albourne, Fulking, Newtimber, Poynings, Pyecombe, and Twineham.
1001 – 2500	Ansty & Staplefield, Ardingly, Ashurst Wood, Balcombe, Bolney, Horsted Keynes, Lindfield Rural, Slaugham, Turners Hill and West Hoathly.
2501 and above	Cuckfield, Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common, Lindfield and Worth.

<sup>†</sup> Consequently these are subject to alteration once the official figures are published.

## 7. TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

- 7.1 The Panel reviewed the scheme of travelling and subsistence allowances. In line with the recommendation made to the District Council it is recommended that the car mileage rate should remain at the flat rate of 40p per mile in line with the HMRC tax-free levels. If HMRC amends the tax-free level The Panel will further review the level of allowance at that time. The current additional car passenger rate is recommended to remain at the current level.
- 7.2 The scheme of subsistence allowances for the current year is in line with the scheme applicable to local government officers. The Panel believes that this works well and there is no reason for change. It is therefore recommended that the following be approved to apply to Members of Town and Parish Councillors and that, where relevant, the rates for subsistence should increase alongside any increase to the staff scheme on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.

Detail	Recommended Rate
<b>Vehicles</b>	
Car Mileage	40p per mile
Car Passenger Mileage Rate	3p per mile for 1 passenger 5p per mile for 2 or more passengers
Cycling Allowance	21p per mile
<b>Subsistence</b>	
Breakfast	£ 6.45
Lunch	£ 8.91
Tea	£ 3.53
Evening Meal	£ 11.03
Overnight Out of Pocket Expenses Per night	£ 4.97
Overnight Out of Pocket Expenses Per week	£ 19.86

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 The Panel would like to thank officers – Judith Morgan and Joseph Pearson - for their support during this review as well as those Town and Parish Councillors and Clerks who took the time to provide information and comments.

**TERMS OF APPOINTMENT**

Members of the Independent Panel for the review of Members' Allowances are appointed for a four-year term.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Term ends</b>
Anthony Bellringer	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2014
Anthony Cox	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2011
Adam Haynes	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2014

**BACKGROUND OF PANEL MEMBERS**

Anthony Bellringer

A resident of Mid Sussex since 1983, Tony lives in Burgess Hill, where he has been a governor at Southway Junior School (currently attended by two of his three children) since 2001. He has worked in a number of Civil Service roles, including most relevantly on the implementation of new executive arrangements for local authorities under the Local Government Act 2000. Tony is currently the Deputy Secretary to the (Parliamentary) Boundary Commission for England.

Tony Cox

Recently took early retirement from IBM, where his last role was as a salesman for IBM Global Services. Previous roles having included Business Unit Manager, Delivery Manager & Systems Engineer. Tony is married with two daughters and has lived in East Grinstead since 1987. Tony is now undertaking part time work and volunteer work, the latter including work at a local Citizens Advice Bureau.

Adam Haynes

A resident of Mid Sussex his whole life, Adam currently lives in Burgess Hill. During a varied working life he has been an electrical engineer as well as working within the aviation industry. He has extensive experience working within Health & Safety as well as personnel training. He is single with no children but has a large family all still living within Mid Sussex.

**APPENDIX B**

**Summary of Allowances for Town/Parish Councils 2010/11**

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Travel and expenses</b>
Albourne			
Ardingly			
Ansty and Staplefield			
Ashurst Wood			
Balcombe	None	£396	None
Bolney	None	None	None
Burgess Hill TC	£1095	£1642	As recommended
Cuckfield	None	None	As recommended
East Grinstead TC	£1085	£1250	None
Fulking	None	None	None
Hassocks	None		None
Haywards Heath TC			
Horsted Keynes	None	None	None
Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common			
Lindfield Rural			
Lindfield	£545	£814	40p per mile
Newtimber	None	None	None
Poynings			
Pyecombe			
Slaugham			
Turners Hill			
Twineham			
West Hoathly			
Worth	None	£400	As officers

Where the table is incomplete there is no current information available.