



**A Review
Of
Members'
Allowances
For
Swale Borough
Council**

**A Report
By the
Joint Independent
Remuneration
Panel**

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November 2012

Foreword

This report has been produced by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) for Swale Borough Council. The Panel has been asked to undertake a wide-ranging review of the whole scheme of allowances to ascertain whether it is still fit for purpose. It has not been part of the Panel's remit to take a view on the Government's approach in legislating for the changes that councils like Swale Borough Council have made and will continue to be required to make. What the Panel has done is to have regard, as it must, to society's and the Government's intention that new schemes of remuneration should contribute to a vigorous and healthy local democracy. To that end the Panel, as previously, has been mindful of the view that if local democracy is to prosper people must have choice. Choice means having candidates for Council membership who have different backgrounds and life experiences. Remuneration of elected Members is one means to achieve that end.

The Panel has had the benefit of receiving a considerable amount of verbal and other written evidence. Some of the latter inevitably draws on comparisons from elsewhere. From this evidence, the Panel has concluded that being an elected Member is not simply about dealing with the Council's formal business agenda. Attending meetings and contributing to debate under the public spotlight is only part of the role. It is the work they do, usually for constituents and often out of 'normal' working hours, behind the scenes, which can be equally if not more demanding. These demands are such that people who stand for their local Council cannot reasonably expect to pursue a career or make progress in their chosen employment in the accepted sense. Whilst they may make that sacrifice knowingly and explicitly the implications need to be understood and acted upon. If they are not, then local Councils will continue to fail to attract a more representative cross-section of the communities they represent and equality of opportunity will continue to be denied to potential candidates.

There is a responsibility on the Panel to recognise these dilemmas and recommend a members' allowances scheme accordingly, which is also equitable and transparent that inevitably requires a balance to be struck between the voluntary effort required of Members and the financial sacrifice they have to make in order to fulfil their role properly.

However, the Panel is cognisant that now is a particularly challenging time to do so in light of the economic constraints facing local government and the public sector in general. The Panel has flagged up its indicative thinking on the levels of the main allowances payable but has not chosen to recommend increases at this stage. It is an issue the Panel hopes to return to at a more opportune moment.

Dr Declan Hall

Independent Remuneration Panel Chair
November 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel recommends that:

Basic Allowance

At this juncture the Panel does not recommend a change to the Basic Allowance.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

The following changes should be applied to the scope and level of SRAs payable:

- The Deputy Cabinet Members SRAs: discontinued
- Group Spokespeople on Planning: discontinued
- Labour Group Chief Whip: discontinued
- Main Opposition Group Leader: restored to £5,850
- Chairmen of the 2 Scrutiny Committees: restored to £3,510
- Minority Opposition Group Leader: £1,170

All other SRAs are to be unchanged.

The Co-optees' Allowances

The Co-optees' Allowance of £10 per meeting is unchanged.

The Dependants' Carers Allowance

The Council adopt a DCA, as a contribution to the cost of care for Members' dependants while they are undertaking approved duties. The maximums payable and conditions applicable (see relevant section of report) should be inserted into the scheme of allowances.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The Council should be able to decide on whether all elected Members of Swale Borough Council should be eligible to join the LGPS, applied to both their Basic Allowance and SRAs.

The Conference Allowance

The Conference Allowance is discontinued and that Members claim any direct expenses incurred for attendance at conferences through the subsistence allowance.

Travel and Subsistence Allowances – Approved Duties

The current list of approved duties is maintained.

Subsistence Allowances

The maximum Subsistence Allowances claimable by Members for undertaking approved duties be based on and indexed to the guidance published by the South East Employers.

Where a Member is absent from usual residence for more than 12 hours the Subsistence Allowances claimable for breakfast, lunch, tea and evening meal can be aggregated, up to a maximum of £36.53.

Where it proves to be impracticable for a Member to book through Democratic Services they should be able to claim for reimbursement for an overnight stay at a maximum of £150.71 per night inclusive of breakfast.

All claims will be for 'actuals', i.e., reimbursements, and accompanied by receipts to reflect the actual expenses incurred, except for out of pocket expenses of £5.73

Travel Allowances - Mileage Rates

The mileage allowances are based HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAP) rates and the applicable rates are inserted into the Members' Allowances Scheme in an appropriate appendix/annex as follows:

Vehicle Type	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Cars and vans	45p	25p
Motor cycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p
Passenger Supplement Rate	5p per passenger	5p per passenger

The Information Technology (IT) Allowance

The current IT Allowance should be discontinued and replaced by a Information Technology and Communications (ICT) Allowance payable at £15 per month. Moreover it should only be payable on the condition that a Member can be contactable via email on a swale.gov.uk account.

Indexation

The following indices are applied to the remuneration and allowances paid to Members of Swale Borough Council:

A. Basic Allowance, SRAs, Co-optees Allowances and ICT Allowance:

- Indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column 49) to be implemented from the start of the municipal year for which year it is applicable.

B. Mileage Allowance:

- Mileage allowances rates to be indexed to the HMRC AMAP rates.

C. Subsistence Allowances:

- Subsistence Allowances should be indexed to the rates published each year in guidance issued by the South East Employers.

D. The Dependants' Carers' Allowance:

- The maximum rates claimable should be indexed as follows:
 - Childcare: to minimum wage applicable to the age of the carer
 - Other Dependants: to the hourly rate charged by Kent Social Services for a Home Care Assistant.

Implementation

The recommendations contained within this Report are implemented from the date of the 2013/14 Council annual meeting, or a prior date as agreed by the Council.

Town and Parish Councils and the Parish Meeting within the Borough

- **Chairman's Parish Basic Allowance:** payable at a maximum of 10% of the Swale Borough Council current Basic Allowance, which equates to £334
- **Parish Basic Allowance:** payable at a maximum of 5% of the Swale Borough Council current Basic Allowance, which equates to £167.
- Both these allowances where paid should be indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column 49) to be implemented from the start of the municipal year for which it is applicable.

Parish Travel and Subsistence Allowances

The mileage rates payable by any of the town and parish councils and parish meeting within the Borough should be paid at and indexed to HMRC AMAP rates and Subsistence Rates paid at and indexed to the maximum rates as set out in the guidance published by the South East Employers.

Joint Independent Remuneration Panel:

Review of Members' Allowances

For

Swale Borough Council

November 2012

Introduction: The Regulatory Context

1. This report is a synopsis of the proceedings and recommendations made by the statutory Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) appointed by Swale and Maidstone Borough Councils to advise Swale Borough Council on its current Members' Allowances Scheme.
2. The Panel was convened under *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)* (the 2003 Regulations – which replaced the 2001 Regulations). These regulations, which arise out of the relevant provisions in the *Local Government Act 2000*, require all local authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (in this case a Joint Panel with Maidstone Borough Council) to review and provide advice to Councils on Members' allowances. The Council still retains the right to determine Members' levels of remuneration, and much of the scope and levels of other allowances.
3. All Councils are required to convene their 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. This periodic independent scrutiny of the Council's Allowances scheme requirement ensures a degree of public accountability.
4. The Panel in its review of allowances in November 2011 (page 4), which did not result in any substantive recommendations, recommended a full review of Swale Borough Councils' Members' Allowances by the end of 2012, with particular reference to the number of Special Responsibility Allowances payable and other associated issues. It is the follow up to this recommendation in November 2011 that is the driver for this review.

Terms of Reference

5. The Panel was asked to review the current (2012/13) Members' Allowances scheme and make recommendations to the Council on:
 - the amount of Basic Allowance that should be payable to its elected members
 - the responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) and as to the amount of such an allowance
 - the duties for which Travelling and Subsistence allowances can be paid and the amount of this allowance
 - allowances for co-opted members
 - whether the authority's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and if it does make such a recommendation, the amount of this allowance and the means by which it is determined
 - whether annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should run
 - whether the Council should be able to decide if Members may join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and which members of an authority are to be entitled to pensions in accordance with a scheme made under section 7 of the Superannuation Act 1972
 - the implementation date for any proposed changes and whether any allowance should be backdated to the beginning of a financial year in the event of the scheme being amended
 - allowances for members of town and parish councils and the parish meeting within the Borough

The Panel

6. Swale Borough Council and Maidstone Borough Council reconvened its Joint Independent Remuneration Panel consisting of the following appointees:
 - Dr Declan Hall:
Chair of the Panel, a former academic at INLOGOV, The University of Birmingham, now an independent consultant specialising in Members' allowances and support, who was appointed by the South East Regional Employers as a partner consultant
 - Paul Hutchinson:
A Squadron Leader in the Royal Air Force and resident of Swale Borough Council, and an independent Member of the Joint Panel appointed by Swale Borough Council

- Val Page:
Retired local government officer and resident of Maidstone Borough Council and an independent Member of the Joint Panel appointed by Maidstone Borough Council
7. The Panel was supported by Joanne Hammond, Senior Democratic Services Officer at Swale Borough Council, who acted as the 'Panellists' Friend', and whose role was to support the proceedings and take the organisational lead in facilitating the review.
 8. The Panel would like to record its gratitude to the Members and Officers of Swale Borough Council for making themselves available to meet with the Panel. In particular, the Panel would like thank Joanne Hammond, whose support was invaluable in ensuring that the Panel was organised and operated in an efficient and effective fashion.

Process and Methodology

Evidence Reviewed by the Panel

9. The Panel met at Swale House in Sittingbourne on 8th – 9th November 2012. The Panel meetings were held in private session to enable the Panel to meet with Members and conduct deliberations in confidence.
10. In arriving at its recommendations, the Panel took into account the following range of evidence:
 - Any changes in Council structures and roles and responsibilities of Members since the previous review.
 - The views of Members, both written (as expressed in a questionnaire) and oral (as expressed in interview with the Panel).
 - 'Reviewing Allowances: Issues to consider' a presentation from the Chair of the Panel.
 - The range and level of allowances payable in the comparator group of authorities.
 - Other relevant supporting material such the guidance from Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the meetings schedule of the Council and its committees, role profiles, etc.
 - Reports from previous reviews
11. A range of Members were invited to meet with the Panel and an open session was also held by the Panel for any other Member to make personal representations if they so wished. A number of Officers were also invited to meet with the Panel to provide background and factual information on how the Council operates.¹

¹ See Appendix 1 for Members and Officers who met with the Panel, Appendix 2 for full range of evidence and information considered by the Panel, and Appendix 3 for the summary of SRAs paid in the comparator authorities, namely the 12 districts councils in Kent, and Appendix 4 for summary of questionnaire responses.

