

West Suffolk



Council

ANNEX A

Report of the West Suffolk Independent Remuneration Panel

February 2019



1. Background

- 1.1. In September 2018, an Independent Remuneration Panel (“the Panel”) was appointed by the Shadow West Suffolk Council in order to advise on the levels of remuneration that should be paid to Councillors serving the new West Suffolk Council.
- 1.2. This report has been prepared by the Panel to enable the Council to consider their recommendations, and provide details on the rationale that supports these recommendations. The report is supplemented by a proposed scheme of allowances for the Council.

2. The Panel

- 2.1. The Panel is comprised of 5 members, as follows:
 - Richard Cooper (Chair)
 - Laura Austin
 - Derek Blake MBE
 - Sandra Cox
 - Chris Mattinson
- 2.2. All panel members, by law, must be fully independent of the Council; they cannot be, or have recently been a serving member of the Council, or have any close affiliations with members of the Council.

3. Acknowledgements

- 3.1. The Panel were supported in the course of their work by the Service Manager (Democratic Services); the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny); the Democratic Services Officer (Cabinet), and the Policy Officer.
- 3.2. In addition, the Panel also received a range of representations, both in writing and orally, from many members of the Council to help inform their thinking.
- 3.3. The Panel would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have helped to inform, support and advise them in the undertaking of their work.

4. Introduction

- 4.1. On 1 April 2019, a new Council, West Suffolk Council, will come into being, replacing Forest Heath and West Suffolk Council.
- 4.2. In February 2017, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils renewed their remuneration schemes. The two schemes have differences – there is no present, harmonised remuneration scheme.
- 4.3. As a result, the Panel has been required to develop a new scheme, to reflect the expected roles and relative responsibilities that will exist within the new Council.
- 4.4. In undertaking their work, the Panel has considered a range of supporting material, details of which are attached at Appendix 2. The Panel have been particularly mindful of the following factors:
 - The proposed committee structures and role descriptions for Councillors, and how these will be reflected in the relative level of responsibilities for special responsibility allowances;
 - The outcomes of benchmarking activities to review levels of remuneration at other Councils;
 - The legislative framework and associated national guidance
 - Feedback received from Councillors on the current schemes and their thoughts on what the role of Councillors will be within West Suffolk
 - Value for money and cost of the proposals to the public purse
- 4.5. The proposed scheme is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. This report provides detail on how the levels of remuneration and expenses proposed within this scheme has been calculated.

5. Legislative Framework

- 5.1. The West Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018 requires that the “shadow authority must formulate proposals for the scheme of members’ allowances to be adopted by West Suffolk Council”
- 5.2. Any scheme of allowances that is adopted by West Suffolk Council must comply with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 (“The Regulations”). These require that the Council must have regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 5.3. The Regulations stipulate what form of allowances and expenses may be made to Councillors. In particular, the Council:

- Must set a rate of Basic Allowance, that shall be payable to all Councillors at the same rate;
- May pay a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) to Councillors who have special responsibilities (the form of special responsibility is detailed in the legislation);
- May make arrangements to pay the expenses of Councillors who have caring responsibilities when they are undertaking official Council duties;
- May make arrangements to pay travelling and subsistence expenses of Councillors incurred in undertaking official Council duties.
- May make arrangements for the provision of payments to co-opted members when undertaking their duties.

6. The Basic Allowance

- 6.1. The rate of basic allowances payable to West Suffolk Councillors has been one of the most important, but also one of the most difficult recommendations for the Panel.
- 6.2. By law, the basic allowance is payable to all Councillors, regardless of the level of activity they undertake – unless the Councillor elects to forego their allowance.
- 6.3. Councillors have a variety of roles; but the basic allowance is primarily there to recognise the work they undertake within the Council – making decisions on behalf of their communities, and the work they do to support their communities and residents.
- 6.4. The panel recognise the aims and ambitions set out in the business case to become West Suffolk Council; enabling greater financial resiliency; being better placed to capitalise on opportunities, and having strong leadership to encourage growth. However, it is not clear at this stage how this will directly impact on the work of Councillors when undertaking their ward work.
- 6.5. To counter this, the existing Councils place a strong emphasis of the role of the Councillor in the community, as embodied in the Families and Communities Strategy, and this is fully expected to continue within the new Council. The Council will have 64 Councillors, which represents an 11% reduction on the current 72 Councillors across the two Councils. The Panel recognise that this will result in some Councillors representing more communities and residents, which is likely to entail an increase in workload. This can be reflected both in terms of the basic allowance, but also in terms of the expenses scheme (see below).
- 6.6. Whilst it is recognised that Councillors will be making decisions across a broader area in the new Council, again, it is not clear that the workloads or nature of decisions being made by Councillors would significantly

