



**The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel
appointed to review the allowances paid to Councillors
of Swale Borough Council**



March 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"), as amended, require all local authorities to appoint an independent remuneration panel (IRP) to advise on the terms and conditions of their scheme of councillors' allowances.
- 1.2 Swale Borough Council formally appointed the following persons to undertake this process and make recommendations on its future scheme.

Chris Webb- Local Resident and Former Local Government Officer
Lionel Robbins - Local Resident
Mark Palmer - Development Director, South East Employers (Chair)

- 1.3 Our terms of reference were in accordance with the requirements of the 2003 Regulations, together with "Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances" issued jointly by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inland Revenue (July 2003). Those requirements are to make recommendations to the Council as to:

- (a) the amount of basic allowance to be payable to all councillors.
- (b) the level of allowances and whether allowances should be payable for:
 - (i) special responsibility allowances.
 - (ii) travelling and subsistence allowance.
 - (iii) dependants' carers' allowance.and the amount of such allowances.
- (c) whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and if so which index and how long that index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years before its application is reviewed.

- 1.4 We have also made a recommendation in respect of parental leave for councillors.

2. CURRENT SCHEME

- 2.1 The last full review of councillors' allowances was undertaken by Swale Borough Council in September 2016. The scheme of allowances was brought into effect in May 2017.
- 2.2 The Scheme currently provides that all councillors are each entitled to a total basic allowance of **£5,217.61** per annum. In addition, some councillors receive special responsibility allowances for undertaking additional duties.
- 2.3 Councillors may also claim the cost of travel and subsistence expenses and for expenditure on the care of children or dependants whilst on approved duties.

3. PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING OUR REVIEW

The Public Service Principle

- 3.1 This is the principle that an important part of being a councillor is the desire to serve the public and therefore, not all of what a councillor does should be remunerated. Part of a councillor's time should be given voluntarily. The consolidated guidance notes the

importance of this principle when arriving at the recommended basic allowance.¹ Moreover, we found that a public service concept or ethos was articulated and supported by all of the councillors we interviewed and in the responses to the questionnaire completed by councillors as part of our review.

- 3.2 We noted that the principle of public service had been recognised in the previous IRP review in Swale BC and was clearly quantified at 40%. To provide transparency and increase an understanding of the Panel's work, we will continue to recommend the application of an explicit Public Service Discount (or PSD). Such a PSD is applied to the time input necessary to fulfil the role of a councillor.
- 3.3 Further explanation of the PSD to be applied is given below in section 4.

The Fair Remuneration Principle

- 3.4 Alongside the belief that the role of the elected Councillor should, in part, be viewed as unpaid voluntary service, we advocate a principle of fair remuneration. The Panel in 2020 subscribes to the view promoted by the independent Councillors' Commission:

Remuneration should not be an incentive for service as a councillor. Nor should lack of remuneration be a barrier. The basic allowance should encourage people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills to serve as local councillors. Those who participate in and contribute to the democratic process should not suffer unreasonable financial disadvantage as a result of doing so.²

- 3.5 We are keen to ensure that our recommended scheme of allowances provides reasonable financial compensation for councillors. Equally, the scheme should be fair, transparent, logical, simple, and seen as such.
- 3.6 Hence, we continue to acknowledge that:
- (i) allowances should apply to roles within the Council, not individual councillors.
 - (ii) allowances should represent reasonable *compensation* to councillors for expenses they incur and time they commit in relation to their role, not *payment* for their work; and
 - (iii) special responsibility allowances are used to recognise the *significant* additional responsibilities which attach to some roles, not merely the extra time required.
- 3.7 In making our recommendations, we have therefore sought to maintain a balance between:
- (i) the voluntary quality of a councillor's role.
 - (ii) the need for appropriate financial recognition for the expenses incurred and time spent by councillors in fulfilling their roles; and

¹ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government, and Inland Revenue, *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraph 68.

² Rodney Brooke and Declan Hall, *Members' Remuneration: Models, Issues, Incentives and Barriers*. London: Communities and Local Government, 2007, p.3.

- (iii) the overall need to ensure that the scheme of allowances is neither an incentive nor a barrier to service as a councillor in Swale.

3.8 The Panel will also ensure that the scheme of allowances is understandable in the way it is calculated, this includes ensuring the bandings and differentials of the allowances are as transparent as possible.

3.9 In making our recommendations, we wish to emphasise that any possible negative impact they may have is not intended and should not be interpreted as a reflection on any individual councillor's performance in the role.

4. CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Basic Allowance

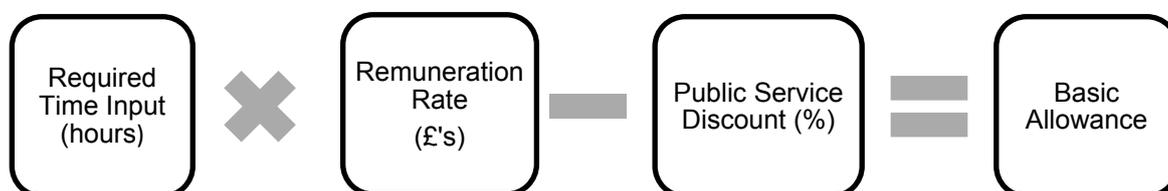
4.1 A Council's scheme of allowances must include provision for a basic allowance, payable at an equal flat rate to all councillors. The guidance on arriving at the basic allowance states, "Having established what local councillors do, and the hours which are devoted to these tasks the local authorities will need to take a view on the rate at which, and the number of hours for which, councillors ought to be remunerated."³

4.2 In addition to the regular cycles of Council and committee meetings, several working groups involving councillors may also operate. Many councillors are also appointed by the Council to several external organisations.

4.3 We recognise that councillors are responsible to their electorate as:

- Representatives of a ward.
- Community leaders.
- Decision makers for the whole Council area.
- Policy makers for future activities of the Council.
- Scrutineers and auditors of the work of the Council; and
- Regulators of planning, licensing and other matters required by Government.

4.4 The guidance identifies the issues and factors an IRP should have regard to when making a scheme of allowances.⁴ For the basic allowance we considered three variables in our calculation: the time required to execute the role effectively; the public service discount; and the rate for remuneration.



4.5 Each of the variables is explained below.

Required Time Input

4.6 We ascertained the average number of hours necessary per week to undertake the role of a councillor (with no special responsibilities) from questionnaires and interviews

³ paragraph 67.

⁴ paragraphs 66-81.

with councillors and through reference to the relevant Councillor information. In addition, we considered information about the number, range, and frequency of committee meetings.⁵

- 4.7 Discounting attendance at political meetings (which we judged to be centred upon internal political management), we find that the average time commitment required to execute the role of a councillor with no special responsibilities is 12 hours per week.

Public Service Discount (PSD)

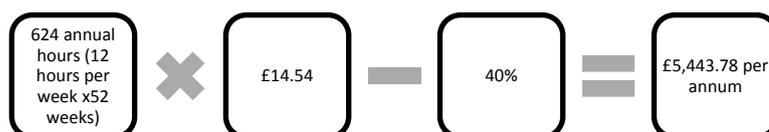
- 4.8 From the information analysed, we found councillors espoused a high sense of public duty. Given the weight of evidence presented to us concerning, among other factors, the levels of responsibility, the varied nature of the role, the need for learning and development, and the increasing accessibility and expectations of the public, we continue to recommend a Public Service Discount of 40 per cent to the calculation of the basic allowance. This percentage sits within the higher range of PSDs applied to basic allowances by councils in the south east.

Remuneration Rate

- 4.9 After establishing the expected time input to be remunerated, we considered a remuneration rate and came to a judgement about the rate at which the councillors ought to be remunerated for the work they do.
- 4.10 To help identify an hourly rate for calculating allowances, we utilised relevant statistics about the local labour market published by the Office for National Statistics. We selected the average (median), full-time gross⁶ wage per hour by place of residence for the Swale Local Authority area. The latest available figure is £14.54.⁷

Calculating the basic allowance

- 4.11 After determining the amount of time required each week to fulfil the role (12 hours), the level of PSD to be applied (40%) and the hourly rate to be used (£14.54), we calculated the basic allowance as follows:



- 4.12 The gross Basic Allowance before the PSD is applied is **£9072.96**. Following the application of the PSD this leads to a basic allowance of **£5,443.78** per annum. This is then rounded to **£5,444**.
- 4.13 This amount is intended to recognise the overall contribution made by councillors, including their work on council bodies, and ward work and attendance on external bodies.
- 4.14 We did also note the levels of basic allowance currently allocated by other Kent district councils (see table below).

Council	Kent District and Borough Councils: Basic Allowances (£)
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⁵ Summary responses to the questionnaires are available on request.
⁶ The basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, dependants' carers' allowance, and co-optees' are taxable as employment income.
⁷ The Nomis official labour market statistics: Hourly Pay – Gross median (£) For full-time employee jobs by place of residence: UK December 2019.

