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**Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel of  
Wiltshire Council**

Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme  
November 2013

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**Members of the Panel**

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Mr D Stratton OBE

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## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Independent Remuneration Panel recommends that:

- (1) The current Basic Allowance of £12,167 per annum be increased by the addition of the 1% pay award to council staff for 2013/14 resulting in a basic allowance of £12,289 for 2013/14.
- (2) The Council adopts the annual pay award to council staff as the index by which annual adjustments are made to the basic allowance and the special responsibility allowances payable to individual councillors for the period up to 2016/17.
- (3) All of the allowances recommended herein are backdated to 7 May 2013 being the first day of office for elected councillors.
- (4) The current limitation on the number of SRAs payable to councillors is discontinued and that a maximum of 2 SRAs be payable in full. No third SRA be payable.
- (5) The Leader's SRA, be set at 250% of the basic allowance resulting in an SRA of £30,722 per annum (Band 1).
- (6) The Deputy Leader SRA remains at 80% of the Leader SRA or £24,577 per annum (Band 2).
- (7) The Cabinet Member SRA remain at 60% of the Leader SRA or £18,433 per annum (Band 3).
- (8) The Portfolio Holders' SRA remain set at 22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum (Band 7).
- (9) An SRA be paid for the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board and that this be set at 30% of the Leader SRA or £9,216 per annum (Band 6).
- (10) An SRA continue to be paid to the Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel and that this continue to be set at 30% of the Leader SRA or £9,216 per annum (Band 6).
- (11) The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee SRA is set at 35% of the Leader SRA or £10,753 per annum (Band 5).
- (12) SRAs for the Chairmen of the Children's Select Committee, the Environment Select Committee and the Health Select Committee are set at 22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum (Band 7).
- (13) The Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee SRA is set at 22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum (Band 7).
- (14) (a) The scrutiny fund, which is intended to reward Councillors performing specific scrutiny functions such as chairing task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises and acting as Vice Chairman of Select Committees, is retained within the scheme and is increased to £15,000.  
(b) The fund is to be allocated, as appropriate, by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
- (15) The Chairman of Area Board SRA is set at 22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum (Band 7).
- (16) The Chairman of Area Planning Committee SRA is set at 20% of the Leader SRA or £6,144 per annum (Band 8).

- (17) The Chairman of Council SRA and Vice-Chairman of Council SRA are set at 40% and 20% of the Leader SRA or £12,289 (Band 4) and £6,144 per annum (Band 8) respectively.
- (18) The Chairman of Licensing Committee SRA remains at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10).
- (19) The Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee SRA is set at 15% of the Leader SRA or £4608 per annum (Band 9).
- (20) The Chairman of the Audit Committee SRA is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10).
- (21) The Chairman of the Staffing Policy Committee SRA is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10).
- (22) The Chairman of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee SRA is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10).
- (23) The Chairmen of the two Operational Flood Working Groups' SRA is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10).
- (24) (a) The Group Leader Allowance remains as follows:
- A flat rate of £500 per Group Leader, plus £50 per member in the Group.
  - £100 per member in the Group to remunerate those members taking on special Group responsibilities (e.g. Secretary, treasurer, spokesperson).
- (b) The Group Leaders' Allowance is exempt from the SRA per Councillor cap.
- (25) The Chairman of the Standards Committee's allowance is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10).
- (26) The Independent Person for Standards should continue to receive an allowance of £2,240 per annum
- (27) The Co-opted Members of the Standards Committee's allowance remain at £1,120 per annum.
- (28) The Co-opted Member of the Children's Select Committee's allowance remain at £896 per annum.
- (29) The Co-opted Members of the Police and Crime Panel's allowance remain at £1,926 per annum.
- (30) There is no amendment to the current scheme's classification of approved duties.
- (31) The mileage rate should be linked to the inland revenue rate (currently 45p per mile) and any movement in that rate should trigger an automatic rise in the councillor's rate.
- (32) Subsistence and overnight allowances should be linked to those paid for officers, with the exception of lunch allowance which is payable for councillors.
- (33) Payment of a Technology Allowance of £250 per Councillor is continued within the scheme. This annual payment covers all IT consumables and the cost of the Councillor's broadband. The Allowance is given with an expectation that it will be used by Councillors to contribute to

**the cost of broadband internet access. If the Council provides a dedicated broadband connection for a Councillor then they should receive £70 per year towards consumables.**

**(34) There is no amendment to the current Scheme's Dependents' Carers' allowance.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Wiltshire Council's Independent Remuneration Panel was convened under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Regulations require all local authorities to set up and maintain an advisory Independent [Members'] Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances. All Councils are required to convene their Remuneration Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their allowances scheme and they must 'pay regard' to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme.
2. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 also stipulate the statutory content of an allowances scheme, and thereby require the Panel to make recommendations on:
  - the level of a Basic Allowance payable to all members of the Council;
  - the roles and responsibilities for which Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) should be payable and the level of each such allowance;
  - the level of allowances payable to Co-opted Members;
  - the inclusion of child care and/or dependent carers' allowances and the level of any such payments;
  - the level of allowances for travel, subsistence and overnight stays; and
  - whether allowances should also be pensionable.

## **BACKGROUND**

3. The Independent Remuneration Panel ('the Panel') last undertook a detailed review of the Members' Allowances Scheme ('the Scheme') in 2009. Since then it had been necessary for the Panel to meet to update the scheme following changes to the standards regime introduced by the Localism Act in 2012 and the new governance arrangements for the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Police and Crime Panel.
4. In making their recommendations in 2009 the Panel acknowledged that the Basic Allowance recommended represented a fairly significant increase on the current Basic Allowance – from £9,875 to £12,167 - but this simply reflected the application of an up-to-date rate of remuneration. The Panel felt that based on the evidence they had received the amount recommended was in line with those paid by other major unitary councils and properly reflected the increased scope of Councillor responsibilities under the new Wiltshire Council.
5. However on receiving these recommendations the council decided to phase in the recommended increase in allowances, including increases in special responsibility allowances, over the life of the council so that the recommended levels of allowances made by the Panel would be payable in the final year of the council, i.e. 2012/13.
6. The Panel acknowledges and recognises the decision of the council in this respect and in hindsight and on reflection based on evidence submitted by other councils (see paras 14- 16) these decisions have to some degree placed Wiltshire's basic allowance in a much fairer position.

## **PANEL**

7. Wiltshire Council's Independent Remuneration Panel consists of the following Panel Members:

## **Mr A Lampey**

Until 2001, Albert Lampey was Employment Secretary for the South West Provincial Employer's Organisation. During his last year, he was also secretary to the South West Regional Assembly and regional branch of the Local Government Association (LGA) and was responsible for bringing together the secretarial, financial and constitutional arrangements to enable a combined secretariat for local government's regional bodies. Since 2001, Mr Lampey has undertaken consultancy assignments, primarily in the human resources area. He is also a member of Cornwall Council's Independent Remuneration Panel and runs a beef farm with his son.

## **Mr J Payne**

Until 2005, Jeremy Payne was Managing Director of HTV Group. Previously, he was MD of HTV West and Director of Programmes, commissioning and overseeing the production of 570 hours of programmes each year. His media career has encompassed experience in newspapers, radio, public relations and independent commercial film production as well as television in the UK, Australia and New Zealand. Jeremy was founding chairman of South West Screen and currently chairs the South West Film and Television Archive.

## **Mr D Stratton OBE**

David Stratton OBE ran his family's farm in Kingston Deverill from 1970 until 2006. He has now handed down the day-to-day management of the farm to his son, but remains a partner in the business. He was High Sherriff of Wiltshire in 2001.

8. The Panel received officer support from John Quinton, Head of Democratic Services, and Marie Todd, Area Board and Member Support Manager. The Panel members are very grateful for the skilful and insightful support of these officers.
9. A list of Councillors who gave verbal evidence to the Panel is attached at Appendix 1. In addition, 62 Councillors responded to an allowances questionnaire. The Panel would like to record its gratitude to those Councillors who provided evidence in either form.

## **PRINCIPLES**

10. In revisiting the current Scheme, the Panel reviewed the principles it had adopted for previous reviews, as well as those adopted by other Independent Remuneration Panels. It resolved to retain the principles it had adopted for past reviews which were:
  - A. the level of remuneration should relate to a commonly accepted benchmark
  - B. a scheme should be simple and easy to understand by the public as well as councillors themselves
  - C. a scheme should not be bureaucratic
  - D. Wiltshire Council is one of many local authorities and it should not adopt a scheme which is significantly out of line with others
  - E. membership of a local authority is a voluntary public service and the level of allowances should reflect that; but people should not be prevented from standing for office on financial grounds
  - F. a scheme should provide reasonable recompense for the time commitment and duties involved, after allowing for an element of public service, in order to maintain the quality of representation and extend the opportunity for people to serve as councillors



G. a scheme should reflect the substantial time which the average councillor spends on casework, local community work and other council work

H. a scheme should recognise also the additional duties and responsibilities of office holders.

## **PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY**

11. In undertaking the review, the Panel met on five occasions between July and October 2013. They considered a range of evidence, including:

### **Verbal evidence from Councillors and officers**

12. The Panel met with Councillors holding various roles of special responsibility, including the Leader, Leader of the majority opposition group, Cabinet Member, Portfolio Holders, Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, Council, Area Planning Committees and Area Boards as well as councillors who held no specific office other than being a councillor – i.e. a back bench councillor. The evidence they provided is referenced, where appropriate, throughout this report. A complete list of Councillors and officers who provided verbal evidence for the Panel is attached at Appendix 1.

### **Members' Allowances Questionnaire**

13. A Members' Allowances Questionnaire (Appendix 2) was circulated to all ninety-eight members of the Council, requesting their views on the existing scheme and suggestions for any future scheme. 62 responses were received, representing a 63% return rate. These responses were invaluable to the Panel in providing a Councillor's perspective on the level of remuneration they receive and highlighting any consensus on how aspects of the existing scheme could be improved. These views and suggestions are referenced throughout the report where appropriate. A summary of the questionnaire responses received is also attached at Appendix 3 .

### **Members' Allowance Schemes adopted by other councils**

14. During its initial deliberations the Panel considered member allowance schemes from a number of local authorities, including county, shire, district and unitary councils. In the latter stages of the review, this sample was refined to include only the twelve councils that the Panel felt most closely compared with Wiltshire Council. These were all large unitary councils or councils within the South West region. They were as follows:

- Bath and North East Somerset Council
- Bristol City Council
- Cornwall Council
- Devon County Council
- Durham County Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Shropshire Council
- Somerset County Council

15. The allowances paid by these councils were analysed to discover the average levels of Basic Allowance and SRAs paid and the relationships between them. In recommending a level of Basic Allowance and of all SRAs within the Scheme, the Panel considered the levels paid by comparable councils at length and

used these as a benchmarking tool. This assisted it in adhering to one of its agreed principles: “Wiltshire Council is one of many local authorities and it should not adopt a scheme which is significantly out of line with others”.

16. Details of the sample of comparable councils referred to above and the comparative data presented before the Panel are attached at Appendix 4.

### **Guidance, literature and other data**

17. The Panel considered a number of publications relating to the remuneration of elected representatives, including the statutory guidance from the Government and other advisory literature. The Panel also received feedback from the annual meeting of the Chairs of Independent Remuneration Panels and their Principal Advisers for the south west region held on 28 June 2013. This was a useful networking opportunity and a valuable forum for cross-referencing the work of the Panel with that of other Panels.

## **BASIC ALLOWANCE**

### **Introduction**

18. Under the ‘Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, a members’ allowance scheme must make provision for a Basic Allowance, which must be paid at the same rate for all Councillors. The Statutory Guidance on the Regulations states that the Basic Allowance “is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meeting with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes.” (ODPM, 2003). Incidental costs can be many, ranging from telephone calls to visiting constituents (Councillors Commission, 2007).

19. The Panel has previously used the following formula to calculate the Basic Allowance:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{LGA day rate} \\ \times \text{ Number of working days in a year} \\ \times \% \text{ to reflect the average number of hours that Councillors say they work} \\ \text{– ‘public service discount’} \\ \text{= Basic Allowance} \end{array}$$

20. As part of its holistic review, the Panel re-examined all three elements of this formula:

- **Rate for remuneration**
- **Number of hours to be remunerated**
- **Level of ‘public service discount’ to apply**

### **Rate for remuneration**

21. Historically, the Panel has used the Local Government Association’s (LGA) ‘day session rate’ in setting the Basic Allowance. The rate is based on the national male median white-collar wage, derived annually from the previous year’s Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings conducted. Though used by many

councils in setting their allowances, the rate has no statutory force and local authorities are free to use other indices by which to set or update their allowances if they wish. The Council's current Basic Allowance was calculated using the 2009 LGA day rate (£149.34 – based on 2008 figures).

22. In undertaking the current review, the Panel was informed that the LGA had now discontinued publishing the day rate and therefore the Panel considered various alternatives including various rates used by other councils. The Panel looked at many extrapolations of Basic Allowance using alternative rates such as the median and mean annual full time wages (ONS, 2012) but none of these rates had any links to or relationship with the previously used LGA rate.
23. In conclusion, the Panel agreed to use the current basic allowance (£12,167) as the starting point and one element for setting the allowance for the future.

