



Report of the
Independent Remuneration Panel
appointed to make recommendations
on the
Scheme of Members' allowances
for
Mablethorpe and Sutton Town Council

July 2023

1. Background

- 1.1 East Lindsey District Council Independent Remuneration Panel was requested to consider and recommend a Scheme of Allowances for Mablethorpe and Sutton Town Council that complies with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Local Government Act 2000, and associated regulations.
- 1.2 The scheme of allowances had not been reviewed since 2007/08.

2. The Panel and its responsibilities

- 2.1 The membership of the Panel is as follows:
 - Stuart Childs
 - Nicci Marzec
 - Terry Pinder
- 2.2 The Panel has been supported by Council Officers – Ann Good (Democratic Services Manager) and Rebecca James (Scrutiny & Policy Officer).
- 2.3 The Panel are required to consider all areas within its remit under the regulations, and then to make recommendations to the Town Council. In general, these recommendations can relate to the following matters:
 - The basic allowance that should be made payable to its Elected Members;
 - The duties for which a travelling and subsistence allowance can be paid and the amount of this allowance;

3. Documentation and evidence

- 3.1 The Panel met and gave consideration to the following:
 - Details of existing scheme of allowances.
 - Information provided by Steve Fletcher, Town Clerk, on behalf of members of the Town Council
 - Comparative information from other Town Councils in seaside towns

4. Current scheme

- 4.1 The allowances for Mablethorpe and Sutton Town Council were last reviewed in 2007/08.
- 4.2 The current scheme includes the following allowances:
 - Basic Allowance of £390 per annum for all councillors
 - A travel and subsistence rate of 45 pence per mile

5. Review of Current Responsibilities for Town Councillors

- 5.1 Steve Fletcher, Town Clerk, presented the current position for the Town Council in support of his request for a review of members allowances.

It had been some time since Mablethorpe and Sutton Town Council (MSTC) had asked for a review. The Town Clerk outlines the current assets and responsibilities of the council which include:

- Trusthorpe allotments (140+ plots)
- Community Hall / Interagency Building - Mablethorpe
- St. Mary's Park
- Cycleways - Mablethorpe
- Beach Huts – Mablethorpe
- Public Toilets (x 4) – Mablethorpe / Sutton on Sea
- Market – Mablethorpe
- Events / event management & delivery – (various)
- Bus shelters (x4)
- LCC Grass verge cutting
- Coral Café
- War memorial maintenance (x2)
- Hanging Baskets (2007/08 - 20) 2022/23 – 84)
- CCTV

- 5.2 The Panel were advised of the current budget and resources of the council.

- Budget - £704,663
- Income - £63,200
- Precept income - £641,463
- Staff – 2.8 employed staff

The Panel noted that the budget of the council had increased from £519,793 in 2019/20 to £704, 663 in 2022/23. The number of paid staff has increased from 1.25 FTE in 2007 to 2.8 FTE.

- 5.3 The Panel noted the that the Council currently comprises 20 members and the annual meetings schedule for the council is

- 10 full council meetings
- 12 planning committee meetings
- 6 administration committee meetings
- 7 other ad hoc meetings.

The Panel were advised that the number of meetings has not significantly increased, however, the length of meetings has increased as the council has more business to conduct. On average full Council meetings take approximately 2 - 3 hours where previously they were approximately 1 – 1.5 hours.

In addition, Members are required to commit more time to preparation for meetings and attend informal working groups, used to develop new initiatives.

The Panel also noted that the Town Council does have a standing Personnel Committee but that, owing to lack of business, it has not had to meet for some time.

The Town Council also has a number of Working Parties and Task and Finish Groups which meet regularly on a variety of different areas of council business. It was noted that the number of committees and meetings were greater than would normally be required for an organisation of the Council's size.

The Panel further noted that the Town Council has been in negotiation with East Lindsey District Council for some time about transfer of assets to the Town Council. It was noted that some of these assets could be significant and would, in the future, have an impact on the workload of the council and councillors. However, at present, negotiations are ongoing, and impact cannot be assessed.

It was also noted that councillors hold regular surgeries in the town and undertake casework. It was noted that the number of issues raised with councillors has increased since the closure of the local Customer Access points. The Panel noted the frequency and level of councillor attendance at these surgeries. The Panel determined that the level and frequency, although regular and attended by multiple councillors, were greater than would ordinarily be required for the Council's size and responsibilities. It was also noted that many of the issues raised were matters that would have to be referred to the district council as they were outside the scope of the Town Council's responsibilities.

- 5.4 Councillors currently receive a basic allowance of £390 per annum. The Council does not have any additional Special Responsibility Allowances.
- 5.5 The Panel noted that the Mayor is also the Chair of the Council and receives an additional allowance of £2,500 to support the responsibilities of the civic role.
- 5.6 Members can claim travel at 45 pence per mile for travel outside the area to attend council related business.
- 5.7 The council does not issue or provide any equipment or resources to enable councillors to fulfil their role.

6 Comparative review

- 6.1 Benchmarking information from other Town Councils in seaside areas was collated to make informed comparison with other similar sized towns with a seasonal economy.

The comparative information below would indicate that Mablethorpe and Sutton Town Councillors are well remunerated for their roles compared to broadly similar sized Town Councils. The basic allowance in Mablethorpe and Sutton is higher than any of the comparative councils, many of whom do not provide a basic allowance.

	Mablethorpe	Berwick upon Tweed	Sidmouth	Whitby
Population	12,668	13,265	12,569	13,594
Budget/precept	£641,463	£401,424	£619,020	£412,935
Number of councillors	19	16	21	19
Basic allowance	£390	none	£290	none
Mayoral allowance	£2,500	£4700 but this includes the costs of all the events too Mayor gets around £800	£2000 Chair allowance no mayor	£2000
committees	3	6 sub committees	3	6 sub committees
Responsibilities include:	2.8 FTE staff members Weekly Cllr surgeries Allotments Community hall Beach huts Public toilets Bus shelters Grass verges Café War memorial Hanging baskets CCTV	Park Play area Splash Park Festive lighting Public seating Bus shelters Allotments Litter bins Grit bins Festivals CCTV	Public conveniences Water fountains Flower beds Festivals Christmas Lights Skate Park Youth Service/Centre provision Street furniture Dog bins War memorial museum	5 staff members Allotments Toilets War memorial Pier Harbour Town hall building Art gallery Halls for hire Monuments Bench Christmas lights

6.2 The Panel, having considered the above, along with information provided by the Town Clerk, determined that the basic allowance is fair and that there is no basis on which any further increases would be justified at this stage.

7 Recommendations

The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends

- 7.1 That members allowances are frozen at the current rate for a period of 4 years unless significant change to Councillor responsibility arises during that period.
- 7.2 That a further review of allowances should be undertaken following any significant transfer of assets to the Council to determine the impact of the transfer on the workload and responsibilities of Councillors.