	2019 ⁸
Ashford Borough Council	4,768
Canterbury City Council	5,585
Dartford Borough Council	5,439
Dover District Council	3,980
Folkestone and Hythe District Council	5,433
Gravesham Borough Council	4,822
Maidstone Borough Council	5,065
Sevenoaks District Council	5,467
Swale Borough Council	5,217
Thanet District Council	4,570
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	5,000
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	5,500
Average	5,071

- 4.15 The Panel wished to ensure the level of basic allowance does not constitute a barrier to candidates from all sections of the community standing, or re-standing, for election as councillors. The Panel was of the view that the 2020 review has made recommendations to ensure that the recommended basic is in accordance with the principle of fair remuneration.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Basic Allowance payable to all members of Swale Borough Council be £5,444 per annum.

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

- 4.16 Special Responsibility Allowances are awarded to councillors who perform significant additional responsibilities over and above the roles and expenses covered by the basic allowance. These special responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the council's functions.
- 4.17 The 2003 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. They do require that an SRA be paid to at least one councillor who is not a member of the controlling group of the Council. As the guidance suggests, if the majority of councillors receive an SRA the local electorate may rightly question the justification for this.⁹
- 4.18 We conclude from the evidence we have considered that the following offices bear *significant* additional responsibilities:
- Leader of the Council
 - Members of the Cabinet
 - Deputy Cabinet Member
 - Minority Leader of the Largest Minority Party
 - Minority Leaders of Other Minority Parties
 - Scrutiny Committee Chair
 - Policy Development and Review Committee Chair
 - Planning Committee Chair
 - Audit Committee Chair
 - Licensing Committee Chair

One SRA Only Rule

⁸ Figures drawn from the South East Employers, Members' Allowances Survey 2019 (November 2019).

⁹ paragraph 72. Local Government Regulations 2003

- 4.19 To improve the transparency of the scheme of allowances, we feel that no councillor should be entitled to receive at any time more than **one SRA**.
- 4.20 The One SRA Only Rule avoids the possible anomaly of the Leader receiving a lower allowance than another councillor. If two or more allowances are applicable to a councillor, then the higher-valued allowance would be received. The One SRA Only Rule is common practice for many councils. Our calculations for the SRAs are based on this principle, which should be highlighted:

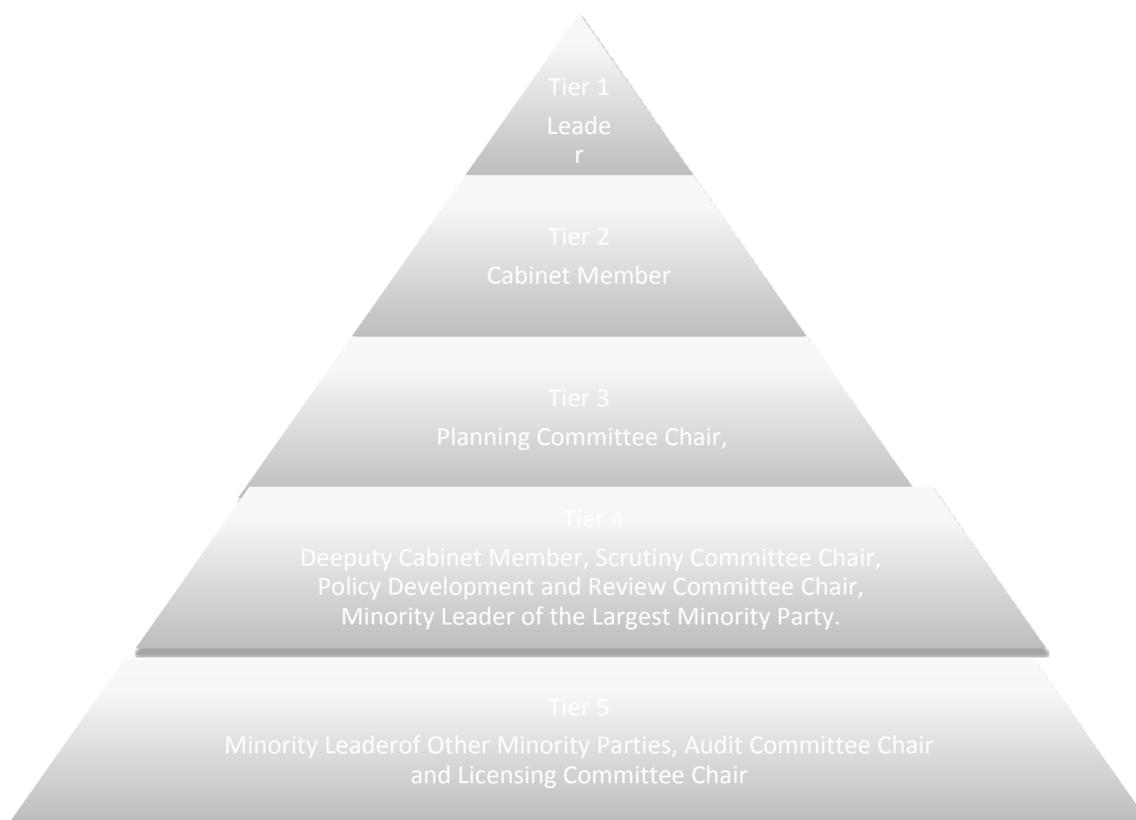
WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that that no councillor shall be entitled to receive at any time more than one Special Responsibility Allowance and that this One SRA Only Rule be adopted into the Scheme of Allowances.