### **Number of hours to be remunerated**

24. In response to the questionnaire, Wiltshire Councillors provided an average minimum time input of 21 hours per week in order to perform the basic role of Wiltshire Councillor effectively. This represents a marginal increase on the average figure of 20.5 hours per week provided by members of Wiltshire Council in 2009. The hours spent on the basic role ranged from 10 hours to 70 hours.
25. In 2009 the Panel had been concerned that the time input provided by Councillors in response to the 2009 questionnaire was predicated on only three months experience of Wiltshire Council. The Panel had acknowledged that the Council was a new organisation and that the role of Wiltshire Councillor may not yet be fully understood or developed. The Panel had resolved, therefore, in setting the basic allowance for 2009 to base this on 18 hours per week.
26. The figures from 2013 are consistent with the previous figures and with most councillors (25) indicating an input of between 11 and 20 hours a week.

### **Level of 'public service discount' to apply**

27. In its guidance for panels in setting the Basic Allowance, the Government states that "it is important that some element of the work of members continues to be voluntary – that some hours are not remunerated." (DCLG, 2001)
28. The discount level applied by Wiltshire County Council was set for some time at 50%. In order to bring the Council's scheme more into line with other councils a phased reduction brought this 'discount' to 33% in 2008/9. Nationally, the 'public service discount' most often used is 30–33%, but can vary between 25 and 50% (Councillors Commission, 2007).
29. In conclusion, the Panel saw no reason to amend the current 33% 'public service discount' applied to the Basic Allowance and resolved to maintain this rate.

### **Conclusions**

30. The Panel gave detailed consideration to the purpose of the basic allowance. If it was to provide a living wage to broaden the attractiveness of the role to all and to serve to broaden the representativeness of the elected councillors then in setting such an allowance the council would fall foul of one of its agreed principles, ie Wiltshire Council is one of many local authorities and it should not adopt a scheme which is significantly out of line with others. The Panel felt, therefore, that it had to continue to set an allowance that reflected the public service nature of the role but that ultimately this would mean that it would still not be at a level which would attract a wider range of people to truly reflect the population of Wiltshire.
31. The Panel acknowledges how important the Basic Allowance is in that it affects all councillors. It also has some impact on the rest of the Scheme. Despite the fact that the current allowance was based on 2008 figures, the response from the survey and from many individual councillors who were interviewed was

that the basic allowance was set at the right level. The Panel also felt that the current allowance is in line with those paid by other major unitary councils and properly reflects the increased scope of Councillor responsibilities under the new Wiltshire Council.

32. On that basis the Panel were persuaded that the allowance should remain at the current level but that the agreed pay award to council staff of 1% with effect from 1 April 2013 should be applied to uplift the allowance and to recognise in part the marginal increase in hours worked.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**The Panel recommends that the current Basic Allowance of £12,167 per annum be increased by the addition of the 1% pay award to council staff for 2013/14 resulting in a basic allowance of £12,289 for 2013/14.**

### **INDEXATION**

33. The Panel were aware in undertaking this review they had been asked to recommend a Scheme for the life of the Council (i.e. for four years). However, annual adjustments to the Scheme will be necessary in order to reflect inflationary changes.
34. The Regulations state that a scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to an index, which may be specified by the authority. It must not rely on this index to make annual adjustments to the scheme for a period of more than four years (after which it must seek a further recommendation from its Independent Remuneration Panel) (ODPM, 2003).
35. The Panel agreed that the annual pay award to staff should be used to update the allowances on an annual basis as this was the most logical benchmark figure. This option was supported by 52% of the respondents to the survey.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**The Panel recommend that the Council adopts the annual pay award to council staff as the index by which annual adjustments are made to the basic allowance and the special responsibility allowances payable to individual councillors for the period up to 2016/17.**

### **BACKDATING**

36. The Panel recommends that all of the allowances recommended herein are backdated to the appropriate date in 2013.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**The Panel recommend that all of the allowances recommended herein are backdated to 7 May 2013 being the first day of office for elected councillors.**

## **SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES (SRA's)**

### **Introduction**

37. The Regulations state that "a special responsibility allowance [SRA] may be paid to those members of the council who have significant additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties

of a councillor. These responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the authority's functions.” (ODPM 2003).

38. The Regulations list the categories of responsibilities which might call for an SRA. They state that SRAs may be payable for duties which fall within the following categories:

- acting as leader or deputy leader of a political group
- membership of the executive, where an authority is operating executive arrangements
- presiding at meetings of a committee, sub-committee, or joint committee
- representing the authority at meetings of another body
- membership of a committee or sub-committee which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods
- acting as a spokesperson for a political group on a committee or sub-committee
- membership of an adoption appeals panel or panel dealing with licensing or controlling any activity
- any other activities in relation to the discharge of the authority's functions as to require equal or greater effort of the member than any of the activities listed above.

39. The Regulations also state that where one political group is in control, and where an authority has decided to pay SRAs, the authority must make provision for the payment of a special responsibility allowance to at least one member of a minority group.

40. The Panel noted the Government's guidance that “it should not necessarily follow that a responsibility which is vested to a particular member is a significant additional responsibility for which an SRA should be paid. Whilst such responsibilities may be unique to a particular member it may be that all or most members have some such responsibility to varying degrees. Such responsibilities should be recognised as a time commitment to council work which is acknowledged within the basic allowance and not responsibilities for which an SRA allowance should be recommended” (ODPM, 2003).

### **SRAs per Councillor and the 50% guideline**

41. The Regulations do not limit the number of SRAs which may be paid, nor do they prohibit the payment of more than one SRA to any one Councillor. However, within the guidance the Government sets an expectation that the proportion of SRAs should not exceed 50% of the total number of councillors. The Government feels that local authorities would find it difficult to justify to the electorate how or why such a proportion of Councillors were carrying out significant additional responsibilities over and above those of a normal councillor.

42. The Panel recognises that Wiltshire Council is one of a small group of large rural unitary authorities and there are by definition more posts with special responsibility in such an authority (more committees therefore more chairmen etc). Additionally, Area Boards and devolved governance continue to be key objectives of the Council and are re-emphasised within the recently adopted business plan. This contributes to local and transparent decision making and also leads to more positions of responsibility, with the 18 Area Boards making up a significant portion of the total number of SRAs.

43. The Council's current scheme limits the number of SRAs that may be received by an individual councillor. A majority of other councils operate similar limitations. The current scheme provides that any

councillor holding two or more roles of special responsibility may receive 100% of the greater and 30% of the lesser SRA. No third SRA is payable.

44. Responses to the Questionnaire indicated that a slight majority of Councillors (55%) are in favour of this part-way approach. However councillors that were interviewed including the Leader, voiced views contrary to this and felt that if a councillor undertook two roles with specific responsibility they should be rewarded accordingly with the full SRA.
45. Allowing individual councillors to receive more than one SRA could make the allowances scheme less transparent, in that it is difficult to deduce from the scheme the amount paid to any one individual. It may also produce the anomaly of the Leader receiving a lower total allowance than another Councillor. (Councillors Commission, 2007)
46. Under the current scheme 56 SRAs are payable. 41 out of the 98 councillors receive the full SRA and 14 of those councillors also receive 30% of a second SRA and one SRA remains unpayable as this is the third SRA payable to that councillor.
47. The Panel recognised that the way the Council remunerates under the current scheme, the 50% guideline figure is not exceeded. However the number of SRAs did exceed that figure (57%) but the Panel was of the view that the guidance had been drawn up before the creation of the large unitary authorities and for that reason it was minded to amend the scheme in relation to the payment of multiple SRAs. The Panel heard evidence from a number of councillors who were Area Board Chairmen and also held another area of responsibility such as Portfolio Holder or Committee Chairman. It was recognised that these councillors were carrying out the full range of duties for both positions and taking the full responsibility for the roles. However the Panel recognised that the evidence suggested that there was a maximum time limit within which councillors could be effective and therefore there was an optimum number of roles that councillors could perform. The Panel agreed that this was two roles of special responsibility plus the local councillor role. This would also encourage the SRAs to be spread more widely.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**The Panel recommends that the current limitation on the number of SRAs payable is discontinued and that a maximum of two SRAs be payable in full. No third SRA be payable.**

#### **SRA Methodology**

48. The Panel considered several methods of calculating the levels of SRAs, using approaches recommended by the Government and those used by other Panels.
49. The Panel agreed with the Government's suggestion that "a good starting point in determining special responsibility allowances may be to agree the allowance which should be attached to the most time consuming post on the Council (this maybe the elected mayor or the leader) and pro rata downwards for the other roles which it has agreed ought to receive an extra allowance." (ODPM, 2001). This approach is one widely adopted and has the advantage that, when future adjustments to the SRAs are required, changing the Leader's SRA will have a proportionate and easily calculable impact on all other SRAs within the scheme. This approach also provides a clear, transparent and understandable scheme of allowances, particularly when roles with comparable levels of 'special responsibility' are banded together (with each band attracting a set percentage of the Leader's SRA) as they are within the recommended Scheme (see Appendix 5).
50. The Panel has received a wide range of views on the subject of SRAs and these are reflected in its recommendations below. Not all of the views were consistent but in most areas there was a common theme to the views presented both orally and in writing.

## **Leader SRA**

51. The Panel considered several methods of calculating the Leader's SRA, using approaches recommended by the Government and those used by other Panels. These included:

### **The factor approach**

52. This determines the Leader's SRA as a multiple of the basic allowance. This method has the advantage of being simple and transparent, but has the disadvantage of building into the SRAs a public service discount not suggested in the statutory guidance. Nor is it easy to establish a rationale for the multiple selected.

### **The analogy approach**

53. This draws an analogy between the post of leader and another public sector role, such as a backbench Member of Parliament.

54. In considering this approach the Panel looked at such analogies as the differential between the salary of the Prime Minister and that of the Head of the Civil Service as a possible model for that between the salary of the Council's Leader SRA and the salary of its Chief Officers.

55. Overall the Panel felt that the SRAs paid to the Leaders of other comparable councils provided a more relevant benchmark than the salaries of other public sector roles.

### **The time-based approach**

56. This assigns a notional amount of time to the leader's post in addition to the time notionally rewarded by the basic allowance. The extra time can be rewarded at a higher rate than that used to arrive at the basic allowance. This approach has the advantage of a stronger logic than the factor approach.

### **Further considerations**

57. The Leader's role includes setting the strategic direction and promotion of the Council, ensuring that the needs and aspirations of Wiltshire's people are known, spearheading Council management initiatives, identifying and setting priorities and targets, monitoring the performance of the Cabinet and promoting the work of the Council in general. The importance of the Leader's role has developed since the move to an executive structure of local government in 2000.

58. The Panel had when they last reviewed the allowances in 2009 reached general agreement about the increasing demands that unitary status had placed upon the Leader. These demands were considered to be substantially above those placed on all other members of the Cabinet and indeed the Council as a whole, and therefore the Panel concluded that the role should attract an allowance which reflected this.

59. Without doubt these initial conclusions of the Panel had been borne out by practical experience since 2009. In addition the current trend within central government of delegating/devolving further functions to local government with or without resources, had undoubtedly added to the burden and responsibilities of the both the Council and in turn the Leader. Recent examples are welfare reform and the transfer of public health.

60. The Leader holds the political and strategic responsibility for an organisation with a budget approaching £1 billion and employing around 5,000 people (excluding non-teaching staff). The Panel are satisfied that the time input required to perform this role would preclude the post-holder from undertaking 'normal' full-time work - a situation borne out by the Leaders of other councils across the country (Councillors Commission, 2007). Indeed, the hours actually committed probably significantly exceed those of a normal

working week of 37 hours, and the evidence provided (at least 60 hours a week) suggests that this is the case at present.

61. The Panel discussed at length the various competing factors faced in appropriately remunerating elected members with positions of such responsibility. Whilst the guidance (and the 5th principle of this the Panel's review) states that membership of a local authority is a voluntary public service and the level of allowances should reflect this, the Panel were also anxious that level of Leader's SRA awarded should be sufficient to attract the calibre of candidate required to perform the role effectively.

62. In recommending a Leader SRA the Panel also considered the following factors:

- The current Leader SRA is £25,168. The mean Leader SRA within the sample (see Appendix 4) is £27,875 (range: £20,000 - £36,575). The current Leader SRA is in the lowest quartile (9<sup>th</sup> out of 12).
- The current Leader SRA represents 207% of the current Basic Allowance. The average percentage within the sample is 272% (range: 165 – 438%). The current Leader SRA as a percentage of the current Basic Allowance is the third lowest within the sample.

## Conclusions

63. The Panel concludes that despite Government guidance stating that through Members' allowances schemes, "[people should be] encouraged to come forward as elected members and that their service to the community [should be] retained" (DCLG, 2003), it is not in a position to recommend a Leader's SRA to match the salary of a position in the private sector with comparable responsibilities. To do so would be to recommend "a scheme which is significantly out of line with others" (second principle). The Panel notes that there remains a conflict between keeping local elected representation a partially voluntary public service and attracting to it, a broad cross-section of society (i.e. not only the financially independent and/or retired). However, it feels it is not within its remit to address on-going national debates on this issue.