Considering the Evidence

12. The Panel took a tiered approach in considering the evidence. It is required to operate within the broad statutory framework laid down by the 2006 Members' Allowances Statutory Guidance and 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations. The 2003 Regulations establish the legal framework within which the Panel is required to operate, i.e., providing discretionary authority for the payment of SRAs, and Travel and Subsistence Allowances, while mandating the payment of a Basic Allowance that is paid equally to all Members. Within this legislative context, the Panel has an obligation to pay regard to the 2006 Statutory Guidance, which for instance mandates certain considerations for Panels in reaching their recommendations regarding the Basic Allowance, SRAs and the Travel and Subsistence allowances' scheme and the scope of such a scheme.
13. The next level of evidence considered by the Panel was the representations made by the Members, which obtained the views of the groups and individual Members of the Council. The interviews in particular were deliberative in nature and provided the Panel with a qualitative feel of the issues facing elected Members and how that relates to remuneration and allowances payable. The meetings with Officers were primarily to gather the factual context and inform the Panel of relevant changes in council structures. The responses from the questionnaire were also noted at this level, primarily to inform the Panel of the weight of feeling amongst the wider membership and to inform the discussions with Members.
14. Finally, all the evidence and representations were reviewed and evaluated within the comparative context. In particular, the Panel has benchmarked the scope and levels of allowances paid in Swale Borough Council against those paid in all 12 Kent district councils as the most relevant comparative group of councils. While at times it is difficult to make systematic comparisons, the Panel has undertaken benchmarking, where relevant figures can be obtained. The Panel has not been driven by the rates and levels of allowances paid across the comparator authorities but was in the very least concerned to understand how the issues under review have been addressed elsewhere, i.e., what is the most common and good practice.

Principles of the Review

15. In undertaking this review the Panel has been guided by the following principles, namely that a Members' Allowances scheme should:
 - Provide recompense for the time required from Members and the responsibility they are required to take on and
 - Be at a level that provides a degree of compensation as Members and prospective Members have to forgo some aspect of paid employment (where applicable) to fulfil public duties.
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- Also recognise there is an element of public service in being an elected Member – it is not a professional “job” in the generally accepted sense.
- As far as practically possible, seek to reduce financial barriers to public service.
- Be transparent in that Members and the public understand what Members are paid and the rationale underpinning the levels payable.

The Evidence Reviewed: Key Messages and Observations

The Role and Purpose of a Members’ Allowances Scheme

16. There was a wide range of views presented to the Panel, both in the questionnaire and orally, regarding the purpose of a Members’ Allowances scheme and the nature of being an elected Member. There were those who expressed a view that ‘remuneration’ was not appropriate and that an allowances scheme should simply ensure that Members’ expenses were covered. Other Members took the view that the current levels of allowances do not reflect the time and responsibilities undertaken by elected Members. On balance, the latter view prevailed.

17. The Panel can only be guided by the Government’s policy intention as stated in the 1998 White Paper (to the Local Government Act 2000) *Modern Local Government: In touch with the people*, (paragraph 3.54):

The financial support for councillors must also reinforce the culture of the modern council and address, as far as possible, any disincentives to serving in local politics. People do not enter public service to make their fortune. But neither should they pay a price for serving the public. It is clear that executive mayors, and some others in political executive positions or the scrutiny function in councils, may spend much if not all of their time on council business with a possible subsequent loss of earnings and pension rights.

18. Consequently, the Panel is required to make recommendations that recognise that senior Members spend the greater part of their time on council activities and the rest spend a substantial part of their time on council activities; and that commitment should not, as far as possible mean they have to ‘pay a price for serving the public.’ For the Panel it is important to recognise that elected Members are in different financial circumstances and for those who can afford to forgo allowances the opportunity is there. *The Panel reminds Members that they have no obligation to take all or part of their remuneration or claim any reimbursements to which they are entitled.*

19. Thus, for many Members and potential Members the allowances scheme should serve to reduce financial barriers to being on Council. It still leaves those for whom remuneration is not a barrier free to make decisions on the allowances they are entitled to according to their own personal circumstances. To do otherwise would not only hinder the recruitment of potential elected Members but put barriers in place for those Members who

wish to “step up” to posts that require them to spend a substantial amount of their time on council activities.

20. It is the view of the Panel that the current allowances scheme does not provide adequate recompense for the roles and responsibilities that Members are required to undertake. Furthermore, the evidence indicated that the current levels are at a level that they do constitute a financial barrier to becoming and remaining on the Council and that many Members have incurred a cost for being on Swale Borough Council, in terms of loss of earnings, career promotion, and concomitant impact on their pension provision.
21. The comparative data also supports this view insofar that many of the allowances paid in Swale Borough Council are at the lower end of the comparative spectrum. The fact that the Basic Allowance and many of the SRAs are either the lowest or at the lower end of those paid in the 12 Kent district councils is not an issue in and of itself, after all one Council has to pay the among the lowest levels. What is a concern is that the level of the Basic Allowance at least has become a financial barrier to being a Member that if not addressed will mean the pool of prospective Members will be confined to either those who can afford it or are prepared to incur the cost of serving on Council.

Recognition of Current Economic Climate

22. While the prime role of the Panel is to assess what it judges the roles and posts under review are worth based on the evaluation of the evidence, it cannot but be aware of the current economic climate. Not only do many residents of Swale face an uncertain economic future, the Council is also seeking further savings while experiencing growing demands on services, thus trying to ‘do more with less’.
23. While it is never a good time to raise Members’ allowances the current economic climate and Government’s agenda for local government does not mean Members are doing less. The Council continues to address the range of issues that affect all councils such as Swale Borough Council. This has increasingly meant an enhanced partnership working that accompanies this agenda, particularly affecting senior Members. Moreover, pressures on council services and recent Government legislation, such as the *2011 Localism Act*, means that ‘front line’ Members will face further pressures. Being an elected Member will not get easier.

The Role of the Panel for 2013/14: Addressing Anomalies

24. Nonetheless, the current economic climate and the fact that the Council has not accepted the Panel’s recommended increases in the past (indeed the current level of allowances have only been marginally increased since 2002) has led the Panel to take a pragmatic approach in that now is not the time to recommend increases in the allowances paid to Members.

25. Rather, the role of the Panel at this juncture is to address the main anomalies in the current Members Allowances scheme while pointing out where the Panel feels the Basic Allowance and Leader's SRA at least should be. The Panel will return to its indicative thinking at a future date.
26. Ironically, the indicative views of the Panel notwithstanding if the Council does accept all the Panel's recommendations it will in practice lead to savings on the current sum paid out in members' allowances. This further convinces the Panel that it is imperative that serious consideration is given to placing the levels of main allowances payable on a footing that does not amount to a financial barrier to serving on Council – even if it is done at a time when it is more opportune to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Highlighting the Appropriate Basic Allowance

27. The Basic Allowance was originally set in accordance with what is now the 2006 Statutory Guidance. The Panel has replicated this approach and laid it out below to show where an indicative level should be for future consideration.

The Approach laid out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance

28. The 2006 Statutory Guidance, to which the Panel *must* pay regard, lays out a number of considerations for Panels in arriving at the Basic Allowance. In particular, paragraphs 67-69 state:

Having established what local councillors do, and the hours which are devoted to these tasks the local authorities will need to take a view on the rate at which, and the number of hours for which, councillors ought to be remunerated.

It is important that some element of the work of Members continues to be voluntary – that some hours are not remunerated. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by elected members, and further to ensure that, despite the input required, people are encouraged to come forward as elected members and that their service to the community is retained.

The local authority may wish to agree a rate for remuneration. They may chose to be guided by the LGA daily rate which is based on the national (male) median white-collar wage.

Alternatively they may wish to look at local and regional wage rates as these may seem more appropriate as measures for the allowances paid to Members of its community. Local authorities may also wish to consider the allowances and remuneration which is paid to other members of the voluntary sector e.g. members of local health trusts.

29. Commonly, this guidance is broken down into three distinct variables as a means to arrive at the recommended Basic Allowance:

- **Input:** Time required to undertake the role
- **Public Service Discount:** Element of that time which is voluntary
- **Day Session Rate:** The worth of the remunerated time

Time Required to fulfil roles associated with the Basic Allowance

30. In 2002 the Panel assessed the time required to undertake the role of the 'backbench' Member at 11 hours per week – for all roles associated with the payment of the Basic Allowance. This figure is different from what Members may be putting into their various 'backbench' roles, as the time that Members may have to supply is often greater than what the roles demand.

31. In 2002 the Panel then translated this expected weekly time commitment into 572 hours per year.

32. For information purposes, the Panel would expect this time commitment to include the following duties:

- attending full council
- sitting on at least one scrutiny committee plus associated working groups and panels
- sitting on at least one other committee or panel, principally undertaking the quasi judicial functions the Council is required to discharge
- sitting on Council area forums and partnership bodies
- sitting on numerous outside bodies as Council representatives
- undertaking ward and constituency duties
- undertaking necessary travel, preparation and research required to undertake the above duties

33. The Panel emphasises that the expected time estimation of 572 hours per year to fulfil the roles of the backbencher is being utilised as a means to 'size the role' to arrive at an appropriate Basic Allowance. It does not mean that all Members have to put in 572 hours per year. The Basic Allowance is an entitlement arising out of holding elected office. It is recognised that some backbench Members will put in 40+ hours per week on Council-related activities while some can be effective and put less than the expressed expectation. However, as the Basic Allowance must be paid equally to all Members the Panel has to utilise a standard time commitment.

Recognising the Voluntary Aspect of being an Elected Member

34. Similarly, in 2002 the Panel, to recognize the voluntary element of being a councillor discounted 42% of the expected time input. Thus, out of the 572 hours per year average minimum input expected from backbench Members, 240 hours (42% - rounded up/down to nearest hour) were deemed to be

given by Members as *pro bono publico* and therefore unremunerated. This left 332 hours per year as the remunerated time element. It is noted that a voluntary service discount of 42% is on the high side, it is usually between 30-35%. In recommending the Basic Allowance (£4,289) in 2009 the Panel used 30% as the appropriate size of the public service discount, a figure that was supported by the questionnaire returns for this review.