The Maximum Number of SRAs Payable

- 4.21 In accordance with the 2003 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 72) the Panel is of the view that no more than 50% of Council Members (23 Members) should receive an SRA at any one time.

Calculating SRAs

- 4.22 The Panel agreed to apply a criteria and formula for calculating the Leader of the Council's SRA. This will be based on a multiplier of the Basic Allowance. The Leader is the role that carries the most significant additional responsibilities and is also the most time consuming.
- 4.23 We applied a multiplier of the basic allowance to establish the Leader's SRA. Other SRAs are then valued downwards as a percentage of the Leader's allowance. This approach has the advantage that, when future adjustments to the SRAs are required, changing the Leader's SRA will have a proportionate and easily calculable effect on the other SRAs within the scheme.
- 4.24 We grouped together in Tiers those roles that we judged to have a similar level of responsibility. The outline result of this approach is illustrated in a pyramid of responsibility:



- 4.25 The rationale for these five tiers of responsibility is discussed below.

Leader (Tier One)

- 4.26 The Council elects for a four-year term of office a Leader who is ultimately responsible for the discharge of all executive functions of the Council. The Leader is the principal policy maker and has personal authority to determine delegated powers to the rest of the Cabinet. The Leader is also responsible for the appointment (and dismissal) of members of the Cabinet and their respective areas of responsibility.
- 4.27 The multiplier we applied to calculate the Leader's SRA is 370%, or 3.7 x the basic allowance. If the recommended option of a basic allowance with a PSD of 40% is adopted, this results in a Leader's Allowance of £20,143.

WE RECOMMEND that the Leader of the Council continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 370% of the basic allowance, £20,143 per annum.

Cabinet Member (Tier Two)

- 4.28 The Cabinet Member has delegated decision-making responsibility and executive functions. From the information we gathered, we consider this additional responsibility should be reflected in the level of allowance. Therefore, we recommend the Cabinet Members SRA be set at 60% of the Leader's SRA. If our recommendations concerning the basic allowance and the Leader's SRA are adopted, this results in an allowance of £12,086.

WE RECOMMEND that the Cabinet Member receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 60% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance, £12,086.

Planning Committee Chair (Tier Three)

- 4.29. The Panel is of the view that the Planning Committee Chair performs a significant role that has a high impact across the Borough. The frequency of meetings also mean that the role is demanding of time and resource. The Panel therefore recommend an allowance of 35% of the Leaders Allowance, £7,050.

WE RECOMMEND that the allowance for the Planning Committee Chair should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 35% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance, £7,050

Deputy Cabinet Member, Minority Leader of the Largest Opposition Group, Scrutiny Committee Chair and Policy Development and Review Committee Chair (Tier Four)

- 4.30 The role of the Minority Leader of the Largest Minority Party is instrumental to ensure accountability of the leadership and requires a high level of organisation to manage a political group. The Panel therefore recommends that the role receive a Tier-Four allowance of £6,043, 30% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance
- 4.31. The Scrutiny Committee and the Policy Development and Review Committee do not have formal decision-making powers; but are influential and new Government Statutory Guidance (May 2019) has sought to increase the scope and influence of the scrutiny and review function. We have considered the requirements of the role of the

Chairs and consider that it is a significant statutory function. We therefore consider that the role of Scrutiny Committee Chair and Policy Development and Review Committee Chair should also receive a Tier- Four allowance of £6,043, 30% of the Leader's Allowance

4.32 The Deputy Cabinet Member role arose from the driver to align portfolio areas more closely with the Council's revised Corporate Plan priorities. Integral to this was the introduction of six Deputy Cabinet Members who would work alongside the six cabinet portfolio holders. The Deputy Cabinet Members have all the main accountabilities of a Cabinet Member with the exception of formal decision making that cannot be allowed under Regulation. The Deputy Cabinet Members are copied in on the same information as Cabinet Members to ensure consistency of briefing and invited to appropriate member/officer briefings. The skills and knowledge required for the role are significant and at a strategic level. The SRA for the Deputy Cabinet Member's role should continue to be 30% of the Leader's allowance, £6,043.