64. The Panel therefore resolved that the SRA attached to the post of Leader, whilst not being aligned with the salary of a comparable post in the private sector, should constitute a reasonable allowance and should be correctly aligned with the Leader SRAs paid by other large unitary councils. If over the course of time local authority Leader SRAs become more aligned with the salaries of comparable roles in the private sector then the SRA recommended here may need to be reviewed.

65. The evidence received from other local authorities indicates that the current Leader's SRA was well below that of local county councils and smaller adjoining unitaries who would have less responsibility. The Panel confirmed that now that the basic allowance for the council was in the right place ie the upper quartile of comparable local authorities, the aim was to get the Leader and Cabinet into a similar position.

66. The current SRA represents 207% of the recommended Basic Allowance of £12,167 – which was the third lowest in comparison with other councils as was the actual SRA. The Panel remains convinced that the Leader of the Council was a much bigger job than that of most of these councils and now that the experience of moving to unitary confirmed this, the view was that the SRA should be increased to 250% of the basic allowance resulting in a SRA of £30,722. Whilst this was in the mid range in terms of proportion of the basic allowance it would result in the SRA moving to third highest in the list of comparable councils.

67. Of the options available for calculating the SRA of the Leader (outlined in paragraphs 52-56) the Panel favoured the factor approach because it was simple and transparent.



## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**The Panel recommend that the Leader's SRA be set at 250% of the basic allowance resulting in an SRA of £30,722 per annum (Band 1).**

### **Deputy Leader SRA**

68. Like the other Cabinet Members the Deputy Leader holds responsibility for an executive portfolio, but performs the additional duty of deputising for the Leader so far as legally possible and permissible in the Leader's absence. S/he also assists and works closely with the Leader in delivering the Leader's usual functions and on budgetary planning and policy development.
69. From the evidence presented the Panel are satisfied that the size and breadth of the Leader's responsibilities in a large unitary council (as detailed above) are also reflected in the role of the Deputy Leader. The role holds significant responsibilities and requires a time input almost comparable to that of the Leader to be performed effectively. This assistive responsibility is obviously in addition to the duties of a regular Cabinet Member.
70. The Panel considered the following evidence in recommending the level of Deputy Leader SRA:
- The current Deputy Leader SRA is £20,134. The mean Deputy Leader SRA within the sample is £17,305 (see Appendix 4) (range £14,392 - £25,929). The current Deputy Leader SRA is the third highest of those in the sample.
  - The current Deputy Leader SRA represents 80% of the current Leader SRA. The mean percentage within the sample is 68% (range 54 - 83%). The current Deputy Leader SRA is therefore currently in the upper range of those within the sample as a percentage of the Leader SRA, though this may be because the current Leader SRA is low.
  - The current Deputy Leader estimates an average weekly input of around 50-60 hours.
71. The current Deputy Leader SRA is set at a level equidistant between that of the Leader and that of a regular Cabinet Member. This equates to an SRA set at 80% of the Leader SRA. The Panel received no evidence to suggest that there had been a change in the relationship of the Deputy Leader to the Leader so recommended that the ratio should remain the same.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

**The Panel recommend that the Deputy Leader SRA remains at 80% of the Leader SRA or £24,577 per annum (Band 2).**

### **Cabinet Member SRA (currently 7\*)**

\*in addition to the Leader and Deputy Leader

72. The main responsibilities of Cabinet Members are to give political direction to officers working within their portfolio and to support them in the implementation of policy. They are accountable for individual delegated decisions and performance within their portfolio both internally and externally, to partners and the community. They have an overview of the performance management, efficiency and effectiveness of their portfolio and make executive decisions relating to it. The current Cabinet portfolios include Economic Development, Skills and Strategic Transport; Finance, Performance, Risk, Procurement and Welfare Reform; Children's Services and Adult Care, Public Health and Protection and Housing.

73. From the evidence received, the Panel are satisfied that the role of Cabinet Member is third only to that of Leader and Deputy Leader in terms of the responsibilities and time demands of the role.
74. Following the elections in June 2009, the Leader appointed for the first time 13 'Portfolio Holders' who sit outside of the Cabinet but whose primary role is to support the workload of Cabinet Members. These were new roles, which have no decision-making powers but currently carry such portfolios as Safeguarding, Housing, Waste and Planning. The role of Portfolio Holder is discussed in more detail later in this report (see paragraphs 79-84), but in recommending a Cabinet Member SRA the Panel considered whether the introduction of this new assistive role had reduced the workload or responsibilities of the Cabinet Members.
75. The Panel noted that council Leaders are limited to appointing up to ten Cabinet Members including themselves; a limit which has not been increased in line with the greater scope of Cabinets' responsibilities in unitary authorities. The Panel also considered the possible effect on a council's performance of having Cabinet Members with insufficient time to conduct proper research and consultation before taking executive decisions. It was felt that this could encourage an executive to operate in 'silos', inhibiting strategic thinking across portfolios and ultimately having a detrimental effect on the operation of the Council.
76. In conclusion, the Panel were satisfied that the new Portfolio Holder roles are additional resources providing extra capacity to the work of Cabinet Members. The Cabinet Member is still the decision maker and ultimately holds responsibility for any decisions taken within the remit of their portfolio. The Panel also noted that the reported time input of Cabinet Members (average 31 hours) (on top of the time required by their constituency roles) was effectively full time, and so the new Portfolio Holder roles appear not to have significantly reduced the time demands placed on Cabinet Members. The new role of Portfolio Holder was therefore not a significant factor for the Panel when recommending a Cabinet Member SRA.
77. The Panel also considered the following evidence in recommending the level of Cabinet Member SRA:
- The current Cabinet Member SRA is £15,101. The mean Cabinet Member SRA within the sample is £15,407 (range: £11,383 – £20,065) (see Appendix 3). The current Cabinet Member SRA is in the midpoint of the sample.
  - The current Cabinet Member SRA represents 60% of the current Leader SRA. The mean within the sample is 55%. (range 36% - 75%). The current Cabinet Member SRA is therefore in the middle range of those within the sample in terms of its percentage of the Leader SRA. It is relevant, of course, that the current Leader SRA is the lowest within the sample.
  - Six Cabinet Members (excluding Leader and Deputy Leader) responded to the Allowances Questionnaire and provided an average time commitment of 31 hours per week in performing their role (in addition to the time required to perform the duties of a regular Councillor (range: 20 – 40 hours)).
78. The Panel therefore recommends that the Cabinet Member SRA remain at **60% of the Leader SRA or £18,433 per annum.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

**The Panel recommend that the Cabinet Member SRA remain at 60% of the Leader SRA or £18,433 per annum (Band 3).**

## Portfolio Holder SRA (11)

79. As mentioned in paragraph 74, following the elections in June 2009, the Leader appointed for the first time 13 Portfolio Holders who sat outside of the Cabinet but whose primary role is to support the workload of Cabinet Members. They have no statutory decision-making powers but are an additional resource providing extra capacity to Cabinet Members' work, undertaking in-depth work with Service Directors and also functioning as an extra contact point for non-executive Councillors. They carry such portfolios as Safeguarding, Housing, Waste and Planning. The role also serves as a development position for prospective Cabinet Members. This element of succession planning has been absent from previous executive structures and the departure of a Cabinet Member could have been problematic as a result.
80. Back in 2009 the Panel had carefully considered the responsibilities and time demands placed on Portfolio Holders in considering an appropriate level of remuneration. There were arguments for and against remunerating the post. On one hand, Portfolio Holders had no official decision making powers and it was the Cabinet Members who held ultimate responsibility, even if decisions were heavily influenced by the Portfolio Holder. On the other hand, the Portfolio Holder was likely to be seen by the Council, the media and the public as the person responsible for any issues falling within their portfolio, regardless of their official decision making powers.
81. In 2009 the Panel had concluded that the role of Portfolio Holder held significant responsibilities and required a significant time commitment to be performed effectively. It was satisfied that the scope of Cabinet portfolios, particularly under unitary councils, warrants the attention of more than one person and the role of Portfolio Holder is therefore a sensible addition to the structure. The Panel was also satisfied that Portfolio Holders, while having no formal decision making powers, are in reality likely to be exerting a strong influence over decisions taken by Cabinet Members and will have to deal with a good proportion of the fall-out from those decisions. The Panel had therefore recommended that Portfolio Holders receive an SRA set at 30% of the Leader SRA. This equates to half of a Cabinet Member SRA, which the Panel believes reflects the correct differential between the responsibilities and time demands of the two roles. (NB the Council on considering this recommendation reduced the SRA to 22.5% of the Leader's SRA.)
82. Having had four years' experience of the role the Panel were keen to learn from the experience of councillors as to how the role had evolved. The Panel met with five Portfolio Holders to discuss their role. It has to be said that the evidence provided by the councillors varied enormously from one reporting that he worked between 60-80 hours a week to another who felt that the role was entirely dependent upon what you made of it. The middle line, which was supported by the response to the questionnaire, however was that Portfolio Holders worked approximately 20 hours a week and that the current banding of the allowance was too low – it should be somewhere around 50% of the cabinet member SRA.
83. This line was also supported by the only Cabinet Member interviewed by the Panel. He spoke very highly of his experience of Portfolio Holders and the role they played in supporting their Cabinet member. He used the Portfolio Holder to make contacts and engage with external partners and voluntary organisations and used them as his "eyes and ears". Whilst they didn't have decision making powers he relied on their judgement to influence his decisions. In his experience Cabinet members delegated whole areas of their portfolios to the Portfolio Holders.
84. The Panel also considered the following evidence when setting a Portfolio Holder SRA:
- The Portfolio Holders that responded to the Questionnaire provided an average time commitment of 20 hours per week (compared to 12.5 hours in 2009) in performing the role (range: 10 - 50 hours).
  - From its discussions with current Portfolio Holders, the Panel were satisfied that they have a role in influencing operational decisions, dealing with the media, outside bodies and attending Select Committee meetings in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

- The role had not developed significantly over the four years of the council but the breadth of responsibilities had – the change in cabinet member responsibilities had also had an impact on Portfolio Holders. However, the Cabinet member still retains ultimate responsibility and is the person who makes the final decision.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

**The Panel recommend that the Portfolio Holders' SRA remain set at 22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum (Band 7).**

#### **Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board**

85. The Panel had reviewed this position for the first time in 2012 and came to the conclusion that it would be premature to set an allowance at that stage as the Board was meeting in shadow form and further regulations were still expected.
86. Now that the Board had been formally established and was meeting on a regular basis the Panel took the opportunity to reassess its understanding of the role of the Board and its initial decisions.
87. To help the Panel with its deliberations the Panel received evidence from the Leader of the Council and one of the Corporate Directors.
88. The Leader was of the view that the Chairman should receive an allowance as whilst she was currently chairman, this might not always be the case. This should be at about the same level as the Chair of the Police and Crime Panel. There was no evidence to suggest that individual members of the Board should receive any allowance.
89. The Corporate Director gave members of the Panel a detailed briefing on the role of the Panel and the evolving situation relating to the transfer of the public health function to local authorities. The Board was specifically responsible for:-
- Preparing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS);
  - Encouraging integrated working between health and social care commissioners in connection with the provision of health and social care services;
  - encouraging close working between commissioners and health-related services and the board itself; and
  - encouraging close working between commissioners of health-related services and commissioners of health and social care services.
90. The Board had a really powerful role in joining up health and social care and in influencing over £2b worth of commissioning spend. Social care was the biggest area of local authority spending and was in the future the biggest area of risk. It was very logical therefore for local authorities to prioritise the work of the health and wellbeing board as resolving this issue and minimising the risk would be a major factor in the continued success of the council. The Chairman's role in understanding the complexity of this area and influencing partner organisations was critical to the success of the board and the joining up of health and social care.
91. The Panel recognised that this area continued to be one where there was very little comparative data and accordingly felt it should be kept under review. However the Panel were in no doubt that the Board had a very important role to discharge. Likewise the Panel were in no doubt that although this was a new role, the Chairman's role was a powerful one and one that had significant responsibility. Both interviewees suggested that the position should receive an SRA and that this should be positioned in Band 6 – the same as the chair of the Police and Crime Panel. The only note of caution expressed by the Panel was

that if the Leader decided for whatever reason he/she could not perform this role any longer, the assumption was that it would be undertaken by the relevant cabinet member. The SRA would therefore continue to apply. However if a non-councillor member of the Board fulfilled the role then the issue of the payment of the SRA would have to be reviewed.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**The Panel recommend that an SRA be paid for the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board and that this be set at 30% of the Leader SRA or £9,216 per annum (Band 6).**

#### **Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP)**

92. The Panel had reviewed this position for the first time in 2012 and had come to the following conclusions:

- The PCP would operate as a scrutiny body in that it would in general have similar powers and responsibilities as compared to other scrutiny committees.
- However there are some key areas where the PCP had additional powers of veto around the budget and appointment of staff that added to its responsibilities.
- On this basis there was no evidence to support paying an allowance to all members of the PCP. The PCP discharged a very important role but it was not replacing the Police Authority as that Authority's executive functions would be discharged by the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- The Chairman should receive an SRA and this should be set at a level between the current Select Committees of the Council and the Management Committee to recognise the additional responsibilities exercisable by the PCP and its greater responsibility to the public.