change. As set out in the "council size" case (agreed by the Shadow Council in October 2017), it is expected that on average Councillors would have 2 or 3 Committee / working party appointments each, which is not dissimilar to current volumes. It is acknowledged that some committees, such as Development Control, may need to meet for slightly longer than at present.

- 6.7. During the course of the Panel's work, several Councillors have put forward representations regarding the "voluntary" nature of the role and whether it is appropriate to make deductions to the basic allowance accordingly. The Panel recognise that being a Councillor is something that people may choose to do, and there is a degree to which people may take into account the wider public good in doing so. However, they have not sought to make this a factor in calculating the level of allowance.
- 6.8. All Councillors were provided with a survey (the outcomes of which are summarised at Appendix 3), seeking their views on remuneration. Within the survey, the Panel directly asked Councillors what they considered the level of remuneration should be. 22% of Councillors responded. Although answers varied, the most common response was for an allowance somewhere in the region of £6,000, and the majority of Councillors favoured a modest increase in the allowance.
- 6.9. Some Councillors felt that there should be substantial increases in the value of allowances payable to Councillors. Being a Councillor can often be a 24/7 role; residents may contact their Councillors at any time of day, and many Councillors put forward the high volume of correspondence they have to deal with on a day-to-day basis in addition to taking part in meetings. Many equated the role to a full time occupation and raised concern that unless there was a substantial increase in allowances, it would deter people, particularly those who required a regular income from undertaking the role.
- 6.10. The Panel were sympathetic to this argument, but were concerned that the current national framework and approach to allowance payments prevents them from making such a radical recommendation.
- 6.11. The Panel have taken into account the outcomes of research undertaken to compare allowances from other Councils. Research was based on those that are geographically close to the Council, and those Councils that will have a similar number of residents to the new Council.
- 6.12. This research is attached at Appendix 4, charts 1 and 2. It should be noted that the rates of allowances were taken as at 1 April 2018, prior to annual uplifts in rates; in the meantime, some Councils have also undertaken remuneration reviews and therefore their rates may now be different.

- 6.13. The panel received representations about what costs the basic allowance should cover. Most schemes, including both the current Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury schemes, expect the basic allowance to cover incidental costs such as telephone calls, stationery and postage. Councillors also highlighted that they are expected to cover the costs of mobile phone contracts and calls, and printer inks and paper, whilst the Forest Heath Council scheme provides a specific annual allowance towards broadband costs.
- 6.14. During the review, it was drawn to the Panel's attention that most St Edmundsbury Councillors have been historically receiving a £180 broadband allowance in addition to their members' allowance scheme. After extensive deliberation, the panel concluded that the cost of broadband in future should be incorporated into the basic allowance, and reflected in the percentage increase.
- 6.15. The Panel heard conflicting representations from Councillors regarding mobile phone costs, and after discussion felt it was more appropriate for the Council to decide whether mobile phones should be given to Councillors, rather than the panel.
- 6.16. Taking all the above into account, the Panel consider it appropriate to propose a basic allowance rate of £5,900 for West Suffolk Council. This will equate to £2.10 per resident, and will place the Council towards the middle of its future peer group, in terms of Councils of a similar size. The current schemes, when combined, cost £2.14 per resident.
- 6.17. The total costs of basic allowances proposed will be £377,600, compared to the total current costs for Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury combined of £398,907 (based on schemes at 1st April 2018, including costs for broadband allowances payable). This represents an overall cost saving of 5.3%.
- 6.18. Whilst the purpose of this review is to set a new rate of allowance for the new Council, the Panel noted that this would represent a modest increase compared to both existing Council schemes, whilst the cost per resident is reduced overall, representing better value for money for the taxpayer.
- 6.19. Members may note that the proposed rate would be a comparatively higher increase for Forest Heath Councillors; this reflects the fact that at present, the average "ward size" (number of electors each Councillor represents) is some 25% higher in St Edmundsbury than in Forest Heath, and the St Edmundsbury rates were, accordingly, proportionately higher in the past.
- 6.20. By law, the basic allowance must be paid to all Councillors at the same rate (unless the Councillor chooses to forego their allowance). The Panel

noted during the review that some Councillors expressed concerns about this, and whether a per-meeting form of allowance should be introduced. The Panel were aware that a payment per meeting approach would be inconsistent with the national framework and therefore inappropriate for the panel to recommend this form of scheme.