The Rate for the Remuneration

35. In 2009 the Panel utilized the 2008 median salary for all employees within the Borough of Swale as the rate for remuneration. The Panel has replicated this approach with one slight difference – the rate for remuneration has been based on the median hourly earnings of all *residents* of Swale. It is the one most utilised by Panels and has the advantage of relating the Basic Allowance to the earnings of Members constituents and therefore is a rate that should be not only logical but defensible.
36. In 2011, the most recent date for which figures are available, the median hourly salary for all residents in Swale, excluding overtime, was £13.53 per hour.²

Calculating the Basic Allowance

37. By following the methodology laid out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance the Panel arrived at a tentative Basic Allowance based on the following calculation:
 - 572 hours minimum annual expected average input – 240 hours per year as a Public Service Discount = 332 remunerated hours per year
 - 332 hours per year x £13.53 per hour = **£4,492**

Benchmarking the Basic Allowance

38. To test the strength of the indicative Basic Allowance arrived at above the Panel benchmarked it against the current Basic Allowance paid in the 12 Kent district councils.
39. As Table 1 (see below) shows, the current Swale Borough Council Basic Allowance (£3,343) is the lowest in the comparator group of authorities. It also shows the mean Basic Allowance paid in the comparator group of Kent district councils is £4,354, a level very similar to that arrived at by following the 2006 Statutory Guidance 2006 approach.
40. **However for reasons outlined earlier the Panel is *not recommending a Basic Allowance of £4,492 but simply highlighting it as an indicative figure for future consideration when the economic climate is more suitable.***

² See Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings (ASHE), Median Hourly Pay - excluding overtime for all full time workers in resident in Swale, Table 8.6a

Table 1: Basic Allowance: Kent District Councils 2012/13

Authority Name	Population (approx)	Basic Allowance
Ashford Borough Council	114,100	£4,292.28
Canterbury City Council	149,100	£4,710.00
Dartford Borough Council	93,600	£4,765.00
Dover District Council	106,100	£3,980.00
Gravesham Borough Council	99,600	£3,447.00
Maidstone Borough Council	148,200	£4,666.00
Sevenoaks District Council	114,100	£4,246.00
Shepway District Council	100,300	£3,876.00
Swale Borough Council	131,900	£3,343.00
Thanet District Council	130,900	£4,570.00
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	117,400	£5,076.00
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	107,600	£5,279.00
Average	117,742	£4,354.19
Maximum	149,100	£5,279.00
Minimum	93,600	£3,343.00

An Indicative SRA for the Leader

41. In arriving at an indicative SRA for the Leader the Panel has replicated the approach utilised by the Panel in its review of allowances in 2009, a methodology that is specifically mentioned in the 2006 Statutory Guidance, namely the factor approach. This simply multiplies the Basic Allowance by a commonly accepted factor to arrive at the recommended Leader's SRA. The benchmarking shows that the average SRA for the Leaders of Kent district council is a fraction over four times the average Basic Allowance. It is noted that the actual differential between the current BA and Leaders' SRA in Swale is 3.8. However, a more commonly utilized multiplier is a factor of three and this was used in the 2009 review.
42. Thus, by multiplying the recommended Basic Allowance (£4,492) by a factor of three, it arrives at an indicative Leader's SRA of £13,476. This would still leave the Leader's SRA below the average Leader's SRA in the 12 Kent district councils, which is £17,705. It would also still leave the Leader's SRA as the second lowest in the Kent district councils.
43. As the Panel is not recommending an increase in the Leader's SRA the Panel is simply flagging up this indicative SRA and methodology for future discussion at a more appropriate juncture.

Other SRAs

44. Apart from the SRAs that the Panel has recommended to be discontinued (see below) the Panel has not laid out its indicative thinking on the levels and relativities of other SRAs payable beyond stating that they will all need reviewing to more closely recognise current workloads and responsibilities when the Basic Allowance and Leader's SRA is reviewed.

SRAs and Determining Scope and Numbers: Meeting the Significance Test

45. In determining which posts merit a SRA the Panel has been cognisant of the 2006 Statutory Guidance (May 2006, paragraphs 70 and 73) which states:

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 special responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the authority's functions.

It does not necessarily follow that a particular responsibility which is vested to a particular member is a *significant* additional responsibility for which a special responsibility allowance should be paid. Local authorities will need to consider such particular responsibilities very carefully. 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 duties may not lead to a *significant* extra workload for any one particular member above another. These sorts of responsibilities should be recognised as a time commitment to council work which is acknowledged within the basic allowance and not responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be recommended.

46. The Panel has considered, in line with the statutory guidance, when reviewing posts and roles that merit an SRA whether they meet the test of being vested with "*significant* additional responsibility". This has led the Panel to recommend the discontinuation of some SRAs and no additional SRAs (see below).

Deputy Cabinet Members

47. The Council no longer appoints Deputy Cabinet Members and this SRA (£3,510) is now redundant. Even if the Council was to appoint Deputy Cabinet Members in the near future the Panel will need to take a view on whether these posts meet the test of '*significant* additional responsibility'. **Consequently, the Panel recommends that the SRAs for Deputy Cabinet Members are discontinued.**

Opposition Group Spokespeople on the Planning Committee

48. Currently, the two Opposition Group Spokespersons on the Planning Committee receive an SRA of £1,170.³ The questionnaire returns showed that 74% of the respondents agree with this SRA being paid. This level of support in the questionnaire was not shared by the Panel as the Opposition Group Spokespeople perform a limited role, one that is largely related to briefing their respective group members on up coming planning issues.
49. The Panel has taken the view that the posts of Opposition Spokespeople on the Planning Committee do not meet the test of having significant additional responsibility. While they have a defined responsibility it is not so significant so as to merit a SRA. It is noticeable that Swale Borough Council is the only district council in Kent that pays such an allowance. In 2009 the Panel also recommended that this SRA be discontinued.
50. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for Opposition Group Spokespeople be discontinued**

Labour Group Chief Whip

51. Currently, the Labour Group Chief Whip receives an SRA of £3,218, the same as the Scrutiny Chairmen. The Panel understands the rationale behind this SRA and that its introduction in June 2011 did not result in an overall increase on the spend on SRAs received by the Labour Group Members. The SRAs paid to the Labour Group Leader and 2 Chairmen of Scrutiny, which in Swale are always allocated to members of the main Opposition Group were reduced to pay this SRA.
52. Despite the fact that questionnaire responses show 79% of respondents support this SRA being paid the Panel was struck by the written comments. Out of 6 written comments in the questionnaire 5 did not agree with this SRA being paid. Indeed, in 2011 the Panel expressed concern about the need to pay this SRA and expressly noted it would review it.
53. The Panel is concerned that the funding for this SRA came primarily from the SRAs paid to the Scrutiny Chairmen which are statutory posts without any wider evaluation. It is not a post that is remunerated in other Kent district councils and the Panel feels that remunerating such an overtly “political” post is hard to justify to the public. Moreover, it does not meet the test of significant additional responsibility.
54. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Labour Group Chief Whip be discontinued and the SRAs payable to the Leader of the Opposition and the Chairmen of Scrutiny should be set at the level they were paid prior to their SRAs being discounted to pay for the SRA of the Labour Group Chief Whip, namely £3,510 for the Chairmen of Scrutiny and £5,850 for the Leader of the Majority or Main Opposition Group.**

³ It is noted that the Independent Group Spokesperson on Planning chooses not to receive their SRA.

55. As per previous comments on SRAs the levels and differentials will need to be looked at it when the Panel undertakes its next fundamental review of allowances.

Distinguishing between Opposition Group Leaders

56. Currently, the allowances scheme does not distinguish between the SRAs paid to the Leaders of the Opposition Groups, each receive an SRA of £3,218 for leading a group of 13 and 2 members respectively. It is common practice to distinguish between the Leader of the Majority Opposition Group and Minority Opposition Group Leaders. By definition the size of the role of the Leader of the Majority Opposition Group should be larger as there is a greater expectation to provide critical challenge to the controlling administration.
57. Consequently, the Panel has decided to distinguish between the roles of Majority and Minority Group Leaders. The SRA for the Leader of the Majority Opposition Group should be set at £5,850 (see above) while the SRA for the Leader of the Minority Opposition Group[s] on a par with the SRA paid to the Chair of the Audit Committee, which is £1,170.
58. **The recommended SRA for the Leader of the Minority Opposition Group is £1,170.**
59. The 1989 Local Government and Housing Act allows for a party group on Council to be formed with a minimum of 2 members however the Panel felt this legal requirement might not meet the significant responsibility test. At present it is not a major issue as the Leader of the Independent Group chooses not to receive the applicable SRA.
60. The Panel flags up that when it undertakes its next full review of allowances for Swale Borough Council that it will review the validity of recommending that the SRA for any Leader of a Minority Opposition Group should only apply when a threshold is reached, e.g., 10% of the Council membership. This additional qualifying criteria is applicable for instance in Dartford Borough Council.

Other Allowances – The Co-optees’ Allowances

61. Swale Borough Council makes available a Co-optees’ Allowance of £10 per meeting that is designed to cover travel and subsistence costs. There are currently only two Parish Councils co-optees on the advisory Standards Committees and they do not claim this allowance. There was no evidence received to indicate this allowance needed revising
62. **The Panel recommends that Co-optees’ Allowance of £10 per meeting is unchanged, subject to future indexation where applicable.**

The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)

63. Currently, Swale Borough Council does not make available the Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA) despite the recommendation of the Panel in the 2009 review that it should be made available. A view that remains the dominant one as indicated in the questionnaire responses which shows 72% of respondents do not support the payment of this allowance
64. The *Local Government Act 2000* explicitly clarifies the right of local authorities to pay a Dependants' Carers' Allowance, which Members can claim to assist them with the costs for care for their dependants while undertaking approved Council duties. It is an allowance explicitly designed to enable a wider range of candidates to stand for and remain on Council.
65. Benchmarking shows that out of the 12 Kent district councils 10 of them make the DCA available. Experience shows that this allowance is not claimed very often but is an important tool in an allowances scheme to reduce financial barriers to Council membership for those with caring responsibilities. This would be particularly the case in the context where Swale has a low paying scheme of allowances generally.
66. The Panel supports the availability of the DCA but it should not be an opened ended allowance and should be robust. Consequently, **the Panel recommends that the Council should adopt a DCA that is a contribution to the cost of care for members dependants while they are undertaking approved duties and the following conditions should apply and inserted into the scheme of allowances:**

This Allowance is divided into two parts; namely child care and elderly/disabled care. In respect of child care, this Allowance is available to Members undertaking approved duties only and who are eligible at the rate of the hourly minimum wage applicable to the age of the carer and supported by a receipt for up to a maximum of 10 hours per week that can include travel time for undertaking approved duties. To claim this a Member will need to:

- Register that they have a dependent child living with them under the age of 15.
- Sign a statement which declares that the childcare has been provided by a babysitter and not paid to a member of the immediate family or household. This statement will be lodged with the Standards Committee.

With regard to the elderly and/or disabled care element of the Allowance, this is to be paid at a maximum rate based on the chargeable hourly rate by the Kent County Council Social Services Department for provision of a Home Care Assistant and also supported by receipts.

To claim this, a Member will need to:

- Register that they have an elderly/disabled person living with them.

- Sign a statement which declares that the care has been provided by a carer and not paid to a member of the immediate family or household. This statement will be lodged with the Standards Committee.

NB: In respect of these Allowances, a Member cannot claim for the employment of multiple carers for multiple dependants.