93. The Panel had therefore agreed an SRA for the Chairman of the PCP of £7550 representing 30% of the Leaders SRA.

94. In reviewing this allowance the Panel received evidence from the current chairman of the PCP.

- This was a completely new role and the legislation had not been very clear on certain parts of the role.
- The Panel supported the Police and Crime Commissioner and held him to account.
- This was a more complex role than some due to the fact that the Panel was a joint committee with Swindon Borough Council.
- A protocol had been produced about how to work together.
- The Panel had approved the precept, adopted a Police and Crime Plan and appointed the Chief Constable.
- Creative and innovative thinking was required.

95. Taking the long term view the PCP Chairman felt that the allowance was at about the right level and would be once things had settled down.

96. The Panel concurred with these views and had received no other evidence to suggest that their original recommendation on the PCP was wrong. Although the Leader did in her evidence suggest that this role was equivalent to that of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee chairman because it was more complex.

## **RECOMMENDATION 10**

**The Panel recommend that an SRA continue to be paid to the Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel and that this continue to be set at 30% of the Leader SRA or £9,216 per annum (Band 6).**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee SRAs**

97. In recommending SRAs relating to the Council's overview and scrutiny function the Panel received a detailed briefing from the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the statutory scrutiny officer on the roles fulfilled by its three select committees and their respective Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.
98. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees each meet 5 – 6 times per year, and are:
- **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**  
(current Chairman's SRA: £8,809)
  - **Health Select Committee**  
(current Chairman's SRA: £5,663)
  - **Children's Select Committee**  
(current Chairman's SRA: £5,663)
  - **Environment Select Committee**  
(current Chairman's SRA: £5,663)
99. The Panel recognised that the role of Overview and Scrutiny as a backbench Councillor's primary forum for challenging and scrutinising the decisions of the Cabinet; contributing to the monitoring of the Council's performance and to the development of Council policy. The Panel were satisfied that the Council's Select Committees played an important overall role in the functions listed above and that their Chairmen's roles in facilitating this was sufficient to attract significant SRAs. These roles include leading their respective select committees as a team, acting as a key link with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, being accountable to the Council for the actions of their Committees and for the chairmanship of Committee meetings. The Panel felt that the current banding (Band 7) was appropriate for the role.
100. The Chairman of the Management Committee saw his role as Chairman of Scrutiny to re-engage councillors in the decision making process. The business plan was the vehicle for achieving this, and he regarded his role as non-political and evidence based using overview and scrutiny as a machine to help deliver policy.
101. The Panel considered the rationale for the differentiation between the current SRA paid to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (£8809) and the lesser SRAs paid to the Chairmen of the Children's Select Committee, the Environment Select Committee and the Health Select Committee (£5,663).
102. The Panel received evidence that all three of the Council's Select Committees hold responsibility for overseeing and scrutinising generally distinct services performed by the Council and its key partners. However, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee holds the additional responsibility of reviewing, developing and advising on the Council's overview and scrutiny function (this being the "Management" aspect of its remit). While it is not an "umbrella committee" through which the recommendations of the Select Committees flow, it is the committee responsible for both scrutinising overarching policy issues and for establishing, and defining the remit of, the Select Committees.
103. The Management Committee's broader role means that its Chairman is viewed as the corporate lead for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and the post-holder must undertake significant additional work outside of Committee meeting to this end. The Panel was satisfied, therefore, that the Chairman of

the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee holds a greater level of responsibility than the Chairmen of the Select Committees and that a differentiation in the levels of their respective SRAs remains appropriate.

104. The Panel also considered the following evidence when setting the level of SRA for the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee:

- Within the sample (see Appendix 4), the mean SRA paid to chairmen of councils' 'main' or management scrutiny committee is £9,186 (range: £6,000 - £13,300). Therefore the current SRA is in the middle range of the sample.
- The current SRA represents 72% of the current Basic Allowance (£12,167).
- The current SRA represents 35% of the current Leader SRA (£25,168).
- In response to the Questionnaire, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee provided a time commitment of 15 hours per week. The Chairman of the Children's Select Committee 3 -4 hours and Environment Select Committee 10 hours. No figures were supplied by the chairman of the Health Select Committee.

105. The Panel concludes that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has an important role with significant responsibilities. However, at present the Panel do not consider its responsibilities or required time commitment to be equivalent to that of a Cabinet Member, who has direct decision making powers. From councillor responses to the questionnaire, the time commitment required by the two roles also reflects this disparity. The Panel therefore recommends an SRA below the level of a Cabinet Member, set at **35% of the Leader SRA or £10,753 per annum.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 11**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee SRA is set at 35% of the Leader SRA or £10,753 per annum (Band 5).**

106. The Panel has further concluded that the Chairmen of the Children's Select Committee, the Health Select Committee and the Environment Select Committee play an important role with significant responsibilities, but not to the same degree as the Chairman of the Management Committee. The Management Committee Chairman has the additional responsibility of leading, reviewing and developing the Council's overview and scrutiny function. The Panel therefore recommends an SRA set at **22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 12**

**The Panel recommend that SRAs for the Chairmen of the Children's Select Committee, the Environment Select Committee and the Health Select Committee are set at 22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum (Band 7).**

#### **Vice-Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

107. The Panel also considered whether the role of Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee warrants an SRA. The difference in the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and that of the Select Committees was also taken into consideration.

108. The Panel noted that, while on paper the role of Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is no more onerous than that of other Vice-Chairmen, particular circumstances

at Wiltshire Council result in the post-holder performing duties outside of the standard vice-chairing role and playing a key part in the scrutiny function. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has historically been a member of the opposition group and the Committee's Vice-Chairman similarly a member of the majority group. Through this arrangement the Committee's Vice-Chairman effectively becomes the controlling group's 'lead' on scrutiny and a vital link between the scrutiny function and the Cabinet/majority group - a role that could not realistically be performed by the Chairman (as a member of the opposition group). The Panel received evidence that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee work collaboratively, forming a partnership that is essential to the management and development of the overview and scrutiny function and to ensuring the smooth running of the political process. The Vice-Chairman's role is therefore an important one to the overall functioning of the Council.

109. The Panel concluded that the Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has a role with a comparable level of responsibilities to the Chairmen of the three Select Committees (though the responsibilities are quite different) and therefore recommends an SRA set at the same rate - **22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum.**

### **RECOMMENDATION 13**

**The Panel recommend that the Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee SRA is set at 22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum (Band 7).**

### **Vice Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees (3)**

110. The Panel also considered whether the Vice-Chairmen of the three Select Committees should receive an SRA. It was satisfied that the significance of the role played by the Vice-Chairman of the Management and Resources Select Committee is due to that Committee's management and development of the overview and scrutiny function. It did not, therefore, conclude that the Vice-Chairmen of the other Select Committees hold responsibilities comparable to the Vice Chairman of the Management Committee. However, it was recognised that the Vice Chairmen do have a certain level of involvement with the day to day work of the Select Committees due to the cross party working of the scrutiny function. For this reason, and also to avoid increasing the percentage of councillors paid and SRA, the Panel recommend that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should be responsible for recognising and rewarding performance and outcomes achieved by the three Vice Chairmen through the Scrutiny fund and agreed therefore to increase the fund by £5k to recognise this. This increase would allow the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to pay an allowance to Vice Chairmen of Select Committees if he felt it was appropriate to do so.

### **Scrutiny fund**

111. The current Scheme provides for a lump sum of £10,000 to be allocated to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for distribution to "those members performing specific scrutiny functions, the aim of which is to widen and increase the engagement of non-executive members in the decision making process" (wording taken from the Panel's original recommendation in 2006). This fund was allocated in response to representations regarding the difficulty in getting Councillors to serve on scrutiny task groups and perform other scrutiny duties. It was hoped that it would encourage more Councillors to become engaged in challenging the Cabinet (with all the democratic benefits that this would bring) as well as helping to provide some balance in the amount of allowances allocated between the majority and non-majority groups. It would also recognise exceptional work and time commitment carried out in the scrutiny arena.
112. In 2007, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed a method of distributing this money whereby service on scrutiny activities was to be reflected as a share of the Chairman's allocation of funds. The allocation was divided by the number of shares and distributed to members who had



attended over 50% of available meetings of any scrutiny committee, task group or project board etc. The allocation of the fund in this way had also become bureaucratic and onerous for officers to administer.

113. The Panel were disappointed to learn that the fund had continued to be used in the way described, although the Panel acknowledged that the rationale followed did attempt to reward the work of those councillors contributing greater effort, nevertheless it could be regarded as an attendance allowance for scrutiny committee members. The Leader also expressed dissatisfaction with this practice, which is anomalous within the Scheme as no other committee members are paid merely for their attendance at committee meetings. The Panel had intended the fund to be used to remunerate Councillors performing specific scrutiny functions such as chairing task groups and for rewarding exceptional scrutiny performance.

114. On speaking to the new Chairman of the Management Committee, it was clear that he had reservations regarding the way this pot had been used in the past and would prefer it to be linked to performance and outcomes rather than simply allocated by a share system which had become divisive. Having discussed this issue the Panel was satisfied that changes could be made to the system to bring the allocation more in line with its original intention. The Panel does believe that the fund can serve a valuable purpose in remunerating Councillors who play a significant role in scrutiny activities such as task groups, rapid scrutiny exercises and acting as Chairmen of Select Committees. It therefore recommends that the fund is retained within the Scheme and increased to £15k.

115. The Panel reiterates that the fund is intended to reward councillors performing specific scrutiny functions such as chairing task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises and acting as Vice Chairmen of Select Committees. Choosing the precise method of allocation remains in the gift of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 14**

**The Panel recommend that:**

**(a) The scrutiny fund, which is intended to reward Councillors performing specific scrutiny functions such as chairing task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises and acting as Vice Chairman of Select Committees, is retained within the Scheme and is increased to £15,000.**

**(b) The fund is to be allocated, as appropriate, by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.**

#### **Chairman of Area Board SRA (18)**

116. The creation of Wiltshire's eighteen Area Boards was a key aspect of the Council's bid for unitary status in 2009 and when the Panel set the original level of allowance for this role the Boards were not yet fully established. The Panel met with a group of Area Board Chairmen to discuss their role and responsibilities. The Area Boards currently meet between 6 and 8 times per year and have at least one Task Group dealing with transport issues in the local area. The Panel noted that the boards had been a great success and were meeting their aim of engaging local people and devolving decision making as specified in the Localism Act 2012. The Boards regularly attract an attendance of between 40 and 50 people with larger numbers for more contentious local items. Each Board had dedicated officer support in the form of a Community Area Manager. The Panel noted that the Boards were all very different and, within a broad framework, decided how to operate to best reflect the needs of their particular locality.

117. The Panel concluded that the Area Boards play a pivotal role in a large rural unitary authority such as Wiltshire. They are the mechanism through which the Council engages with the community and the Boards' Chairmen play an important role in ensuring that they function effectively. While the Chairmen

have no decision making powers (over and above those of an ordinary Area Board member), they act as their Boards' primary spokesperson and contact point and the Panel was satisfied these duties are onerous enough to warrant an SRA.

118. The role of the Chairmen in Area Board meetings includes ensuring the effective handling of business by allowing all parties to air their views, ensuring respect for all and knowing the key players on each issue. Outside of meetings, the Chairmen are the main point of contact for the public, the media, town/parish councils and other key partners with regards to any issue relevant to their Area Board. They also have such calls on their time as briefings with officers (particularly Community Area Managers) and following-up any issues arising from their Board's previous meeting.
119. From its discussions with several Area Board Chairmen, the Panel were satisfied that they play a key role in the success or failure of the Area Boards. The Chairman's management of meetings and selection of appropriate agenda items, plus the building of relationships with the public and partners through orchestrating inclusive debate was key to each Area Boards' success in taking decision making and influencing to a more local level. The chairman was often seen as the leader of the community area.
120. From evidence presented by those who met with the Panel, the time required to fulfil the role of chairman was about seven hours per week.
121. Given that membership of the Boards varies from 3 to 10 Councillors, the Panel had in 2009 considered whether all Area Board Chairmen hold the same level of responsibility and have to undertake the same amount of work. Having spoken to a number of Area Board Chairmen, however, the Panel were satisfied that neither the size of a Board's membership nor its funding rank are particularly relevant in determining the responsibilities and time demands placed upon their Chairmen. The Panel had resolved that there is no adequate method of banding the levels of SRA paid to Area Board Chairmen and have recommended awarding the same level of SRA to all. The Panel also considered the evidence gained from questionnaire responses, i.e. that 9 of the 18 Area Board chairmen responded to the questionnaire, and reported an average time commitment of 8.5 hours per week in performing their role (range: 4-16 hours).
122. Based on the evidence gained during this review and also based on experience of the last four years, the Panel felt that the role of Area Boards was likely to expand with more decisions being taken at a local level. The Council's business plan states that it "will continue to strengthen area boards and increase the capacity for local people to influence decisions which affect their local community." It was noted that the Boards were already heavily involved in the community campus projects which involved a great deal of work and that other community based projects were likely to emerge in the future in line with the localism agenda.
123. For these reasons the Panel recommends that the banding of the SRA for Area Board Chairman should be amended and be moved up to Band 7.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 15**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of Area Board SRA is set at 22.5% of the Leader SRA or £6,912 per annum (Band 7).**

#### **Chairman of Area Planning Committee SRA (4)**

124. The Committees' role is to determine planning applications and matters such as the designation and amendment of conservation areas, Village Design Statements, Parish Plans, registration of common land for town and village greens, and public rights of way. They meet on a three week cycle with approximately 18 meetings per year although the panel were informed that some meetings were regularly cancelled.

