

Report of the East Devon Parish Remuneration Panel – April 2026.

The Independent Remuneration Panel is appointed by East Devon District Council and is an independent body. Its responsibility is to review the Council's Scheme of Councillors Allowances.

The Panel makes recommendations to East Devon District Council to ensure that allowances are set at the appropriate level to undertake the elected member role and sufficiently attractive to all who would wish to serve as an elected councillor.

In terms of independence, Panel members are not employees and are therefore independent of the Council. Panel members do not have a line manager in the Council and therefore are under no direction or influence from the Council in anyway. Ongoing administrative support for the IRP is provided by the Council as required.

The current membership of the panel is as follows:

- Nigel Arnold – Panel Chair
- Ken Bryant – Panel Member
- Andy Cockerham – Panel Member
- Charles Summers – Panel Member

The Council seeks the advice of the Panel before making any changes or amendments to the Councillors Scheme of Allowances and should therefore take its reasoning into account before setting a new or amended Scheme of Councillors Allowance.

Part 1

Review of the East Devon Councillors Allowance Scheme

Introduction

The Independent Remuneration Panel met on 29 April 2026 to review the current Scheme of Allowances including the level of Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances.

The IRP carried out a full review of councillor allowances in June 2025 and felt that the current level of basic and special responsibility allowances did not require any changes and that the scheme overall was suitable, subject to some minor drafting corrections. Members of the IRP to submit changes to the Democratic Services Manager.

The Scheme of Allowances has been updated and is attached at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Scheme of Allowances is approved by the Council, subject to any minor drafting changes.

Part 2

Review the Special Responsibility Allowance of the Independent Person on the Standards Committee and Independent Representatives on other committees

The IRP were advised that an Independent Person was a statutory role created by the Localism Act 2011 and that every local authority must appoint at least one IP to support its standards arrangements.

The core functions of an IP included:

- Advising the local authority on complaints – the Monitoring Officer must consult the IP before making a decision on an allegation that a councillor has breached the Code of Conduct.
- Advising councillors who are the subject of a complaint – councillors can seek views from the IP regarding allegations made against them.
- Providing an independent, impartial perspective – the IP offers a non political viewpoint to support confidence in the fairness and transparency of the standards process.
- Participating in Standards Hearings – the IP will attend hearings in an advisory capacity.
- Supporting a culture of high standards of conduct – offer guidance on ethical matters and helps promote good governance within the authority.

The IRP were advised that an Independent Representative (IR) was a different role to that of the IP.

An IR role was not defined in statute and may vary from council to council. An IR serves on a committee to provide external oversight and diversity of perspective, but without the specific statutory responsibilities of an IP. At EDDC there were IR on the Standards Committee, Audit & Governance Committee and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The IRP received details of the workload and details of the complaints and acknowledged that the IP was involved in a greater level of work in reviewing complaints in consultation with the Monitoring Officer.

In comparison the role of an IR was required to attend committee meetings usually 4 per year and spend time reading the agenda and reports.

RECOMMENDATION: That a Special Responsibility Allowance of £1,000 be awarded to the Independent Person(s) on the Standards Committee, in recognition of the additional complexities of dealing with Code of Conduct complaints, with the allowance to be backdated to the date of appointment of the Independent Person.

In respect of the allowance awarded to the Independent Representatives the Panel recommend that this remains unchanged at £412.80.

Part 3 - Local Government Pension Scheme

Since the IRP meeting on 29 April 2026 legislation had been introduced which gave councillors the right to join the Local Government Pension Scheme and the Scheme of Allowances needs to be updated to reflect this.

The Democratic Services Manager consulted with the IRP members and it is proposed that the following wording is included in the Scheme of Councillor Allowances:

The authority shall enable its members, who are eligible, to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. For further information please click this link [Councillors and Mayors in England :: LGPS](#)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Scheme of Allowances is updated to include the following wording:
The authority shall enable its members, who are eligible, to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. For further information please click this link
[Councillors and Mayors in England :: LGPS](#)

Approved Mileage Allowance

The HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance rate has increased to 55p per mile for the first 10,000 business miles travelled. It is proposed that this increase be applied with effect from 1 April 2026 and backdated accordingly.

The increase, announced by HMRC in May 2026, is the first since 2011 and reflects the rising costs associated with operating a vehicle. Adopting the revised rate will ensure that employees and councillors are reimbursed fairly for business travel, remain aligned with HMRC guidance, and are not financially disadvantaged when using their own vehicles for official duties.

Based on previous mileage claims, it is estimated that backdating the increase from April to June 2026 would result in an additional cost of approximately £552.67, with an estimated ongoing budget increase of £2,210 for the 2026/27 financial year.

The Democratic Services Manager has consulted with the Independent Remuneration Panel who confirm their support for this proposal which would align councillors' mileage payments with those proposed for employees, ensure fair reimbursement of business travel costs and provide for the backdating of eligible claims.

RECOMMENDATION:

To increase the mileage allowance payable under the Councillors' Allowance Scheme to the revised HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance rate of 55p per mile for the first 10,000 business miles, with effect from 1 April 2026 and to update the Scheme of Allowances to reflect this.