Members and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

67. The one binding recommendation the Panel can make is in relation to membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). If the Panel does not recommend elected members should be able to join the LGPS then the Council cannot overturn that recommendation. However, if the Panel does provide a positive recommendation it is for the Council to decide whether to accept the recommendation and if so it is then up to individual elected Members to decide whether to join, if they are eligible.
68. Where a Panel recommends for members to be eligible to join the LGPS and a Council subsequently adopts the recommendation experience shows that not many elected members chose to join it. However, the Panel supports the principle of letting the Council decide, taking into account issues of public perception and personal choice, as it supports one of the Panel's guiding principles – namely seeking to reduce a financial barrier to being an elected Member. Moreover, since the passage of the Pension Act 2011 it is government policy for all employers by 2018 at the latest to automatically enrol their employees in a workplace pension scheme. It is recognised that elected Members are not employees. Nor is it envisaged that a Member would be making sufficient pension contributions on their remuneration or be an elected Member long enough to make the future pension payable sufficient to live on but it should compensate for loss of earnings and impact on professional pensions that a Member in employment would incur through being on the Council.
69. In line with its guiding principle to reduce barriers to public service the **Panel recommends that the Council should be able to decide on whether all elected Members of Swale Borough Council should be eligible to join the LGPS, applied to both their Basic Allowance and SRAs.**

The Conference Allowance

70. The allowances scheme currently provides for conference allowance of £38.06 per day. However, there is no express authority under the 2003 Members' Allowance to pay this allowance therefore **the Panel recommends that the Conference Allowance is discontinued and that Councillors claim any direct expenses incurred for attendance at conferences through the subsistence allowance.**

Travel and Subsistence Allowances – Approved Duties

71. The Panel received no evidence that the current list of approved duties needed revisiting **and recommends that the current list of approved duties is maintained.**

Subsistence Allowances

72. Presently, Members are entitled to claim subsistence allowances on the production of receipts based on “reasonable” costs. Up until 2003 subsistence allowances were capped by the Secretary of State but as it now a discretionary allowance there are no longer any restrictions imposed by the government. However, it is good practice for an allowances scheme to put in place and publish maximum rates claimable, it ensures transparency, clarity and leaves no room for ambiguity.
73. The key to achieving these criteria is to link the Subsistence Allowances to an external and understandable point of reference. The South East Employees publish guidance that is based on the previous methods of calculation which fit the bill.
74. **The Panel recommends that the maximum Subsistence Allowances for which Members can claim for undertaking approved duties should be based and indexed to the guidance published by the South East Employers. Allowances claims should be for ‘actuals’. For 2012/13 these rates are as follows:**

Table 2: Recommended Maximum Subsistence Rates (SEE Guidance)

Allowance	Rates (£)	Condition
Breakfast	£7.36	For an absence of more than 4 hours, or where the authority permits a lesser period, from usual residence including the period before 11am
Lunch	£10.17	For an absence of more than 4 hours, or where the authority permits a lesser period, from usual residence including the period between 12noon and 2pm
Tea	£4.03	For an absence of more than 4 hours, or where the authority permits a lesser period, from usual residence including the period between 3pm and 6pm
Evening Meal	£15.00	For an absence of more than 4 hours, or where the authority permits a lesser period, from usual residence ending after 7pm

75. **Where a Member is absent from usual residence for more than 12 hours the Subsistence Allowances claimable should be aggregated up to a maximum of £36.53 providing flexibility for a Member to claim**

reimbursement of subsistence as circumstances dictate. All claims should be accompanied by receipts to reflect the actual expenses incurred.

76. In addition and in accordance with the rates published by the South East Employers where a Member is required to be absent for more than 12 hours from their usual place of **residence they should be able to claim £5.73 for out of pocket expenses. This allowance should not require receipts.**
77. As Members are required to book overnight accommodation through Democratic Services there is less need for recommendations for overnight subsistence. However, **the Panel further recommends that where a Member is required to stay overnight and subsistence is paid directly by the Council that the maximum rates outlined above do not apply – the Council will act as the guardian of the public purse in these cases.**
78. **The Panel also recommends that the published Members' Allowances Scheme should include the current arrangements for when Members are required to stay overnight while undertaking approved duties, namely to book through Democratic Services or if that is impracticable that they are able to claim for reimbursement for an overnight stay at a maximum of £150.71 per night inclusive of breakfast, which is based on guidance published by the South East Employers.**

Travel Allowances - Mileage Rates

79. The current mileage rates for which Members can claim for travelling to approved duties is not based on any current or verifiable benchmark. The questionnaire returns indicated that the 81% of the respondents wanted no change to the current travel and subsistence scheme. However, the Panel takes the view that the appropriate mileage allowances rates should be those set by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on the following grounds:
- They are the rates recommended by the Panel in 2009
 - They are the rates that are applicable to Officers
 - They are the rates that are most commonly used in the public sector
 - They do not incur any tax or national insurance liability on behalf of the claimants
 - They are "greener" in that they do not reward those with larger car engines
 - They are based on an external point of reference
 - They are the rates most commonly used in the 12 Kent district councils (in at least 9 out of the 12)
 - The town and parish councils within the Borough that pay a mileage allowance have also chosen to base the mileage rates on HMRC rates
80. **The Panel recommends that the mileage allowances are based HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAP) rates and the**

applicable rates are inserted into the Members' Allowances Scheme in an appropriate appendix/annex.

81. The current HMRC mileage rates payable are laid out below:

Table 3: HMRC AMAP Rates 2012/13

Vehicle Type	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Cars and vans	45p	25p
Motor cycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p
Passenger Supplement Rate	5p per passenger	5p per passenger

The Information Technology (IT) Allowance

82. Currently Members receive an annual payment at the beginning of each municipal year of £100 to “cover additional costs incurred by the use of IT such as line rental/connection costs, paper and ink.” Unusually, this is the only IT support Members receive. In most other councils Members receive direct provision of necessary IT and other monetary support to contribute to the costs of council-related telephone calls, etc. that more closely reflects real rather than notional costs. For instance, in Ashford Members receive a standard PC/laptop and printer; while in Shepway Members receive £231 per year.
83. While the majority of the questionnaire respondents felt that there should be no change to the current level of the IT Allowance the 8 written comments all expressed the view that the current level of £100 per year bore no relationship to actual costs incurred by Members. In 2009 the Panel recommended that the IT Allowance be increased to £200 per year, which was rejected by the Council.
84. It is essential for Members to be able to be contactable by their constituents by modern electronic means and in turn be able to access agendas, papers and other Council information. Indeed there is a duty to promote “e-governance.” The current level of £100 is not based on any identifiable metric and is particularly low considering that this is the total sum of IT support Members receive.
85. The Panel feels that the current level of £100 should be revised to more closely reflect actual IT costs incurred by Members – not necessarily to cover the whole amount but set at a more realistic contribution. Consequently, **the Panel recommends that the current IT Allowance should be discontinued and replaced by a Information Technology and Communications (ICT) Allowance payable at £15 per month. Moreover it should only be payable on the condition that a Member can be contactable via email on a swale.gov.uk account.**

Indexation

86. The current Swale Members' Allowances scheme does not contain any provision for indexation, despite previous recommendations of the Panel. This is unusual as most schemes contain some degree of indexation provision. It enables schemes to at least keep pace with inflation to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the index utilised and whether it is actually applied each year. The lack of indexation is one reason why the current level of allowances has remained more or less static for the past decade.
87. **The Panel recommends that the following indices are applied to the remuneration and allowances paid to Members of Swale Borough Council:**
- A. **Basic Allowance, SRAs, Co-optees Allowances and ICT Allowance:**
- Indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column 49) to be implemented from the start of the municipal year, rather than financial year, for which year it is applicable.
- B. **Mileage Allowance:**
- Mileage allowances rates should be indexed to the HMRC AMAP rates.
- C. **Subsistence Allowances:**
- The Subsistence Allowances should be indexed to the rates published each year in guidance issued by the South East Employers.
- D. **The Dependants' Carers' Allowance:**
- The maximum rates claimable should be indexed as follows:
 - Childcare: to the minimum wage applicable to the age of the carer
 - Other Dependants: to the hourly rate charged by Kent Social Services for a Home Care Assistant.
88. It is pointed out that if the Council was to adopt all or any of the indices recommended by the Panel that the Council is under no obligation to implement a particular index each year. It retains the right not to implement an index or if it so decides to implement an alternative index. However, if the principle of indexation has not been adopted by the Council then it cannot index any of its allowances and if any, even minor uplifts for inflation are sought by the Council then it must come back to the Panel for its advice. By having the principle of indexation in place it removes the requirement to seek advice from the Panel for a maximum period of 4 years, after which all Councils are required to seek fresh advice from their Panel on indexation.

89. For information purposes it is noted that the index recommended for the Basic Allowance, SRAs, Co-optees' Allowance and ICT Allowance (the annual percentage increase for local government staff) has actually been zero percent for the past three years.

Implementation

90. **The Panel recommends that the recommendations contained within this Report be implemented from the start of the 2013/14 annual meeting of the Council meeting, or a prior date as agreed by the Council.**

Town and Parish Councils within the Borough

91. The Panel is also the statutory remuneration Panel for the two town councils, 33 parish councils and one parish meeting within the Borough. The 2003 Regulations permit the town and parish councils and parish meeting to pay

- A Parish Basic Allowance
- A differential Chairman's Parish Basic Allowance
- Travel and Subsistence Allowances

92. These allowances can also be indexed.

Parish Basic Allowance and Chairman's Parish Basic Allowance

93. The town and parish councils and parish meeting were invited to make representations to the Panel but none were received. No town or parish councils or parish meeting have advised the Council that they pay the Parish Basic Allowance or Chairman's differential Parish Basic Allowance. However, lest a town or parish council or parish meeting wish to pay one in the next couple of years the Panel is making the same recommendation it made in 2011, namely:

- **Chairman's Parish Basic Allowance:** payable at a maximum of 10% of the Swale Borough Council current Basic Allowance, which equates to £334.
- **Parish Basic Allowance:** payable at a maximum of 5% of the Swale Borough Council current Basic Allowance, which equates to £167.

Parish Travel and Subsistence Allowances

94. A number of the town and parish councils do make available travel allowances and in the 2011 Report the Panel recommended that mileage rates should be based the same rates paid to Borough Members. Even

though the town and parish councils that pay mileage actually base it on HMRC rates as the Panel has made recommendations that alter the current mileage rates payable to Borough Members it is doing the same for town and parish council Members.

95. **The Panel recommends that the mileage rates payable by any of the town and parish councils and parish meeting within the Borough should be paid at HMRC AMAP rates.**
96. **Similarly, the Panel recommends that those town and parish councils and parish meeting which wish to pay subsistence allowances should pay them at maximum rates as set out in the guidance published by the South East Employers.**
97. Those parish and town councils and parish meeting that currently pay mileage rates and subsistence allowances will need to formally consider this recommendation as soon as practically possible, particularly for those paying mileage rates to ensure that the HMRC rates they currently pay can be updated to reflect recent up dating.
98. **The Panel recommends that the following indices are applied to any remuneration and allowances paid to Members of the town and parish councils and parish meeting within Swale Borough Council as follows:**
 - A. **Parish Basic Allowance and Chairman's Parish Basic Allowance:**
 - Indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column 49) to be implemented from the start of the municipal year, rather than financial year, for which year it is applicable.
 - B. **Mileage Allowance:**
 - Mileage allowances rates should be indexed to the HMRC AMAP rates.
 - C. **Subsistence Allowances:**
 - The Subsistence Allowances should be indexed to the rates published each year in guidance issued by the South East Employers.