125. The Panel had discussions with two Area Planning Committee Chairmen and considered several factors in recommending a level of SRA for their role. It noted the very high level of public interest in (and attendance at) Area Planning Committee meetings and the importance of the role of Chairman in managing effective public engagement in the planning process. It also noted the high frequency of Area Planning Committee meetings and the onerous time demands thereby placed upon their Chairmen. Like the Chairmen of Area Boards, they have no decision making powers over and above those of a regular Committee member, but they must attend pre-meeting briefings and are seen as the primary contact point for the public, the media and town/parish councils with regards to any matter considered by their Committee. With controversial applications, this responsibility is likely to be considerable and onerous.
126. The Panel also considered the following evidence in recommending an SRA for the Chairmen of Area Planning Committees:
- Within the sample (see Appendix 4), the average SRA paid to the Chairmen of area planning committees is £5,941 (range: £3,325 - £13,300).
  - two of the four current Area Planning Committee Chairmen responded to the Members' Allowances Survey and made representations to the Panel in person (or in writing). They reported a mean time commitment of 3.5 hours per week in performing their role.
127. The Panel conclude that the business of Area Planning Committees is of great interest and importance to the public, and that the role of Chairman is crucial to the successful management of their operation. The role of Chairman requires a significant time commitment due to the frequency of Committee meetings and the level of public and media interest they attract. We therefore recommend that the Chairman of Area Planning Committee SRA remains at **20% of the Leader SRA or £6,144 per annum (Band 8)**.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 16**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of Area Planning Committee SRA is set at 20% of the Leader SRA or £6,144 per annum (Band 8).**

#### **Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council SRAs**

128. As well as presiding over meetings of the Council, the Chairman of Council's role is to represent the Council at civic functions and on outside bodies and to promote public involvement in the Council's activities. The Vice-Chairman's role is to deputise for the Chairman, chairing Council meetings and attending events in the place of the Chairman when necessary. The Panel acknowledged that, since there is no longer a two tier system of local government in Wiltshire, the Chairman and Vice Chairman will be invited to more civic receptions and functions than previously. The current SRAs for these roles are £10,067 and £5,034 respectively, representing 40% and 20% of the current Leader's SRA.
129. The Panel considered the following evidence in setting SRAs for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council:
- The mean SRAs for Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of Council in the sample are £10,487 and £3,305 respectively (see Appendix 4).
  - Time commitment is 20-25 hours per week for the chair and approximately 4 hours for the vice chairman
130. The Panel concludes that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman play an important and time consuming role in representing the Council and therefore recommends that the Chairman of Council SRA and Vice-

Chairman of Council SRA remain at **40% (Band 4) and 20% (Band 8) of the Leader SRA or £12,289 and £6,144 respectively.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 17**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of Council SRA and Vice-Chairman of Council SRA are set at 40% and 20% of the Leader SRA or £12,289 (Band 4) and £6,144 per annum (Band 8) respectively.**

#### **Chairman of Licensing Committee SRA**

131. The Licensing Committee deals with all of the Council's responsibilities under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 and any other associated matters. It meets 3-4 times per year, as the majority of the workload with respect to licensing matters is placed upon the Committee members when they sit on Licensing Sub-Committees to determine individual licensing appeals.
132. The Panel considered the following evidence when setting an SRA for the Chairman of Licensing Committee:
- The current Chairman of the Licensing Committee did not provide a time commitment in hours per week, but envisages dealing with a number of licensing sub-committees per year, plus meetings of the Licensing Committee itself.
  - The average SRA for those Licensing Committee Chairmen is £3,462
133. The Panel concludes that the role of Chairman of the Licensing Committee does not carry major responsibilities and does not require a significant time input. The Panel notes that serving on Licensing Sub-Committees is the most onerous task relating to licensing and that the Chairman of the parent Committee is under no more obligation to serve on these than other members of the Committee. The Panel does, however, acknowledge that the Chairman is likely to take a significant role in these Sub-Committees due to his or her prominent role within the Licensing function.
134. The Panel therefore recommends that the Chairman of Licensing Committee SRA remains at **10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 18**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of Licensing Committee SRA remains at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10)**

#### **Chairman of Strategic Planning Committee SRA**

135. The Strategic Planning Committee is responsible for considering large scale planning applications and meets 2-3 times per year. Whilst the Committee may not carry a heavy workload, when it does meet it will be of a high profile nature, overseeing both major strategic planning applications and the allocation of housing and sites for major waste and mineral applications.
136. The Chairman has no decision making powers beyond those of a regular Committee member but must attend briefings and will be the primary contact point for the public, the media and town/parish councils with regards to any matter considered by the Committee. As with Area Planning Committees, for controversial issues this is likely to be onerous, but less like Area Planning Committees, this will be a fairly uncommon occurrence.

137. The Panel also noted that half of the councils within the sample pay an SRA for this role, but there is broad variance in terms of the amount (range: £3325 - £11586) (see Appendix 4).

138. The Panel considered several factors in recommending a level of SRA for this role. It noted that the business of the Strategic Planning Committees will occasionally be of a high profile, which will increase the importance of the Chairman's role in managing the meeting and public engagement in the planning process. It will also increase the time demands placed upon them in terms of build-up to and fall-out from Committee meetings. However, the Panel notes that these instances will be relatively uncommon and has therefore recommended an SRA set at **15% of the Leader SRA or £4,608 per annum.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 19**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee SRA is set at 15% of the Leader SRA or £4608 per annum (Band 9)**

#### **Chairman of Audit Committee SRA**

139. The Audit Committee is responsible for internal and external audit. It meets 5 times per year.

140. The Panel considered the following evidence in recommending an SRA for the Chairman of the Audit Committee:

- The majority of other large unitary councils do pay an SRA for this role.
- Of those councils within the sample that do pay an SRA for this role, the average is £4,217 (range: £2660 - 6020) (see Appendix 4).
- The current Chairman of Audit Committee reported a weekly time input of 4 hours.

141. The Panel concludes that this role is not particularly onerous but is important to the maintenance of a successful audit function and therefore it should receive a small SRA.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 20**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of the Audit Committee SRA is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10)**

#### **Chairman of Staffing Policy Committee SRA**

142. The Staffing Policy Committee is responsible for determining, monitoring and reviewing staffing policies, including the power to deal with all matters relating to staff terms and conditions. The Committee also establishes a Senior Officers Employment Sub-Committee, Staffing Appeals Sub-Committee and Grievance Appeals Sub Committee to deal with matters relating to the dismissal or disciplinary action against individual members of staff and staff grievances. The Committee meets 4-5 times a year.

143. The Panel considered the following evidence when recommending a Chairman of Staffing Policy Committee SRA:

- Only one council within the sample pay an SRA for this role (or one similar):

East Riding (Staff Terms and Conditions Committee)  
£3,474

- No details of the time input for performing the role has been given. The role is currently performed by the Portfolio Holder for staffing equalities, customer care and systems thinking.

144. The Panel concludes that this is not a particularly onerous role but also that the effective chairmanship of the Staffing Policy Committee will be important to the Council's management of staffing issues. It also acknowledged the amount of work involved in maintaining an overview of the senior management restructure that is currently taking place.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 21**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of the Staffing Policy Committee SRA is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10)**

#### **Chairman of Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee SRA**

145. The Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee comprises five members of Wiltshire Council, two members of Swindon Borough Council plus four co-opted members. It exercises the functions of the Council as administering authority under the Local Government Superannuation Acts and Regulations and deals with all matters relating thereto. It meets five times per year.

146. The Panel considered the following evidence when recommending an SRA for the Chairman of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee.

- Nine of the councils in the sample pay an SRA for this role (range: £2,147 - £5,793) (see Appendix 4). The mean SRA is £3,406.
- In response to the Members' Allowances Questionnaire, the current Chairman of the Wiltshire Pension Fund provided a time input of four hours per week to perform this role.
- The important supporting role of the Vice Chairman was also highlighted but, on balance, the Panel did not feel that this role warranted an SRA.

147. The Panel notes that there has been little change for this role in terms of responsibility or workload, so would support a continuance of the current SRA. The Panel therefore recommend the role's SRA should be set at **10% of the Leader SRA or £3,372 per annum.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 22**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee SRA is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10)**

#### **Operational Flood Working Groups**

148. The Panel reviewed for the first time the Operational Flood Working Groups (OFWGs) which had been drawn to its attention by the Leader and the Cabinet Member.

149. There are two OFWGs in Wiltshire – North and South. The division of the groups has been set up to mirror the river catchment areas managed by the Environment Agency rather than the council's electoral divisions. Each one meets every two months making 6 meetings of each per year plus the meetings held on the ground with officers and stakeholders (usually residents, landowners, Parish Councillors, and Flood Wardens plus agency representatives).

150. The OFWGs, led by their Chairmen, have responsibility for distribution of the Flood Support Grant (£1M) that has been granted annually by Council and for ensuring that it is both targeted and spent wisely. The Officers will prepare a matrix of projects but there are usually more projects than funding so it is the chairmen to decide with the help of OFWGs where to prioritise this funding. These are real decisions which affect people's lives and property. The chairmen also conduct regular meetings on the ground with officers and stakeholders (usually residents, landowners, Parish Councillors, and Flood Wardens plus agency reps). All of these meetings are extremely challenging to chair both on the ground and at OFWG and they are genuine local decision making meetings which gather together the experts and elected Members, often from different levels of local government to make these decisions.
151. The OFWG Chairmen are also required to develop a knowledge of both land drainage law and civil engineering drainage practices and their remit is managed in precisely the same way as a Portfolio holder runs their portfolios. The cabinet member oversees flooding and chairs the bi annual Flood Risk Management meeting which brings together the two OFWG s plus the officers and Cabinet Members who have some cross over on flooding work (e.g. highways, environment and emergency planning portfolios)
152. OFWG Chairmen are also responsible for hosting and running at least one flood training event per year to which attendees generally cut across their two geographical boundaries. E.g. the southern OFWG hosted the Flood Wardens Training Event last year.
153. Wiltshire is regarded as a beacon Flooding Local Authority and its working methods are often quoted by the Environment Agency as prime examples of good working practice. The OFWG are key to this and the Chairmen play a leading role.
154. The delivery of the Council's flood risk management service depends to a large extent on the work of the OFWGs which is delivered through the Council's Drainage Team, which forms part of the Highways Asset Management & Commissioning Team in Strategic Services. The team works closely with the Operational Flood Working Groups which harness the partnership working needed to deliver drainage management on the ground. The Drainage Team take a lead and direction from the respective Chairmen of the OFWGs and they attend all meetings and support the operation of the groups.

### **RECOMMENDATION 23**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairmen of the two Operational Flood Working Groups' SRA is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10)**

### **Group Leader Allowances (4)**

155. Group Leaders are the main point of contact for officers and coordinate the activity of all political groups. Under the current Scheme, they receive two allowances:
1. A flat rate of £500 per Group Leader, plus £50 per member in the Group. This recognises that the size of the Group may have some effect on the responsibilities of the Group Leader.
  2. The second allowance payable to Group Leaders is to reflect responsibilities within their Group (i.e. Secretary, treasurer, spokesperson) and this is paid at a rate of £100 per member, and is allocated by the Group Leader.
156. The current scheme results in the allowances shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1 – Political composition of Wiltshire Council and amounts currently paid**

<b>Political Group</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>1. Group Leader SRA (£500 flat + £50 per member)</b>	<b>2. Group responsibilities (£100 per member)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Conservatives	59	£3,450	£5,900	£9,350
Liberal Democrat	26	£1,800	£2,600	£4,400
Independents	8	£900	£800	£1,700
Labour	4	£700	£400	£1,100

157. The current Group Leader's Allowance received support in the questionnaire (89%) with 88% saying that it was fair transparent and understandable.

158. The Group Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group made specific representations to the Panel regarding the role of the leader of the main opposition group. In his view this role consumed a considerable amount of time attending cabinet meetings and other appropriate committees such as audit and scrutiny. In addition preparation time in understanding cabinet reports and receiving briefings from officers was vital.

159. He estimated that approximately 20 hours per week was required to fulfil this role on top of existing chairmen's duties and basic duties. As meetings are held in the daytime it is not possible to work full time and take on this role. He emphasised that good governance requires an effective opposition to provide challenge to the majority group and this is provided through the leader of the main opposition group. He provided evidence of other authority allowances for this role.

160. The panel questioned whether public money should be used for political purposes ie to provide an allowance that reflected the need for opposition and challenge. They queried whether this role should be performed through the scrutiny function rather than formally through the political group system. The Panel debated these views at length with a number of councillors representing both governing and opposition parties as well as taking account of SRAs paid by other councils but remained unconvinced that these political positions should attract greater allowances.