7. Special Responsibility Allowances

- 7.1. As set out above, the Panel have reviewed a range of factors in calculating proposed levels of allowances. In particular, in Appendix 4, the Panel have considered comparative rates at other Councils as well as understanding from Councillors in receipt of SRA's the level of responsibility this entails.
- 7.2. The Panel have sought to carefully understand the relative nature of responsibilities and determine levels of allowances in a systematic way, evaluating roles in a similar way to how an organisation may evaluate different job roles. The Panel considered the outcome of the Councillor survey, and received representations from Councillors, following which a formal analysis of each role was undertaken to validate the rates being proposed.
- 7.3. In particular, the panel have adopted the approach taken by a number of Councils, and advocated in the South West Councils guidance to Remuneration Panels, of suggesting tiers of allowances, where the levels of allowance is varied according to the relative responsibilities. The South West Councils guidance is one of the few documents nationally produced to provide assistance to Remuneration Panels in undertaking their work.
- 7.4. Within this approach, each tier represents a different multiplier of the basic allowance, and so those with the least responsibility will receive a proportion of the basic allowance as their SRA, whilst those with the most responsibility will receive a multiplier of the basic allowance. Whilst the Panel does not consider the model adopted by South West Councils is appropriate in full for West Suffolk Councils, it has provided a helpful basis on which to formulate the proposals.

Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members

Submissions received indicated that the role of a cabinet member, deputy leader or leader can not only mean being on call to residents at all times, but will often mean delivering the role on a near full-time basis. The Panel also recognised that these roles have an important function in putting forward the Council's position and lobbying on behalf of the Council and its area on both a regional and a national stage. With this in

mind, the Panel felt that there is a strong case to substantially increase allowances for senior executive members.

- 7.5. The business case to become a single council makes clear the need for strong leadership within West Suffolk, to enable the Council to achieve its ambitions. Members with executive responsibility are expected to be the driving force of Council strategies, and have strong insight to a range of services. They will lead and champion initiatives, make decisions within their areas of responsibility, and are expected to lead where there is challenge and scrutiny to the work they and the Council do.
- 7.6. The panel recognised that it is for the future Council Leader to determine their cabinet, but inevitably there is likely to be an increase in responsibility following the reduction in the overall size of Cabinet from the current fifteen members to a future maximum of ten.
- 7.7. As with the basic allowance, it is challenging to give full value to the roles of the leader, deputy leader and cabinet members given the current national framework. However, it was recognised by the Panel that the levels of remuneration that the current roles attract at St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath are very low in comparison to peer Councils at present, as the schemes have not been subject to substantive increase for some time.
- 7.8. Given this direct increase in responsibility anticipated within the new Council, and having reviewed peer Council, it is proposed that the rates are established as follows:
- Tier 1 - Leader: £14,750pa (2.5x basic allowance)
 - Tier 2 - Deputy Leader: £8,850pa (1.5x basic allowance)
 - Tier 3 - Cabinet Members: £7,375pa (1.25x basic allowance)

Chair and Deputy Chair

- 7.9. Review of peer Councils and local Councils indicates that the practices towards paying Chair / Deputy Chair (and equivalent Mayor roles) varies widely. In many Councils, it appears that there are significant deductions made to reflect that this role has a certain degree of honour associated with it.
- 7.10. The Panel considers that being Chair can be a very demanding role. The Chair is expected to Chair Council meetings, facilitating difficult discussions, in a balanced, intelligent way, whilst also acting as the civic leader of the Council, representing the Council at numerous events. This requires someone with a wide skillset to perform the role effectively.