Appendix One – Interviewees

Members:

Cllr A. Bowles:	Leader of Council & Conservative Group
Cllr R. Barnicott:	Chairman of Planning Committee (Conservative Member)
Cllr D. Dewar-Whalley:	Cabinet Member – Finance (Conservative Member)
Cllr A. Harrison:	Scrutiny Committee Chairman (Labour Member)
Cllr M. Henderson:	Liberal Democrat Member & Leader of the Independent (Minor Opposition) Group & Group Spokesperson on Planning Committee
Cllr D. Simmons:	Cabinet Member – Environment & Rural Issues (Conservative Member)
Cllr R. Truelove:	Leader of Labour (Main Opposition) Group
Cllr S. Worrall:	Labour Group Member
Cllr J. Wright:	Cabinet Member – Regeneration (Conservative Member)

Officers:

Abdool Kara:	Chief Executive
Mark Radford:	Corporate Services Director & Monitoring Officer
Jo Hammond:	Senior Democratic Services Officers

Appendix Two – Written information received and considered by the Panel

1. Panels' terms of reference
2. Consolidated statutory guidance on Members' Allowances, issued by Department for Communities and Local Government, May 2006
3. Member's Allowances (England) Regulations, 2003
4. Copy of Chair's presentation to Panel on reviewing allowances: issues to consider
5. Report from Swale Borough Council with following appendices
 - Appendix A: Swale Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme, 2012/13
 - Appendix B: Committee structure, membership, meetings data for Swale Borough Council
 - Appendix C: Copy of IRP Report from 2009, including appendices
 - Appendix D: Panel Report November 2011, including appendices
 - Appendix E: Collated analysis of questionnaire responses
 - Appendix F: Full copy of questionnaire responses
6. Copy of allowances schemes in other Kent district councils and summary of benchmarking analysis based on same sample
7. Parish Council Report 2010 by Panel
8. Guidance issued by South East Employers: Subsistence Allowances
9. Details of claims by Members for travel and subsistence

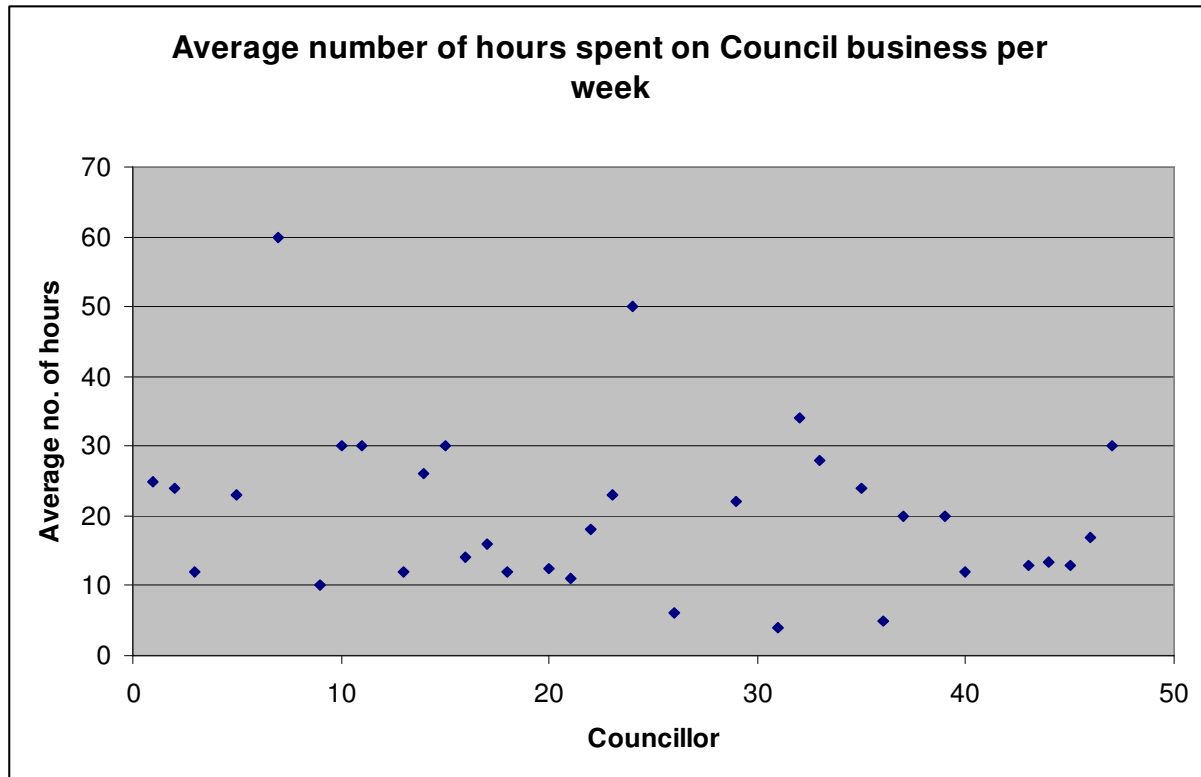
Appendix Three: SRAs Paid in Comparator Group of Councils: Kent District Councils 2012/13

Authority Name	Leader	Deputy Leader	Cabinet Member / Portfolio Holder	Deputy Cabinet Member	Chair Audit Committee	Planning Committee Chair	Planning Committee Spokesperson	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair	Majority Opposition Group Leader	Deputy Opposition Leader	General Group Leader SRA*	Opposition Group Chief Whip
Ashford BC	£14,040.52	£9,350.99	£7,020.26		£4,680.17	£5,616.21		£5,616.21			£220.12	
Canterbury City Council	£18,114.00	£6,342.00	£5,430.00		£906.00	£3,618.00		£4,539.00	£4,292.00	£1,160.00		
Dartford BC	£27,857.00	£16,714.00	£8,357.00	£4,178.00	£2,090.00	£5,014.00		£2,090.00	£8,357.00	£5,014.00		
Dover DC	£14,832.00	£7,416.00	£5,562.00			£3,708.00		£3,708.00		£1,854.00	£4,171.00 for 10+ Members, £232 for 5-9 Members	
Gravesham BC	£20,260.00	£3,447.00	£3,447.00		£3,447.00	£3,447.00		£3,447.00			£3,447.00	
Maidstone BC	£23,326.00		£11,663.00		£1,166.00	£5,831.00		£4,665.00			£11,663 (see below)	
Sevenoaks DC	£15,562.00		£7,781.00		£2,047.00	£3,673.00		£1,995.00			£1,507 + £65 per Member	
Shepway DC	£21,245.00	£9,611.00	£8,807.00		£1,388.00	£3,956.00		£3,956.00				
Swale BC	£11,700.00		£7,020.00	£3,510.00	£1,170.00	£3,510.00	£1,170	£3,218.00			£3,218.00	£3,218.00
Thanet DC	£18,082.00	£10,776.00	£7,990.00		£5,204.00	£5,204.00		£7,990.00			£5,204.00	
Tonbridge & Malling BC	£10,674.00		£8,067.00		£2,538.00	£5,076.00		£6,258.00			£1,950 + £105 per	
Tunbridge Wells BC	£16,750.00		£8,990.00		£1,980.00	£5,279.00		£5,279.00			£2,148.00 + £100 per Member	
Average	£17,705.21	£9,119.57	£7,511.19	£3,844.00	£2,419.65	£4,469.22		£4,396.77	£6,324.00	£2,676.00		
Maximum	£27,857.00	£16,714.00	£11,663.00	£4,178.00	£5,204.00	£5,831.00		£7,990.00	£8,357.00	£5,014.00		
Minimum	£10,674.00	£3,447.00	£3,447.00	£3,510.00	£906.00	£3,447.00		£1,995.00	£4,292.00	£1,160.00		

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APPENDIX FOUR: SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Question 1: How many hours on average do you spend each week on Council business?

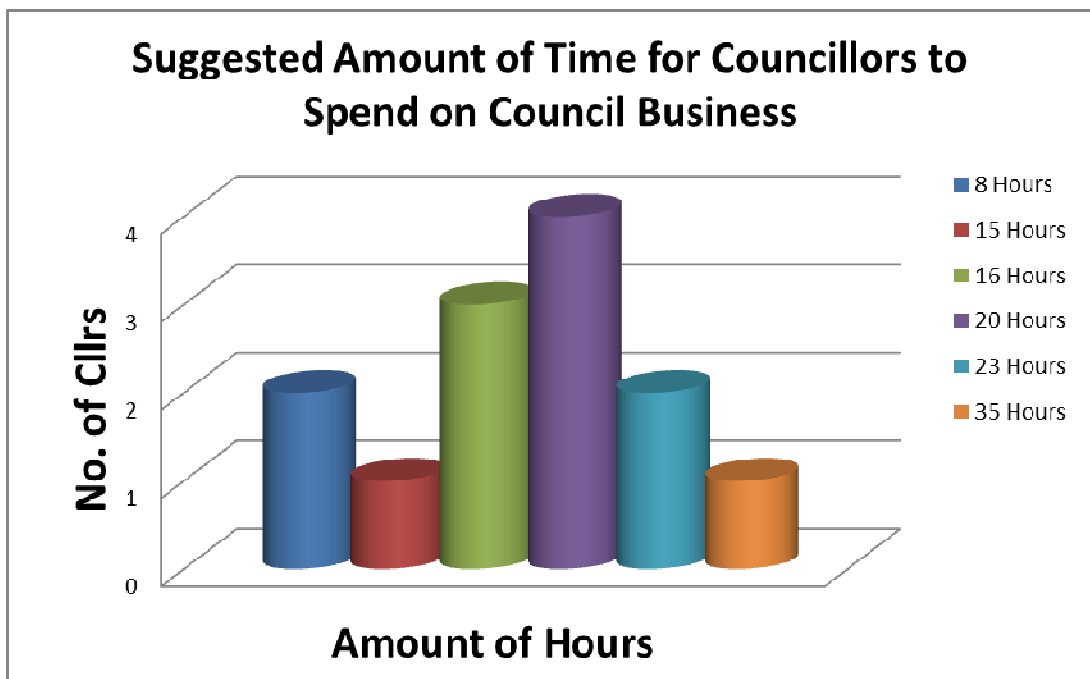


From the responses received, the average number of hours spent on Council business per week is 20.6 hours.

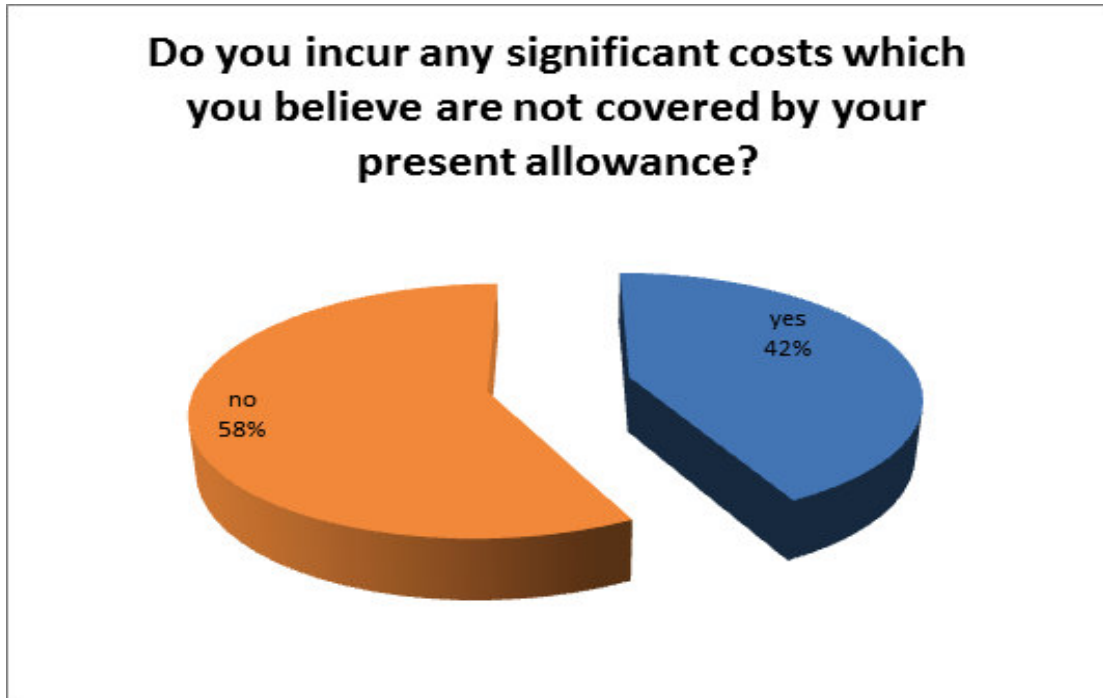
Question 3: The last review (2009) assessed the average number of hours for Councillors as 12 hours per week. Is this figure broadly right for the role of an average constituency Councillor?