161. In paragraphs 41-47, the Panel has recommended the capping of SRAs at two per Councillor. The Panel recommends that Group Leader's Allowances are exempt from this cap.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 24**

**The Panel recommend that:**

**a. The Group Leader Allowance remains as follows:**

- 1. A flat rate of £500 per Group Leader, plus £50 per member in the Group.**
- 2. £100 per member in the Group to remunerate those members taking on special Group responsibilities (e.g. Secretary, treasurer, spokesperson).**

**b. The Group Leaders' Allowance is exempt from the two SRA cap per Councillor.**

**Chairman of Standards Committee**

162. Under its previous review in 2012 the Panel came to the following conclusion:



- that the work of the new standards committee was likely to be less onerous in terms of the number of meetings and because of a new lighter touch complaints procedure. On that basis they felt that the special responsibility allowance for the chairman should be comparable to other committees such as audit and staffing policy.
- that their recommendation is based on opinions formed in advance of the new system coming into being and asked that it be noted that it would as part of its overall review of the scheme in preparation for the new council in 2013, review these allowances in the light of experience of the first months of the system.

163. The Panel received evidence from the current chairman of Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer.

- There had only been 3 meetings of the standards committee since 1/07/12
- A revised code of conduct had been adopted by the council and this did not include some aspects of the previous code. This had led to there being fewer complaints.
- There had been a lot of activity in the transition from the old standards regime to the new process established under the Localism Act
- The complaints process had been focussed on dealing with outstanding complaints under the previous system
- This had now settled down and there were far fewer complaints although the workload surrounding these was still significant
- The panel noted that under the current arrangements most of the work in the handling of complaints was undertaken by officers and the independent persons and subsequently by the sub committees – not by the standards committee itself.

164. In addition the Panel considered the following evidence when recommending the Chairman of Standards Committee's allowance:

- Only four councils within the survey paid an SRA to the chairman of the Standards Committee including Wiltshire Council.
- The SRAs ranged from £2517 - £5400 with Wiltshire Council being the lowest.
- This represents 10% of the Leader SRA

165. The Panel concluded that the SRA for the chairman of Standards appeared to be about right and increasing the allowance when workloads were decreasing would be perverse.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 25**

**The Panel recommend that the Chairman of the Standards Committee's allowance is set at 10% of the Leader SRA or £3,072 per annum (Band 10).**

#### **Independent Person – Standards Committee**

166. The Panel were reminded that at the Council meeting held on 15 May 2012, when considering the new standards regime the Council resolved:

*To seek the advice of the Independent Remuneration Panel on an appropriate rate of remuneration for the independent person and to bring this back to council for decision on 26 June 2012.*

167. It was recognised that the allowance for the independent person did not strictly fall under the remit of the Independent Panel because it is not a special responsibility allowance and does not relate to committee membership. However, it was felt that it would be useful to obtain an independent view for consideration.

168. The Panel concluded that the role of the independent person requires a person of a suitable calibre to undertake the position. The role will involve a certain level of time commitment and responsibility (i.e. reading papers, liaising with the Monitoring Officer or councillor complained against, undertaking mediation). However, the time commitment will depend on the number of complaints received and it was difficult at that stage to ascertain whether complaints will remain at the same level under the new framework. There was some recognition that this is arguably a more responsible role than that of the current independent member on the Standards Committee. In the light of experience it appears that this is still the case and that nothing has changed materially since the Panel last considered this allowance.

169. The role of the independent person and the persons appointed to these roles had been a success and it was intended to develop this role further.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 26**

**The Panel recommend that the Independent Person for Standards should continue to receive an allowance of £2,240 per annum.**

### **CO-OPTEEES' ALLOWANCES**

#### **Co-opted Members of Standards Committee (maximum of 8)**

170. Under its previous review in 2012 the Panel came to the following conclusion

- The new Act shifted the power away from the independent members of the committee who previously were full voting members and in fact chaired the committee, back to councillors. The new committee would be a fully politically proportional committee as are other committees, and whilst co-opted members are still permitted, only councillors will be allowed to vote.
- The roles of the independent members and town and parish council representatives of the committee were therefore reduced as they fulfilled an advisory capacity only and were non-voting members and therefore were no longer an essential part of the role of the complaint hearings. On that basis the Panel felt that their co-optees' allowance should be halved to reflect that reduced role.

171. The Chairman of standards and the Monitoring Officer gave evidence to the Panel that confirmed:-

- Co-opted members had a reduced role which was not significant and did not currently serve on the complaints sub committees
- The panel noted that under the current arrangements most of the work in the handling of complaints was undertaken by officers and the independent persons and subsequently by the sub committees – not by the standards committee

#### **RECOMMENDATION 27**

**The Panel recommend that the Co-opted Members of the Standards Committee's allowance remain at £1,120 per annum.**

### **Co-opted voting members of Children’s Select Committee (5)**

172. The current allowance for co-opted voting members of the Children’s Select Committee was set in 2005 and was calculated by multiplying the required time input for the role by the LGA day rate. In 2005, the required time commitment for the role was deemed to be 6 days, which includes attendance at meetings, travelling and reading time, and some allowance for training.

173. No evidence was submitted that suggested that the required time input of this role had changed significantly.

174. The Panel therefore recommends that the Co-opted voting Member of the Children’s Select Committee allowance remain at **£896 per annum**.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 28**

**The Panel recommend that the Co-opted voting Member of the Children’s Select Committee’s allowance remain at £896 per annum.**

### **Co-opted members of the Police and Crime Panel**

175. The current allowance for co-opted members of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) was set in 2012. The Panel compared this role to that of voting co-opted members of the Children’s Services Select Committee. The Police and Crime Panel co-optees have a minimum workload estimated at double that of the Children’s Select co-optees and considering that and to reflect the uplift applied to the chairman’s SRA resulted in an allowance of £1,926.

176. The Panel noted that the Chairman of the PCP felt that the allowances for the co-opted members were rather low and that he greatly valued their contribution. However, on balance the Panel recommends that the allowance for the co-opted members of the PCP should remain at **£1,926 per annum**.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 29**

**The Panel recommend that the Co-opted Members of the Police and Crime Panel’s allowance remain at £1,926 per annum.**

### **APPROVED DUTIES**

177. The Regulations state that an allowance scheme may provide for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances when such expenditure is incurred for a duty specified as ‘approved’ within the Scheme and within categories specified within the Regulations (ODPM, 2003).

178. The Panel considered Councillors’ responses to the Questionnaire in considering any change to the current Scheme’s clarification of an approved duty. The Questionnaire asked “Do you think the classification of approved duties and exemptions should be changed? If so, how?”

- 60% (37) of respondents were happy with the current classification and exemptions.
- 13% (8) of respondents felt that they should be changed.
- Of those who requested a change, all were individual comments except two respondents felt that site visits should be classed as an approved duty.

179. The Panel notes that under the current Scheme Councillors are able to claim travel and subsistence for site visits which are 'authorised in advance by a Committee or chief officer' (Appendix 5, Para. (3)(iv)). The Panel are satisfied that this is a reasonable arrangement and that site visits not approved in the way described should remain outside of the classification of an approved duty and are covered by the Basic Allowance.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 30**

**The Panel recommend that there is no amendment to the current Scheme's classification of approved duties.**

### **TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES**

#### **Travelling Allowance**

180. In 2006, the Council agreed that councillors' travelling rates would be set at the Inland Revenue authorised rate of 40p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p for each subsequent mile. This is the maximum rate that is statutorily exempt from tax and for which there is no requirement for the employer to make a return to the Inland Revenue. This rate had subsequently increased to 45p per mile in 2011.

181. Councillors' responses to the Questionnaire highlighted a little dissatisfaction amongst Councillors with the current Scheme:

- six respondents commented that the current car mileage rate of 40p per mile was low
- four respondents commented on whether subsistence allowances should continue to be paid

182. The Panel acknowledges the comments on the mileage rate but feels that the level of demand for a change to the mileage rate highlighted by the Questionnaire is not sufficient to warrant amendment to the rates at this time. It is also reluctant to recommend the adoption of mileage rates that will require the Council to make returns to the Inland Revenue. However the Panel confirms that the mileage rate should be linked specifically to the inland revenue rate and any movement in that rate should trigger an automatic rise in the councillors' rate.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 31**

**The Panel recommend that the mileage rate should be linked to the inland revenue rate (currently 45p per mile) and any movement in that rate should trigger an automatic rise in the councillors' rate.**

#### **Subsistence and Overnight Allowances**

183. The current subsistence rates were recommended by the Panel and accepted by Full Council in 2006. They were based on the allowances paid to Officers on NJC Conditions of Service.

184. Responses to the Questionnaire did not highlight any particular Councillor concerns with regards to this aspect of the scheme. The Panel recommends that the rates be linked to officer rates with the exception of lunch allowance which is payable for councillors.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 32**

**The Panel recommend that subsistence and overnight allowances should be linked to those paid for officers with the exception of lunch allowance which is payable for councillors.**

## **TECHNOLOGY ALLOWANCE**

185. The current allowances scheme provides for a technology allowance of £250 to contribute towards the cost of IT consumables, telephone line and broadband. The intention was that this would be used to contribute to the cost of broadband access as the Council's emphasis on electronic working meant that councillors, in order to keep up to date, would have to be effective with their IT communications.
186. Indeed the Council had since the last review of allowances, installed dedicated broadband connections for some councillors as this was more effective for solving any IT problems. In these cases councillors did not qualify for the total technology allowance but an estimate of average broadband costs had been made (£15 per month) and this was deducted from the overall allowance leaving a residual amount to contribute towards the cost of consumables.
187. Following the elections in 2013 use of technology by councillors had become even more important and the move towards a paperless environment was continuing. Also associated applications such as Lync and Mysites made this method of working even more significant.
188. The Panel concludes therefore that the continuation of an annual Technology Allowance, provides a simple and easily administered allowance to help cover the cost of all IT consumables and the cost of broadband. One response to the questionnaire suggested that the allowance should be increased to reflect increased costs. The Panel were not convinced that broadband costs had increased that significantly and pointed out that this a contribution towards the costs and was not intended to cover them all.

### **RECOMMENDATION 33**

**The Panel recommend that Payment of a Technology Allowance of £250 per Councillor is continued within the scheme. This annual payment covers all IT consumables and the cost of the Councillor's broadband. The Allowance is given with an expectation that it will be used by Councillors to contribute to the cost of broadband internet access. If the Council provides a dedicated broadband connection for a Councillor then they should receive £70 per year towards consumables.**

## **DEPENDENT CARERS' ALLOWANCE**

189. The current Scheme provides for Councillors and Co-opted Members to claim for expenditure incurred through employing a carer for a dependant in order to carry out an approved duty, subject to certain conditions. The current scheme pays the National Minimum Wage for carers of all kinds of dependent. It does not stipulate a daily or annual limit to these payments, or a limit to the number of dependents the care of whom can be claimed for.
190. The Questionnaire generated eight specific responses with respect to the current Dependent Carers' Allowance. These ranged from questioning whether the allowance was actually used through to whether it should be paid at all. The payment of this allowance does ensure that those people with caring responsibilities are not prevented from standing for election and therefore the Panel recommends no change to the current Dependent Carers' Allowance scheme.

### **RECOMMENDATION 34**

**The Panel recommend that there is no amendment to the current Scheme's Dependents' Carers' allowance.**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS)**

191. The Regulations state that the Council cannot extend membership of the LGPS to Councillors without a recommendation from the Panel to do so.
192. The Panel remains satisfied that Wiltshire Councillors should be able to join the LGPS if they wish to do so. However, the panel is aware that the Council has consistently not agreed to councillors joining the scheme. Indeed the Government has recently consulted on this issue and the leaders of the political groups agreed to inform the government that it would not be appropriate for councillors to join the scheme. The Panel agreed therefore that there was no purpose in making a recommendation on this issue.

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1** – Evidence sources and Councillors who met with the Panel  
**Appendix 2** - Members' Allowances Questionnaire  
**Appendix 3** – Summary of Councillors' Questionnaire responses  
**Appendix 4** – Basic Allowance and SRAs: Comparative data  
**Appendix 5** – Schedule of Recommended Allowances

## **Appendix 1 – Evidence sources and Councillors who met with the Panel**

### **Evidence sources**

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2012 (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2012)

Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations (ODPM, 2003)

Guidance on Members' Allowances for Local Authorities in England (ODPM, 2001)

Wiltshire Council Role Descriptions (included in the Councillors' Induction Pack) (Wiltshire Council, 2013)

Government Response to the Select Committee Recommendations – Councillors on the Frontline (2012)

Members' Allowances Schemes of the following councils:

BANES Council  
Bristol City Council  
Cornwall Council  
Devon County Council  
Durham County Council  
East Riding Council  
Gloucestershire County Council  
Hampshire County Council  
Herefordshire County Council  
Northumberland Council  
Shropshire Council  
Somerset County Council

### **List of councillors who met with the Panel**

Cllr Richard Britton	Cllr Simon Killane
Cllr Tony Deane	Cllr Jerry Kunkler
Cllr Mike Hewitt	Cllr Alan MacRae
Cllr Alan Hill	Cllr John Noeken
Cllr Mike Hewitt	Cllr Jane Scott
Cllr Alan Hill	Cllr Stuart Wheeler
Cllr Jon Hubbard	Cllr Roy While
Cllr George Jeans	Cllr Philip Whitehead
Cllr Julian Johnson	Cllr Chris Williams

### **List of officers who met with the Panel**

Maggie Rae – Corporate Director  
Ian Gibbons – Service Director, Law and Governance  
Paul Kelly – Overview and Scrutiny Manager

**Independent Remuneration Panel - 2013 Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme**

**Members' Allowances Scheme Questionnaire for Councillors**

The Council's allowances scheme was last considered in June 2012, this was an interim review rather than a full review.