- 7.11. Whilst the Civic Leadership Review indicated that the time commitment involved may not be as significant as the current St Edmundsbury Mayor, the review also confirmed the important role the civic leader can play in supporting the Council's priorities and acting as a key figurehead in the community. Even with a reduced commitment, the postholder would regularly be required to give up evening and weekend time, and very much put personal commitments aside, to fulfil the role effectively.
- 7.12. The Panel recognised that the skillsets required to fulfil the role also apply to the Deputy Chair. The Deputy Chair may be called upon at little notice, and needs to be prepared to have to step into the Chair's role at frequent intervals.
- 7.13. The Panel were also concerned that the demands on the personal time of the post holder – including travelling to many events – was not being reflected in the level of allowance received. With this in mind, they consider it appropriate to propose an allowance level of £7,375pa for the Chair (Tier 3), and £3,894pa for the Vice-Chair (Tier 5 – see below).

Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs

- 7.14. The Panel recognise that the impact of becoming a single West Suffolk Council will vary on the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair roles. As such, the Panel have decided to revisit the relative responsibilities associated with being a committee chair, and the time commitments involved, to determine relative levels of allowances. The Panel's evaluation has been undertaken with regard to the emerging constitution, which establishes the relative responsibilities of each Committee, and specific responsibilities given to the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as feedback from members. It should be recognised that this is not an exact science and there is a degree of judgement when placing roles within each band.
- 7.15. This has resulted in committees being categorised into five tiers, as per the table below:

Tiers of Allowances

Tier 4 (SRA = 0.9 x basic)	Tier 5 (0.66 x basic)	Tier 6 (0.4 x basic)	Tier 7 (0.35 x basic)	Tier 8 (no SRA)
<p>May be expected to chair meetings 8-12 times per year</p> <p>May be regularly required to defend Council decisions to public / press</p> <p>May be required to represent the Council / Committee</p> <p>Specific personal responsibilities in relation to decision making for which they could be held to account</p> <p>Expected to undertake regular (at least weekly) meetings with officers</p>	<p>May be expected to chair meetings 4-8 times per year</p> <p>May have some requirement to defend Council decisions to public / press</p> <p>May be required to represent the Council / Committee</p> <p>May have some liaison with officers / be consulted in relation to decision making (more than monthly)</p>	<p>May be called upon to act in Tier 4 / Tier 5 roles (as a Vice-Chair)</p> <p>May have some liaison with officers / be consulted in relation to decision making (monthly)</p> <p>May have some representative role / be required to represent the committee on occasions</p>	<p>May be called upon to act in Tier 4-6 roles (as a Vice-Chair)</p> <p>May have some liaison with officers / be consulted in relation to decision making (less than monthly)</p> <p>May have some representative role / be required to represent the committee on occasions</p>	<p>May be expected to chair / vice-chair a committee less than 4 times a year</p> <p>Unlikely to have further commitments beyond chairing the meeting</p>
<p>Roles within this band:</p> <p>Chair of Overview and Scrutiny</p>	<p>Roles within this band:</p>	<p>Roles within this band:</p> <p>Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny</p>	<p>Roles within this band:</p>	<p>Roles within this band:</p> <p>Standards Committee Chair / Vice-Chair</p>

Chair of Development Control	Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee Chair of Licensing Committee Vice-Chair of Council Vice-Chair of Development Control		Vice-Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee Vice-Chair of Licensing	
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- 7.16. The Panel have also taken a similar approach to the evaluation of Vice-Chairs, on the basis that the Vice-Chair would be expected to be able to fulfil all the responsibilities of the respective Chair. The Panel has also taken into account current expectations on the Vice-Chairs role.

The Panel received specific representations from a number of Councillors in relation to the Vice-Chairs' role for Development Control, including the need to have two vice-chairs of Development Control, and the need for the Vice-Chairs' to attend many of the same meetings as the Chair. The Panel consider it is a matter for the Council to decide whether to appoint one vice-chair or two, but have taken the feedback relating to the demands of the role into account when setting the level of remuneration.

- 7.17. The Panel, as with other roles, have also assessed comparative information in relation to other Councils. This indicates that practices for payment of Committee Chairs varies significantly and, whilst regard has been given to this in establishing levels of remuneration, have focussed on what they consider to be suitable remuneration for West Suffolk Council.