14 respondents replied "No" 17 respondents replied "Yes" 3 non respondents

Of the 14 that replied "No", 13 suggested different hours as below:



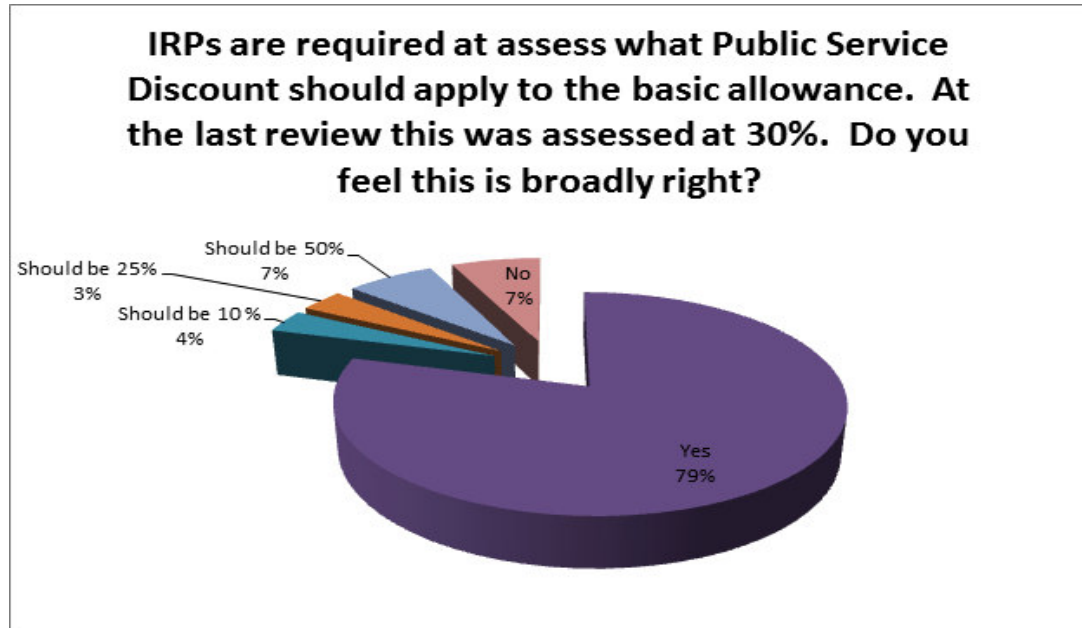
Question 4:



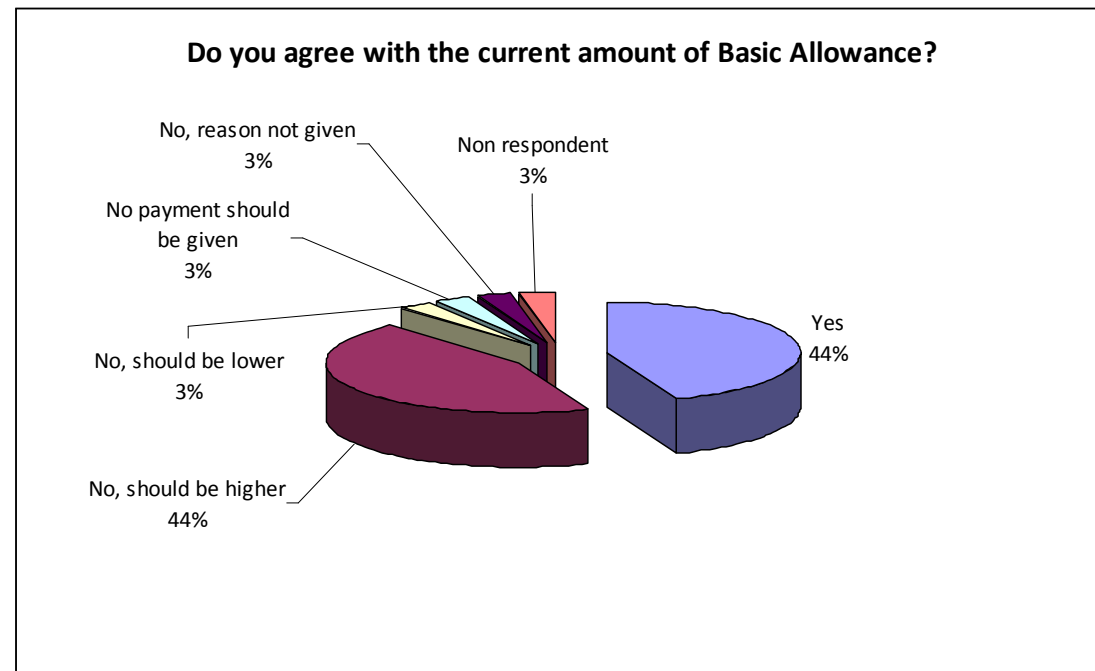
Comments relating to Question Four:

- ◆ Council work should be voluntary and only attendance allowance and mileage paid.
- ◆ Doesn't cover phone calls and interrupted meals.
- ◆ Basic allowance does not cover time spent on outside bodies where it is a council appointment
- ◆ Basic allowance does not cover travel costs, parish representation and site visits
- ◆ Basic allowance does not cover wear and tear on car attending meetings - petrol, new tyres, servicing etc.
- ◆ Basic allowance does not cover computer and office stationary.
- ◆ Basic allowance does not cover the cost of travel, phone calls, paper, ink.
- ◆ There should be no Basic Allowance payment - £10 per month for phone and mail. It is done for honour not personal greed.
- ◆ Basic allowance does not cover telephone calls to other mobile networks which are very expensive and heat, power and lighting of office at home.
- ◆ Basic allowance does not cover printing of leaflets, flyers and campaign literature.

Question 5:



Question 6:

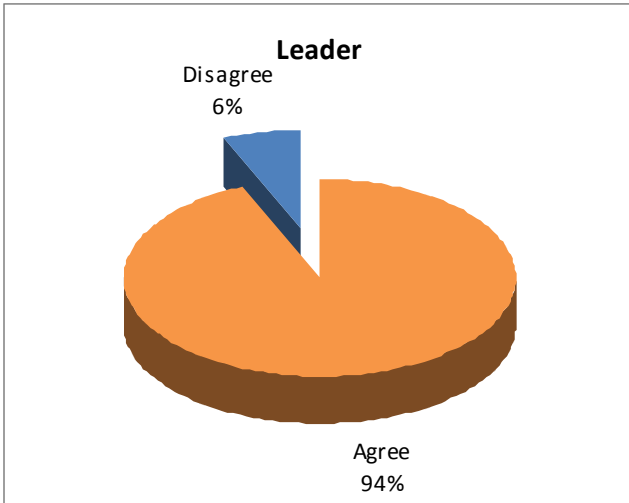


Comments relating to Question Six:

- ◆ Should be increased to £7,500 in line with an NHS non-executive
- ◆ Should be increased to £5,800
- ◆ Should be increased to £4,000 x 3
- ◆ Should be increased to £4,500 x 4
- ◆ Should be increased to £5,000 x 2
- ◆ Should be increased to £6,500

Question 7. Do you agree or disagree with the following Special Responsibility Allowances?

4 respondents did not answer this question.

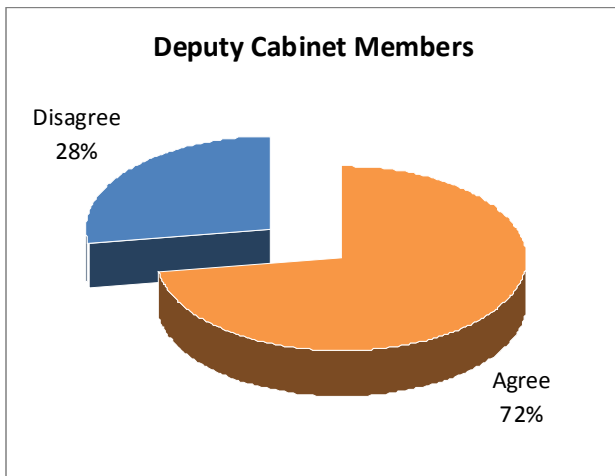
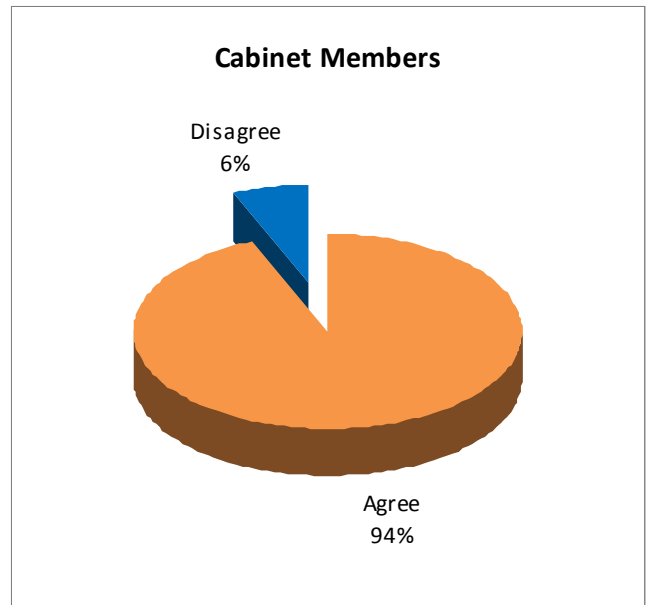


(i) Leader of the Council

- ◆ If anything, I would suggest that this is too low
- ◆ No SRA should be paid to this post
- ◆ Should be increased to £23,400
- ◆ Should be higher.
- ◆ Should be higher
- ◆ Increase to £20,000
- ◆ Should be higher for the hours worked.

(ii) Cabinet Members

- ◆ Certain positions are questionable. I would like to see the deletion of the Cabinet position for Community Safety and Health. This is a surplus appointment and does not actively contribute to the Council. Any responsibilities should be shared between remaining Councillors.
- ◆ No SRA should be paid to this post
- ◆ Should be 70% of £23,400 (16,380)
- ◆ Reduce to 50% of Leader's allowance
- ◆ Should be higher
- ◆ As a Cabinet Member requiring to be available for so many hours no employer would take me on as my time is so limited. The allowance does not secure me or my family a pension in later life and will have to rely on benefits or charity.
- ◆ Increase to £12,000
- ◆ Should be 50% of Leader's allowance
- ◆ Should be higher for the hours worked.