The interim review considered, in particular, allowances relating to the Standards Committee, Health and Wellbeing Board and Police and Crime Panel.

The Panel, however, accepted that these recommendations were based on opinions formed in the early stages of the various changes to governance structures introduced by the coalition government. It is therefore important to review these allowances in the light of experience.

Following the elections in May 2013 a complete review of the current scheme by the Independent Remuneration Panel of Wiltshire Council is therefore required. It is intended that the Panel's report will be presented to Council on 12 November 2013.

In order for us to do this, we would like your views and would appreciate it if you could complete the attached questionnaire.

**The panel will also be inviting specific groups to make representations in person. If you would like to meet with the panel, please tick below:**



**Name:** .....

**Please return the survey once completed by 31 July 2013 to:**

Marie Todd (01225 718036)  
Democratic Services, Wiltshire Council, Shurnhold, Bath Road, Melksham, SN12 8DQ  
Email: [marie.todd@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:marie.todd@wiltshire.gov.uk)

**Panel Members**

Mr A Lampey  
Mr J Payne  
Mr D Stratton OBE



## MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES QUESTIONNAIRE

### Basic Allowance

Under the 'Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, a members' allowance scheme must make provision for a Basic Allowance. The Statutory Guidance on the Regulations for Local Authority Allowances (ODPM, 2003) states that the Basic Allowance "is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meeting with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes."

Historically, the Basic Allowance was set by reference to a 'day session rate' which was published annually by the Local Government Association. This rate was then applied to the number of hours that councillors have previously told us they spend on Council business. A discount of 33% was then deducted to recognise that being a councillor is a voluntary public service.

The Local Government Association "day session rate" has now been abolished.

The current Members' Allowances Scheme is attached at **Appendix A**.

**Q1.** What is the average minimum number of hours per week needed to perform the basic role of a Wiltshire Councillor (**excluding time spent on roles with Special Responsibilities**) effectively?

(NB: This should relate to your role as a councillor, i.e. attendance at meetings, constituency matters etc. If you are also a parish/town councillor you will need to try and differentiate between these roles).

**Q2.** Do you think the current basic allowance of £12,167, is approximately correct? Or do you think that it should be increased or decreased? If so, why? (Please see **Appendix B** for comparative data on Basic Allowances)

**Q3.** Historically the Panel has used the Local Government Association 'day session rate' to update the allowances. This rate is no longer issued.

Do you have any comments or suggestions for an alternative index to use to update the allowances? (e.g. in line with officer pay increases or using the average local white collar day rate).

## Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

The Regulations (ODPM, 2003) provide that: “a special responsibility allowance may be paid to those members of the council who have significant additional responsibilities, over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor. These responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the authority’s functions.”

The guidance (ODPM, 2003) discourages councils from paying an SRA to more than 50% of its councillors, pointing out that: “If the majority of members of a council receive a special responsibility allowance the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified.” (paragraph 72).

Please see **Appendix B** for comparative data on selected SRAs.

- Q4.** Do you currently hold a position (or positions) that could be seen as entailing Special Responsibilities (e.g. Chairman of a committee or area board, Group Leader, Cabinet Member, Portfolio Holder). If so, what is it?
- Q5.** Based on current experience, what is the average minimum number of hours per week needed to perform this role **over and above the time required to perform duties covered by the Basic Allowance**? If possible, please break this time down into specific duties (meetings, briefings, meeting fall-out, correspondence etc). **If you are new to the role please indicate that you are providing approximate/anticipated figures.**
- Q6.** Do you think that the SRAs awarded under the existing scheme are set at a fair level? If not, how do you think they should be changed? (Please see **Appendix B** for some comparative data).
- Q7.** Do you think the SRAs awarded under the existing scheme reflect the correct relativity between posts? If not, how do you think they should be changed?
- Q8.** Most councils limit SRAs to one per councillor. Some pay a reduced percentage of the lesser SRA, while a few pay 100% of both. Wiltshire Council current policy is for any councillor holding two or more roles of Special Responsibility to receive 100% of the greater and 30% of the lesser SRA. No third SRA may be received.

Should councillors with more than one role of special responsibility receive only one SRA, a reduced amount for the lesser SRA or all SRAs? Please indicate overleaf:

<b>No. of SRAs received</b>	<b>Please tick as appropriate</b>
<u>Only</u> the greater SRA	
100% of the greater SRA and a <u>reduced</u> percentage of the lesser SRA	
100% of <u>all</u> SRAs	
Other (please specify)	

**Q9.** Please indicate which of the following roles you think should receive an SRA?

<b>Possible SRAs</b>	<b>Tick as appropriate</b>
Leader	
Deputy Leader	
Cabinet Member (9)	
Chairman of Council	
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	
Portfolio Holder (11)	
Chairman of Children's Select Committee	
Chairman of Environment Select Committee	
Chairman of Health Select Committee	
Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	
Vice-Chairman of Council	
Chairmen of Area Board (18)	
Chairmen of Area Planning Committee (4)	
Chairman of Strategic Planning Committee	
Chairman of Audit Committee	
Chairman of Licensing Committee	
Chairman of Staffing Policy Committee	

Chairman of Standards Committee	
Chairman of Police and Crime Panel	
Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board	
Chairman of Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee	

**Q10.** Please indicate if there are other roles that you think should receive an SRA?

**Group Leaders**

Group Leaders currently receive two allowances: 1. A flat rate of £500 per Group Leader, plus £50 per Group member. 2. The second allowance is to reflect Group responsibilities and this is paid at a rate of £100 per Group member for remunerating Group members with roles of responsibility within the Group (e.g. Secretary, Treasurer, Spokesperson).

Other Councils use a variety of systems for calculating their Group Leader SRA. Some pay no flat rate at all and instead base the Group Leader SRA entirely on the size of the Group's membership. Some pay a flat rate, but only when the Group holds at least 10% of the council's seats. Some pay one flat rate to the 'Major Opposition Group Leader' and a lower rate to the 'Minor Opposition Group Leader'.

**Q11.** Do you think that Group Leaders should receive an allowance?

Yes	No

**Q.12** Do you think the current allowance scheme for Group Leaders is fair, transparent and understandable?

Yes	No

Do you think it could be improved? If so, how?

**Q13.** The Panel has established a £10,000 per annum Overview and Scrutiny fund. This is to remunerate councillors performing specific scrutiny functions such as chairing task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises. Some concerns have been raised about how this funding has been allocated. Do you think this fund continues to serve a purpose?

Yes	No

If so, has it been set at the correct level?

Yes	No

Do you have any comments or suggestions for a better way to engage people in Overview and Scrutiny activity?

### **Co-optees' Allowances**

The current scheme includes an allowance for co-opted members of Children's Select Committee, for the co-opted members of the Standards Committee and co-opted independent members of the Police and Crime Panel.

**Q14.** Please indicate which of the following roles you think should receive an allowance?

Possible allowances	Tick as appropriate
Co-opted member of Children's Select Committee	
Co-opted members of the Standards Committee	
Co-opted Independent member of the Police and Crime Panel	

### **Approved Duties**

Travel, Subsistence and Dependent Carers' allowances are payable when expenditure is necessarily incurred whilst undertaking Approved Duties (as set out in **Appendix A**).

**Q15.** Do you think the classification of approved duties and exemptions should be changed? If so, how?

### **Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

**Q16.** Do you have any comments to make about travel and subsistence allowances?

**Dependents' Carers' Allowance**

**Q17.** Do you have any comments to make about the dependents' carers' allowance?

**Other**

**Q18.** Are there any other changes to the current Members' Allowances Scheme that you would welcome or do you have any further comments to make?

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.**

**Summary of responses to the Members' Allowances Scheme Questionnaire 2013**

**63 out of a possible 98 councillors responded to the Questionnaire (64%)**

**Q5.** What is the average minimum number of hours per week needed to perform the basic role of Wiltshire Councillor effectively (**excluding time spent on roles with Special Responsibilities**)?

Mean Figure: 21 hours per week

Attached bar chart shows range of responses.

Respondents:57

**Q6.** Do you think the current basic allowance of £12,167, is approximately correct? Or do you think that it should be increased – or decreased? If so, why?

Freeze	Increase	Decrease
46	15	1
74%	24%	2%

Respondents: 62

Reasons/suggestions for an <u>Increase</u>	Total
Large rural unitary authority with the accompanying responsibility and requirements.	2
Hard to get high quality candidates or people of working age.	2
About £15k is right level	3
Increase to about £13k	2
Increase in line with officers' pay	1
Increase in line with inflation	1
Hourly rate is really low	1

<u>Freeze</u>	Total
Any increase would send out the wrong message to both staff and the public because Wiltshire Council has lost hundreds of staff and are currently making cuts.	5
Some councillors still only attend basic minimum meetings.	2
The allowance is about right and reflects the voluntary nature of the position. It is £1,000 per month, if councillors average 100 hours per month then that is £10 an hour which is quite generous really.	1

Surprised at how much allowances have increased in the last four years – well above the rate of inflation.	1
However, there is an increasing demand in time.	1
Although fair, travel within the county can add 1-2 hours to work time.	1

<b>Decrease</b>	<b>Total</b>
Should be decreased to allow for Council's financial position.	1

**Q7.** Historically the Panel has used the Local Government Association “day session rate” to update the allowances. This rate is no longer issued.

Do you have any comments or suggestions for an alternative index to use to update the allowances? (e.g. in line with officer pay increases or using the average local white collar day rate).

Index	Votes	%
In line with officer pay increases	14	52%
Average local white collar day rate	6	22%
In line with other Councils	2	7%
National minimum wage	1	4%
Pro rata rate of MPs	1	4%
Compare to HM forces, Civil Service, Police	1	4%
Standard price indexes	1	4%
Inflation	1	4%

Respondents: 27

One additional comment:

- Would not be in favour of a link to officer pay.

**Q8.** Do you currently hold a position (or positions) that could be seen as entailing Special Responsibilities (e.g. chairman of a committee or Area Board, group leader, cabinet member, portfolio holder etc). If so, what is it?

See **Q5**.

**Q9.** Based on current experience, what is the average minimum number of hours per week needed to perform this role **over and above the time required to perform duties covered by the Basic Allowance**? If possible, please break this time down into specific duties (meetings, briefings, meeting fall-out, correspondence etc). **If you are new to the role please indicate that you are providing approximate/anticipated figures.**



SRA Role	Mean hrs per week	Committee meetings per year
Leader	60+	11 (Cabinet)
Deputy Leader	50-60	11 (Cabinet)
Cabinet Members (7) (plus Leader and Deputy Leader)	31	11 (Cabinet)
Cabinet Portfolio Holders (11)	20	11 (Cabinet)
Group Leader (LibDems)	20	
Chairman of Council	20-25	5-6
Vice-Chairman of Council	4	5-6
Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee	15	8
Vice Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Management Ctte	8	8
Chairman of Children's Select Committee	3-4	5-6
Chairman of Environment Select Committee	10	5-6
Chairman of Health & Social Care Select Committee	No details	5-6
Chairmen of Area Boards (18)	7	6-8
Chairmen of Area Planning Committees (4)	3.5	18
Chairman of Strategic Planning Committee	3	3-4
Chairman of Licensing Committee	No details	3-4 12 hearings
Chairman of Audit Committee	4	5
Chairman of Staffing Policy Committee	No details	4-5
Chairman of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee	4	5
Chairman of Standards Committee	5+	2 5 hearings
Chairman of Police and Crime Panel	5-7	5-6
Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board	Included as part of Leader's 60+ hours per week	3

### **Notes:**

- Chairman of Council role involves much travel to various parts of the County and some engagements take time.
- Pension Fund Chairman – It should be noted that Pensions Fund is intense and variable. Wiltshire Council employees represent about 52% of the staff in the pension fund which has about 135 member organisations and £1.5 billion of assets with even more liabilities.
- Group Leader of opposition – This role consumes a considerable amount of time. This involves attending as many Cabinet meetings as possible (about 80%) and other relevant committees such as Audit and Scrutiny Select Committees. The role also involves sitting on a number of additional committees as a consequence of being group leader and spending a considerable amount of time keeping up to date with the various papers that get issued. It is important to read and have an understanding of all cabinet and committee papers and regularly have briefings with officers if clarification is needed on any issues.
- Housing Board – new body being set up – role would be comparable to the management board of a housing association and should see remuneration.

**Q10.** Do you think that the SRAs awarded under the existing scheme are set at a fair level when compared with other local authorities? If not, how do you think they should be changed?