- 7.18. This has resulted in the Committee recommending the following levels of allowances:

- Tier 4 roles £5,310pa
- Tier 5 roles Vice-Chairs £3,894pa
- Tier 6 roles Chairs £2,360pa
- Tier 7 roles Vice-Chairs £2,065pa
- Tier 8 roles: No allowance

Minority Group Leaders

- 7.19. The Panel considered whether minority group leaders should be given a specific allowance for their role. At present, the Panel considered that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the nature of the role was of sufficient responsibility to warrant an allowance. However, the Panel recognised that the forthcoming election may mean that there are changes to the political groups, and in future being leader of a minority group may warrant an allowance. As a result, the Panel consider it more appropriate to revisit this allowance when they undertake their next review (see below), and if an allowance is recommended, this could be backdated accordingly.

Foregoing of Allowances

- 7.20. Some members have indicated that they wish to be able to forego allowances and expenses that they receive. The panel have some concerns that this does create a distorted picture of Councillor workload,

however the law clearly requires the scheme to allow Councillors to forego their allowance and this has been included in the scheme.

Payment of Multiple Special Responsibility Allowances

- 7.21. This is an area of current inconsistency, whereby St Edmundsbury Councillors can only claim for one special responsibility allowance, whilst Forest Heath members can claim for part of a second allowance if they hold two special responsibility posts. The Panel recognised that with a larger Council, it should not be necessary for Councillors to be appointed to more than one special responsibility post and are recommending that only one allowance can be claimed.

Overall costs of Special Responsibility Allowances and the proposed scheme of allowances

- 7.22. The total cost of Special Responsibility Allowances across both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, based on posts held at 1 April 2018, is £135,814.60. The proposed scheme, assuming the Council appoints a full Cabinet of 10 members, and there are two Vice-Chairs of the Development Control Committee, would be £126,555, which represents a 6.8% saving.
- 7.23. Overall, the proposed total costs of basic (paragraph 6.16) and special responsibility (paragraph 7.22) allowances will be £504,155. This represents a total saving of £30,566 or 5.7% to the Council compared to existing costs.

8. Uplifts and Review of Allowances

- 8.1. The Panel consider it appropriate to recommend that allowances are periodically increased. This has the advantage of ensuring that allowances keep pace with increases in the costs of living that Councillors will incur, and as such remain fair and consistent. It also avoids the need for substantial increases in allowances simply to "catch-up" as opposed to changes in responsibilities.
- 8.2. The Panel have considered a range of indices that could be used for such increases, including RPI, CPI, and ONS measures of increases in median salaries. Each measure has its advantages and disadvantages, and in consequence the Panel felt that the fairest measure would be the same increase that the majority of Council staff receive annually, following the national local government salary settlement. The Panel are keen to emphasise that this is being suggested to ensure parity of treatment between staff and Councillors, and not because they consider that staff pay and Councillor remuneration should be more directly linked.

- 8.3. The Panel have also considered how long it should be before the allowances are reviewed again. Whilst there are merits in setting rates for a four year term, to give certainty to Councillors at the time of election, the Panel have some concern that the rates are being established based on expectations of the relative workloads and responsibilities for Councillors. They therefore suggest that a further review is undertaken with the aim of reporting findings within 12 months of the new Council being formed.
- 8.4. This will allow the Panel to assess whether the scheme is operating effectively, and that the levels of remuneration are consistent with the realities of the role, and for the Panel to consider any new posts or changes in responsibilities that the new Council recommends.

9. Scheme of Expenses

Travelling Rates

- 9.1. Whilst the panel were appreciative that costs of fuel have increased, HMRC set standard rates to allow for the reclaiming of fuel and the Panel consider that these provide a sensible benchmark for Councillors to reclaim expenditure for travelling; however they have made provision that if the HMRC rate is amended then the scheme may also be amended. The panel also agreed that Councillors may claim a supplemental rate if they are taking passengers with them. As explained in 9.11 below, the Panel are recommending changes to what events Councillors can claim for.
- 9.2. The Panel also agreed that car parking costs may be reclaimed by Councillors at the rate at which they were incurred in the course of official duties.
- 9.3. In terms of public transport, the panel considered that Councillors should be able to claim at the standard fare rate. The Panel have also suggested that Councillors who are entitled to use discounted / concessionary public transport fares should be expected do so.
- 9.4. The Panel recognised that other forms of transport tended to be exceptional, and usually booked on behalf of the Councillor, e.g. flights to attend training in other parts of the country. The Panel considered it sensible that this practice should continue, and only in exceptional circumstances (and wherever possible agreed with the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer in advance) should Councillors seek to claim for other forms of transport.