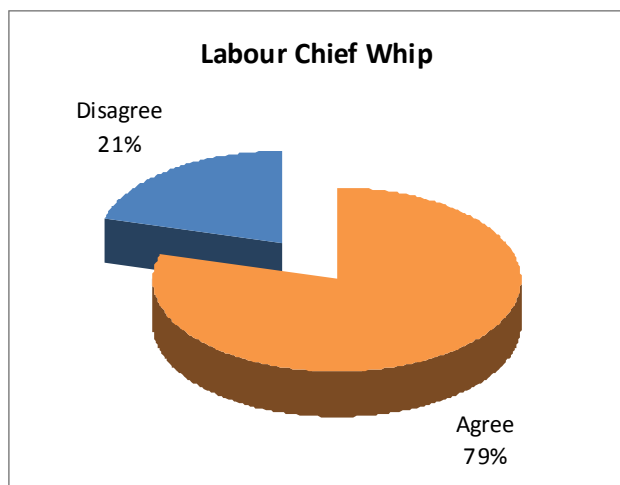
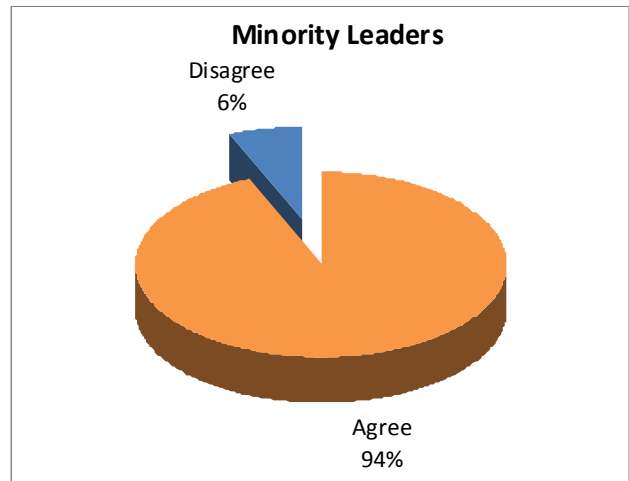


(iii) Deputy Cabinet Members (nb: there no deputy appointments at the current time)

- ◆ This is an unnecessary expense.
- ◆ No SRA should be paid to this post
- ◆ Reduce to 10% of Leader's allowance
- ◆ This is a non-job
- ◆ Do not agree with these posts

(iv) Minority Leaders

- ◆ No SRA should be paid to this post
- ◆ The major minority leader's SRA should be doubled.
- ◆ Increase to £10,000
- ◆ Should be 30% of Leader's allowance.

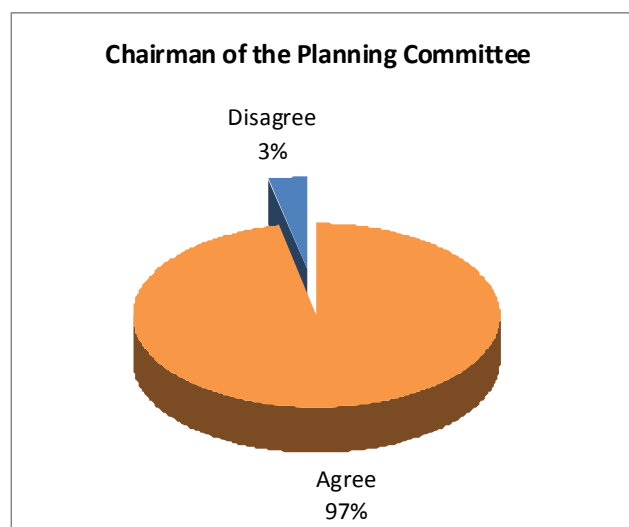


(v) Labour Chief Whip

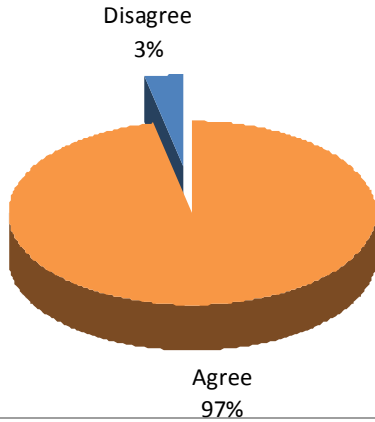
- ◆ Not appropriate.
- ◆ No SRA should be paid to this post
- ◆ All party whips should be excluded
- ◆ This is a party job - should not be paid
- ◆ Do not agree with this payment
- ◆ Increase to £6,000

(vi) Chairman of Planning committee

- ◆ I feel this should be increased but not sure what to.
- ◆ This figure is far too low and does not represent the responsibilities.
- ◆ This should be increased to £8,000
- ◆ Should be 70% of £23,400 (16,380)
- ◆ Increase to 40% of Leader's allowance
- ◆ Should be higher - 40% of Leader's allowance
- ◆ The amount of work needed by the Planning Chairman is far in excess of Scrutiny, the Planning Chairman's allowance should be increased to reflect this.
- ◆ Should be higher than scrutiny chairs as there is more work and more responsibilities
- ◆ Increase to £6,000



Chairman of the O&S Committees



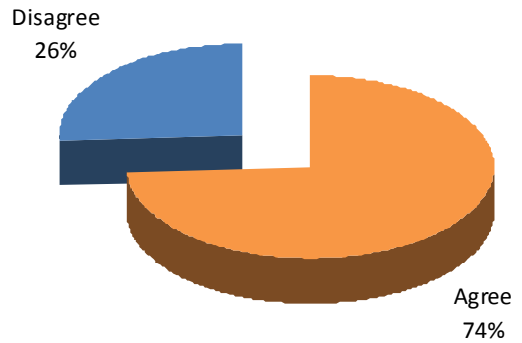
(vii) Chairman of the Scrutiny and Policy Overview Committees

- ◆ This should be increased to £4,000
- ◆ Reduce to 25% of Leader's allowance
- ◆ Should be reduced.
- ◆ Increase to £6,000
- ◆ Should be 30% of Leader's allowance.
- ◆ Too high as a proportion of the Leader's allowance, should be reduced.

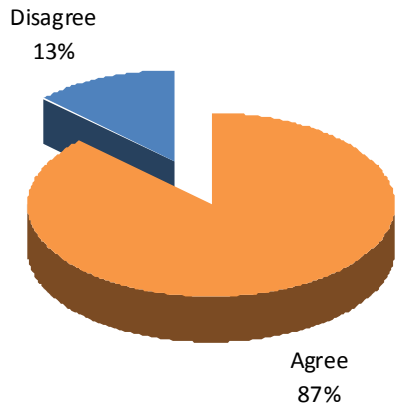
(viii) Planning Committee Spokespeople

- ◆ I am unclear as to their responsibilities?
- ◆ This should be increased to £2,000
- ◆ An irrelevant post
- ◆ Should be reduced.
- ◆ Should be increased to 20% of Leader's allowance

Planning Committee Spokespeople



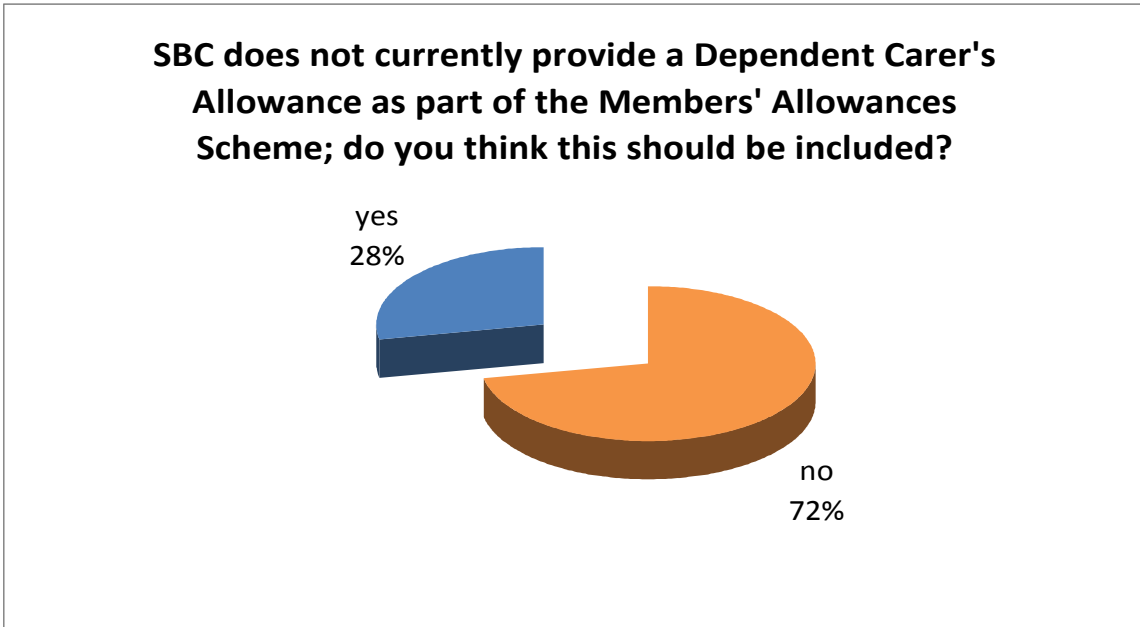
Chairman of the Audit Committee



(ix) Chairman of the Audit Committee

- ◆ This should be increased to £2,000
- ◆ Should be 60% of £23,400 (14,040)
- ◆ Increase to £2,500
- ◆ Should be increased to 20% of Leader's allowance

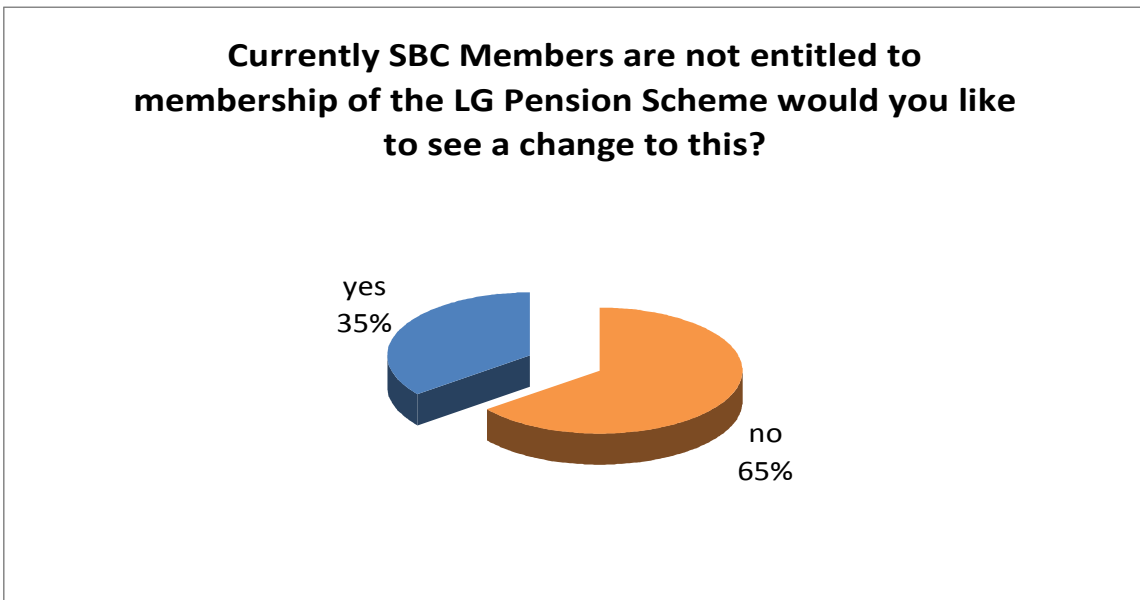
Question 8



Comments relating to the Carer's Allowance:

Should introduce a babysitting or carer's allowance of £20 per meeting.
Should cover reimbursement for loss of earnings/cost of cover
Should be 10% of basic allowance

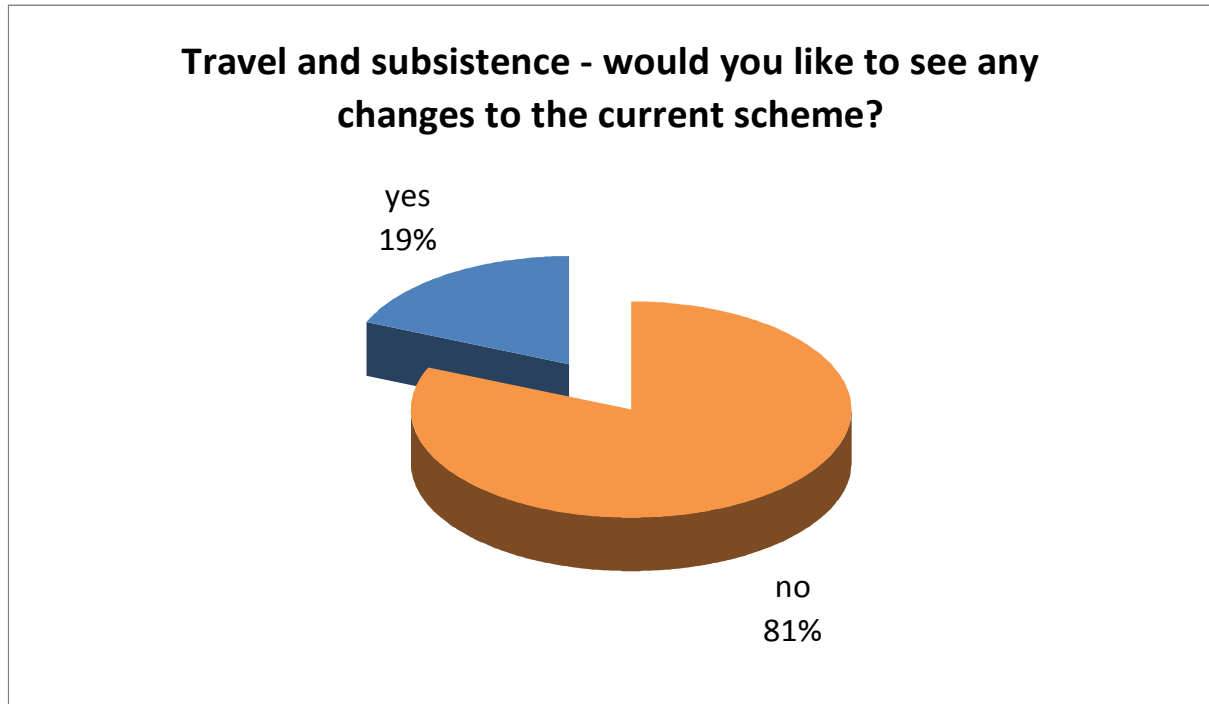
Question 9



Comments relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme:

I would like to see consideration given to Councillors – perhaps a long service financial award.
All former service either broken or unbroken should contribute

Question 10



Comments relating to Travel and Subsistence:

Travel costs associated with ward issues are significant additional costs not adequately covered by the basic allowance.

Councillors should receive 45p per mile to equate with the staff and HMRC allowance there is no justification for paying Cllrs more. BUT all reasonable car use mileage should be paid - the scheme should include ward work, general visits to Swale House for ward work, visits to KCC.

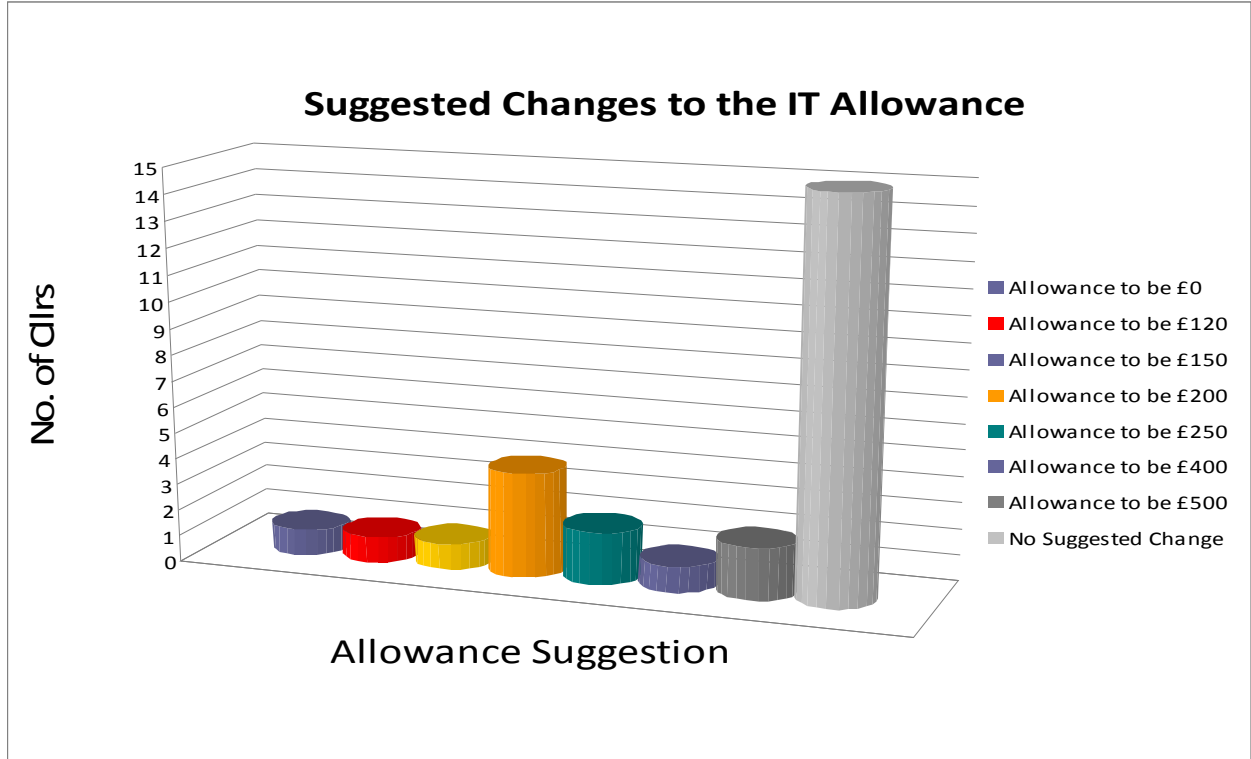
If mileage was reduced it could mean that some Wards would not be represented by the right candidates as travel costs would be too much of a drain on their resources.

Would like to see a slight increase in mileage.

Mileage should be increased.

Mileage should match the HMRC amounts.

Question 11



Comments relating to the IT Allowance:

This is a token payment. I have an annual cost (associated with Council work) of nearer £600.

Printing, ink and paper costs several hundred pounds per annum.

Cartridges and paper are significant additional costs.

Internet connection, paper, ink and stationery are significant additional costs.

I pay approx £450 a year for computer, paper, broadband and mobile phone for Council business.

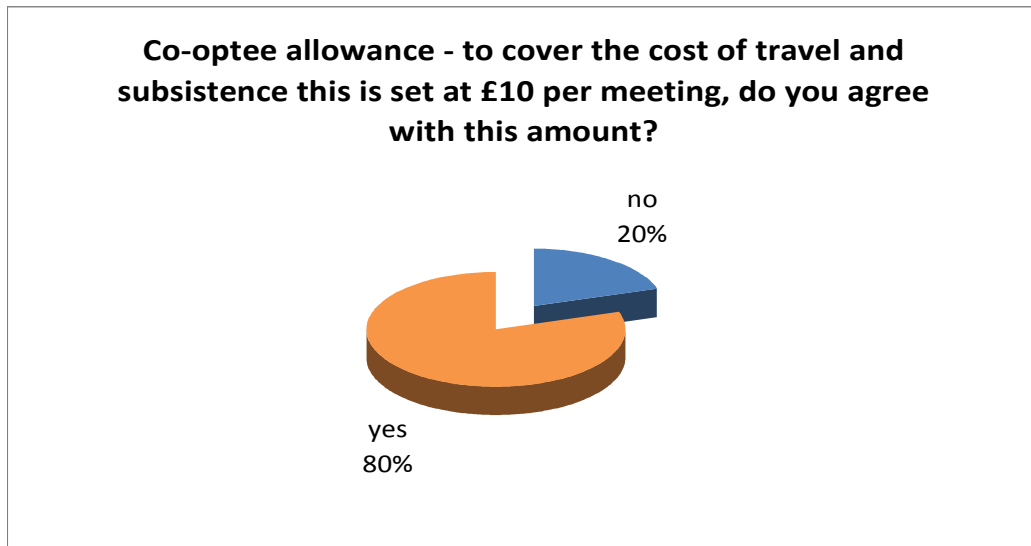
Printer ink is expensive as is upgrading software etc.

The cost of IT expenses except connection costs have increased substantially with e-mail being the main means of communication these days. Cllrs have so much more printing to do and the current amount is not sufficient to cover costs.

Does not cover the cost of phone and internet.

Increase to £500 to cover headed stationery, flyers etc.

Question 12



Comments relating to the Co-optee Allowance:

Payments should be made up to £10 upon travel receipts, not a set amount per meeting.
Should reflect what has been spent by the co-optee, not a set amount.
Mileage or train should only be paid
Pay full return cost of travel and subsistence on receipts.
Should be based on mileage.

General Comments:

Allowances etc. need to be benchmarked across the sector with more account of complexity and difficulty, at present very inadequate.

I spend a lot of money on community newsletters which I regard as a proper use of the Basic Allowance.
The majority group should appoint a whip with responsibility to motivate backbenchers.

The Leader, Cabinet Members and other Members with additional responsibilities need a living wage for the time and effort in recompense. They have many meetings during the working week unlike other Members whose meetings are during the evening. The roles have to reflect true cost without any discount applied if the Panel feel they would like to see a cross section of the public. Otherwise it is just retired Members and those with independent means that can afford to do those jobs. I have known in my time good people who just cannot afford to take on those responsibilities and this is discrimination in a bad way. I personally have to employ someone on more money per hour to do my work within my business then I get in recompense from the Council, as an employer I would not employ someone who had ambitions in politics.