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	33	57%
<b>Increase</b>	12	21%
<b>Decrease</b>	6	10%
<b>Don't know</b>	7	12%

Respondents: 58

<b>Reasons/suggestions for increase...</b>	<b>Total</b>
Portfolio Holder role should be paid more. Possibly at the same level as Chairman of Council. Due to responsibility and sheer volume of work.	3
Cabinet member allowance should be increased due to being a unitary council adopting a model with no chief executive. Allowance should be in region of that paid by Gloucestershire and Hampshire.	4
Deputy Leader allowance is too high and Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is too low.	1
Chairman of Standards Committee should be paid more. Considerable time is required to discharge this function.	1
Role of main opposition leader is badly under-remunerated.	1
SRA for Chairman of Pension Fund Committee and Audit Committee should increase.	1
Area Board Chairmen should be paid less – job is variable. Should not pay for Chairman of Police and Crime Panel but if do it should be equivalent to a Select Committee Chairman. Deputy Chairman of Council should not receive an SRA. Area Planning Chairmen should not	1

receive an SRA or if they do it should be lower.	
Area Board Chairman SRA should increase as the Board's success or otherwise depends very heavily on the amount of work and degree of commitment of the Chairman.	1
SRAs are not high enough and do not reflect the additional responsibility and time required.	1

Reasons/suggestions for decrease...	Total
SRAs are too high and many of the people holding these positions are wealthy retired people who do not need the money.	1
Due to the financial situation of the country and the Council.	1
SRAs should not be quite so high in comparison with the basic allowance.	1
However, many councillors do little and a few do a lot. Sometimes SRAs don't fully reflect that difference.	1
In view of the current financial situation all SRAs should be decreased by 15%	1
In view of the current financial situation all SRAs should be decreased by 10%	1

**Q11.** Do you think the SRAs awarded under the existing scheme reflect the correct relativity between posts? If not, how do you think they should be changed?

	Total	%
<b>Yes</b>	21	34%
<b>No</b>	13	21%
<b>Don't Know</b>	28	45%

Respondents: 62

No, because...	Total
Portfolio Holders should received more - (one suggested Band 6) (one suggested equivalent role to Chairman of Council (Band 4)	5
Chairmen of Area Boards should receive more (Band 6 or 7 ). They are the public face of the council and more responsibilities will be devolved over time.	3
Vice Chairman of Council is too generous	3
Increase Cabinet SRA	2
Deputy Leader too generous – should be 50% of Leader's allowance	2
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should receive less	1
All Chairmen should receive the same amount i.e. Environment Select should not receive double that of Audit, Licensing etc	1
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee too low	1
There is a huge difference in workload and responsibility between posts. E.g. Area Board Chairman is a much bigger job than Chairman of Planning yet they are the same band.	1
Vice Chairmen of the Select Committees should be remunerated – maybe at 50% of the Chairman's allowance	1
Less for Chairman of Council	1
Area Planning Chairman should receive less	2
Area Board Chairmen should receive less – the job is variable	1
Chairman of Police and Crime Panel should not receive an allowance	1
Standards Committee Chairman should return to previous level (increase)	1

**Q12.** Should councillors with more than one role of special responsibility receive SRAs for both, only one or a reduced amount for the lesser SRA?

	Total	%
Only the greater SRA	10	19%
100% of the greater SRA and a reduced percentage of the lesser SRA	29	55%
100% of both SRAs	14	26%

Respondents: 53

Comments	Total
Increase the reduced percentage to 50%	3

Should get paid for all duties if they are different roles	1
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**Q13.** Please indicate which of the following roles you think should receive an SRA.

Most councillors agreed with the existing SRAs but a number of councillors indicated that the following roles should **not** receive an allowance:

No.		Total*	%
1.	Vice Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	16	29%
2.	Vice Chairman of Council	15	27%
3.	Chairman of Staffing Policy Committee	13	23%
4.	Chairman of Health and Wellbeing Board	13	23%
5.	Chairman of Police and Crime Panel	12	21%
6.	Chairman of Pension Fund Committee	12	21%
7.	Chairman of Standards Committee	12	21%
8.	Chairman of Strategic Planning Committee	12	21%
9.	Chairman of Audit Committee	11	20%
10.	Chairman of Licensing Committee	11	20%
11.	Chairmen of Area Planning Committees	7	12%
12.	Chairmen of Area Boards	6	11%
13.	Portfolio Holders	6	11%
14.	Chairmen of Select Committees	4	7%

Respondents: 56

**Q10** Please indicate if there are other roles that you think should receive an SRA.

SRAs suggested by respondents	No.	
Operational Flood Working Group Chairmen (North and South)	5	
Vice Chairmen	2	
Vice Chairmen of Select Committees	2	
Anyone who does extra work e.g. Vice Chairmen and Chairmen of Task Groups	1	
Chairman of Housing Board	1	

**Q11** Do you think that Group Leaders should receive an allowance?

	Total	%
<b>Yes</b>	48	89%

<b>No</b>	6	11%
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Respondents: 54

<b>Comments</b>	<b>Total</b>
Not sure they should receive two allowances	1
They should not receive the extra amount per group member	1

**Q12** Do you think the current allowance scheme for Group Leaders is fair, transparent and understandable?

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	45	88%
<b>No</b>	6	12%

Respondents: 51

<b>Comments</b>	<b>Total</b>
There should be more information provided about this to all councillors. All parties should pay their secretary and coffee at meetings from this fund.	1

**Q13** The Panel has established a £10,000 per annum Overview and Scrutiny fund. This is to remunerate councillors performing specific scrutiny functions such as charring task groups and rapid scrutiny exercises. Some concerns have been raised about how this funding has been allocated. Do you think this fund continues to serve a purpose?

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	34	68%
<b>No</b>	16	32%

If so has it been set at the right level?

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	25	74%

No	9	26%
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Do you have any comments or suggestions for a better way to engage people in Overview and Scrutiny activity?

Suggestions	Total
An increase in the amount paid to all councillors on the task groups may ensure a full 100% attendance. This would prevent disengagement.	2
Councillors should not be paid to attend specific meetings.	2
Make it compulsory for all backbench members to be on either a Scrutiny Select Committee or a Task Group making it part of the basic allowance.	2
This seems to be a role that appeals to some councillors more than others. It should be offered to those people who enjoy this type of challenge/activity and have some experience in this area.	1
Increase one-off payments to chairmen of Task Groups. Many of these, especially the short-term areas can be very time consuming and demanding.	1
Greater, regular updates as to what roles are available, what is expected of those who may be interested in serving on Task Groups etc.	1
As the Chairmen of Task Groups generally hold more than one SRA position others may feel disgruntled that they are asked to do Task Groups for a small reward. This should be paid to all members of the Task Groups and not just the Chairman.	1
To see the results of the Task Group making a difference to policy would also be beneficial otherwise there is no point in having them.	1
This fund has been used to pay members for attending meetings – it is little more than an attendance allowance. It could be better used to either fund a fixed fee for chairing task groups etc or supporting allowances for Vice Chairmen of Select Committees.	1
There should be a larger amount as scrutiny work needs more support.	1
It is the responsibility of Chairmen and Vice	1

Chairmen to engender more enthusiasm and ensure that Task Groups are well focused.	
Ask them to be involved – face to face!	1
Backbenchers on task groups should receive an equal amount and the Chairman should receive double.	1
Double the allowance to £20,000 and distribute as per the present scheme. No problem with this fund being used as an attendance allowance.	1
Distribute some of the SRAs equitably to among all on task groups.	1
Scrap this allowance – the political side of the job is voluntary, the paid part of a councillors' role is serving the community.	1

**Q14** Please indicate which of the following roles you think should receive an allowance?

	Yes	No
<b>Co-opted member of Children's Select Committee</b>	42	14
<b>Co-opted member of the Standards Committee</b>	42	15
<b>Co-opted Independent member of the Police and Crime Panel</b>	41	15

Comments	Total
Only travel should be paid	1
They should be paid only if they bring special expertise	1

**Q15** Do you think the classification of approved duties and exemptions should be changed? If so how?

	Number
<b>OK as it is</b>	37
<b>Changes suggested</b>	8



<b>No comment</b>	11
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### Changes Suggested

- Should not pay councillors to attend Parish Council meetings
- Simply define it as any duty undertaken as part of a role as a councillor with the exception of political meetings.
- Mileage allowance should be paid to view possible site visits re planning applications. (2 councillors made this point)
- Travel and expenses (not subsistence) should be paid for any work carried out as a councillor whether for constituents, the council or area board/partnership groups.
- Members should be paid flat rate allowances and not expenses. Allowances are not justifiable and are an entitlement (including SRAs, subsistence and travel). Any attempt to use the “same as employees” argument fails as members’ allowances are not pensionable unlike employees. Members are “office holders” not “employees”.
- If someone lives in the North and can’t drive getting to Salisbury where a meeting is being held at 4pm an approved duty should be created allowing one to stay overnight.
- Should include undertaking activities within the LGA.

**Q16** Do you have any comments to make about travel and subsistence allowances?

- Should not be allowed to claim for any travel to meetings within a cllrs’ own division e.g. Parish Council meetings. Councillors are elected to represent a division and therefore any work done within that division should be covered by the basic allowance.
- Travel allowances should continue but subsistence can be abused. Everyone needs to eat anyway and the council should not be paying for councillors to have dinner or lunch.
- The mileage allowance is barely reflective of the cost of running a car. Use the AA rate but not the income tax free rate. This penalises the remoter councillors.
- Remove “tea” allowance.
- The claiming of subsistence allowance is so onerous I don’t bother any more.
- Mileage allowance should increase. It has been at the same level for many years. As the driving distances are so much greater since unitary and the time travelling to and from a meeting can often be 3 hours plus the wear and tear on the car is noticeable.
- Some councillors say no subsistence. I do not agree. If a backbencher attends meetings they need food and drink.
- Fuel has dramatically increased but mileage rate has not. This does not reflect the real world.
- The rate is very low.
- Any direct expenses incurred while acting as a councillor should be paid in line with private sector not public sector.

- They are allowances and not expenses.
- Subsistence allowance should only be allowed for exceptional duties e.g. over 24 hours. I find it bizarre that the council should pay for my breakfast on a normal day.
- Should more accurately reflect travel costs and car depreciation but do realise the tax implications.
- Needs to be clearer.
- They are quite adequate.
- Conforms with other companies/employers.

**Q17** Do you have any comments to make about the dependents' carers' allowance?

- Is it actually used? 2
- How is it monitored?
- How many take this up? Is it relevant to the duties of a councillor? Are there other arrangements a councillor could make. What checks are made to ensure the claim is valid?
- This is needed and should be continued otherwise we restrict who can stand for election.
- If councillors can claim something from social security then the council should not duplicate this.
- This is not paid in the private sector.
- Is this appropriate for voluntary work?
- I am a foster carer and I feel I don't need an allowance as I already receive allowances for having the children. I took on the role as councillor and knew in advance that I would have to provide care for the children and feel this should be my responsibility.

**Q18** Are there any other changes to the current Members' Allowances Scheme that you would welcome or do you have any further comments to make?

- It should be clear that subsistence allowances should only be paid for working away from the normal "place of work". If councillors are at the Council offices all day then they should be expected to provide their own lunch but if they are on a day trip to London then they should be able to claim meals if appropriate.
- Councillors should be included in the pension scheme. People should not be dissuaded from standing for Council because there is no pension. It restricts election to older people.
- All members of the Cabinet should take a 10% pay cut. They are quite happy to make hard working staff redundant but have shown little wish to take a pay cut themselves!
- Allowances and expenses are a very sensitive subject, particularly in the light of the recent discussions and consultations over MPs pay. I do feel that it may be for an independent body to set these for us. There is no doubt that the role of a unitary councillors is becoming increasingly

professional and therefore time consuming which takes those of us with jobs and careers away from what we should primarily be doing. If the electorate want “quality” representatives to pay for it.

- Being a councillor is not a “job”. If the panel does not “have its hands tied” Wiltshire are about the third from the top of the comparison list and I would not like to see it go higher. Also the turnout for elections is not great in general, one reason is some of the electorate think we are in it for the money. I think the Panel should take into account the value of councillors’ virtual car parking permits in your calculations. The permits are good because we do not want to waste time finding and claiming back money. Councillors are voluntary and it is an allowance and not a wage. I think the allowance should be much lower than a wage.
- I consider the IT allowance need to be reviewed. Broadband costs and consumables has increased. The present £250 per annum should be considered for an increase.
- The system encourages retirees (particularly from public sector) as it is not possible to support a family on £12k per annum. Some weeks I have worked nearly 40 hours on Council business meaning I am earning below minimum wage (excluding expenses) Direct expenses i.e. paper, stamps, printer ink etc should be separate from “allowances” which are in effect a salary. When direct expenses are incurred into the overall cost of working as a councillor the hourly rate is often lower and will exclude a large portion of the population from carrying out this role.
- The allowances appear to be appropriate so long as they keep up to speed with councillors’ work bearing in mind each cllr now has a larger area to look after. My area previously had 4 District Councillors and 2 County. From 6 to 1.
- I do not think the Council scheme recognises the increased hours spent by the Leader and Cabinet colleagues reflecting our position as a unitary council – all the duties previously performed by the District and County Councils. Also, the additional responsibilities agreed as a result of the decision to run the council on the basis of no Chief Executive.
- An increase in basic allowance then it is fair to everyone.