Carers and Dependents Allowances

- 9.5. As above, a number of Councillors raised concern with the Panel that it is difficult for those with family / caring commitments to become a Councillor. As per 6.9 and 6.10 above, the Panel did not feel able to reflect this fully within the basic allowance, however did feel it important to ensure there is appropriate provision to enable Councillors to be able to claim for the costs for professional care they would have to incur in order to undertake their Councillor work.
- 9.6. Research was undertaken on relative costs of childcare and more specialist support care for those with needs. This latter cost is extremely difficult to determine as it will depend on the complexity of the care required and therefore a rate of £20 per hour was considered appropriate. The ukcareguide.co.uk suggests home care in West Suffolk, for 10 hours per week for 4 years would equate to £18 per hour; by comparison, childcare, according to care.com, would equate to £8 per hour. Councillors would be required to provide supporting evidence of costs incurred.

Subsistence Rates

- 9.7. The current schemes set an amount per meal that Councillors may claim for in the course of their work. In practice, the Panel heard that subsistence allowances are rarely claimed; it tends to be mainly when Councillors are staying overnight for training / conference purposes and in such situations the current meal allowances did not cover the costs of the meal.
- 9.8. The Panel also heard that where a meeting of the Council or its Committees was scheduled to take place across a mealtime, then the practice was for Councillors to be provided with lunch. The Panel considered this should be continued.
- 9.9. Given this, the Panel considered that the current subsistence rates should be removed and replaced with an allowance of up to £20 for a meal where a Councillor was required to stay overnight on official duties. The Panel also agreed that an "exceptional circumstance" clause be included to cover items such as meals on trains or in London.

When Councillors are allowed to make claims

- 9.10. The circumstances under which Councillors are allowed to make claims for costs incurred (in line with the rates set above) are generally stipulated in law; for example, claims can be made for Council and Committee meetings and attending outside body meetings (where appointed by the Council). However, the law also allows Councillors to be able to claim expenses to "carry out any other duty... for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority..."

- 9.11. The Panel have received a number of representations from Councillors that undertaking their local community work is a core part of their role. The Panel agree with Councillors on this point, and consider this work to be discharging functions of the authority; this is further reinforced by the role description for Councillors in the Council's Constitution. They have therefore proposed that in future, Councillors will be able to claim expenses for attending community meetings where invited to do so (including Parish / Town Council meetings); attending community events; work in their community to resolve issues raised and attending meetings to aid expenditure on their locality ward budget.
- 9.12. The Panel have also received representations that Councillors be permitted to claim for attending political group meetings. The Panel have considered this point and assessed this request against the current legal framework; the Panel do not consider the legislation gives scope to allow for such expenses claims.

Submission of Claims

- 9.13. The Panel have considered how long Councillors should have in which to submit expense claims. The Panel consider that the current 2 month window provides sufficient scope for Councillors to submit expense claims, whilst recognising that there may exist exceptional circumstances where a Councillor may be permitted to submit a claim following a longer period of time.

10. Implementation of Scheme

- 10.1. The panel have considered when the new remuneration scheme should come into effect. The Panel recognise that introducing the new scheme on 1 April has merits, and reflects the fact that on that date all Councillors will become West Suffolk Councillors. However, there are some practical implications in doing so, most notably the changes required to the payroll system on both 1 April (to bring the new scheme into effect), and 6 May (when the normal term of Councillors will end) at a time when the Council is undertaking a TUPE transfer of its staff to West Suffolk. Further, Councillors will have to operate on the basis of a new scheme for a 5 week period before the election which may increase the risk of errors in claims.
- 10.2. The Panel noted that there is very little financial implications overall to the Council whether Councillors receive the new rates on 1 April or 6 May. The Panel therefore consider it sensible for Councillors to continue to receive allowances and claim expenses on the basis of their existing Council allowances scheme until 6 May, after which all Councillors should be paid at the new rate for West Suffolk.