WE RECOMMEND that the allowance for Minority Leader of the Largest Minority Party, The Scrutiny Committee Chair, The Policy Development and Review Committee Chair and the Deputy Cabinet Member should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 30% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance, £6,043.

Minority Leader of Other Minority Parties, Audit Committee Chair and Licensing Committee Chair (Tier Five)

4.33 At present there are no Minority Leaders of Other Minority Parties due to the political composition of the Council. However, the Panel was mindful that this position could change before 2024. Therefore, the Panel was of the view that the Special Responsibility Allowance for Minority Leaders of Other Minority Parties should continue on the same basis as recommended in the previous review. The Panel therefore recommends that the Minority Leaders of Other Minority Parties should continue at 10% of the Leader's allowance, £2,014.

4.34 With regard to the roles of Audit Committee Chair and Licensing Committee Chair the Panel did not hear any evidence that would lead to a change in the Special Responsibility Allowance. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the Audit Committee Chair and the Licensing Committee Chair should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 10% of the Leader's allowance, £2,014.

WE RECOMMEND that the Minority Leaders of Other Minority Parties should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 10% of the Leader's allowance, £2,014. This will continue to require a political group of 10% of total Council membership, e.g. five plus councillors.

Also, the Audit Committee Chair and Licensing Committee Chair should continue to receive an allowance of 10% of the Leader's allowance, £2,014.

Area Committees

4.35 The Council is intending to create four Area Committees to enhance the quality of life and of Council services in the relevant area and to bring greater local insight to bear in council decision-making. Each committee will have a Chair and Vice Chair that will be voted for at the first meeting of the municipal year. At this stage the Panel is not aware of when the Area Committees will commence.

4.36 The Panel was of the view that before any recommendation is made with regards any

Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of the Area Committees the Area Committees should have been in operation for at least six- months and a role description for the Chair of the Committees should be produced. The Panel will following a discussion with the newly appointed Area Committee Chairs make a decision as to whether an SRA should be payable and if recommended the appropriate level of that Special Responsibility Allowance.

WE RECOMMEND that a decision on the applicability and level of a Special Responsibility Allowance for the four Chairs of the Area Committees should be Taken after at least six -months of operation of the Committees; and following a Discussion with the Chairs and a review of the role description for the Chairs of the Area Committees

Co-optees' Allowance

- 4.37 The Co-optees' Allowance was set to cover the cost of travel and subsistence for any co-optees appointed. This has been set at £10.00 per meeting. The Panel recommends that no change should be made to the allowance but that it should be indexed in line with the recommendation for the indexation of other allowances.

WE RECOMMEND that the Co-optees' allowance should continue at £10.00 per meeting and should be subject to indexation in line with other allowances.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowance

- 4.37 A scheme of allowances may provide for any councillor to be paid for travelling and subsistence undertaken in connection with any of the duties specified in Regulation 8 of the 2003 Regulations including any other duties approved by the Council. Similarly, such an allowance may also be paid to co-opted members of a committee or sub-committee of the Council in connection with any of those duties, provided that their expenses are not also being met by a third party.
- 4.38 The amounts payable to Members in respect of car and motorcycle mileage payments will be at the maximum rate per mile that can be paid tax-free as defined by HM Revenue and Customs.

WE RECOMMEND that travelling and subsistence allowance should continue to be payable to councillors in connection with any approved duties in accordance with the current scheme of allowances.

Dependants' Carers' Allowance

- 4.39 The current level of dependants' carers' allowance is £9.30 per hour for all caring responsibilities linked to the National Living Wage, determined by the Living Wage Foundation. The dependants' carers' allowance should ensure that potential candidates are not deterred from standing for election and should enable current councillors to continue despite any change in their personal circumstances. However, the current maximum remuneration for those with caring responsibilities could leave councillors out of pocket particularly if they are required to cover the cost of specialist care for adults or children with special needs.
- 4.40 The Panel therefore is of the view that the Dependants' Carers Allowance should be based on two rates, general childcare and specialist care. The Panel was of the view that specialist care provision should be reimbursed for the actual cost incurred by the

councillor upon production of receipts. Medical evidence that this type of care provision is required must also be provided and approved by an appropriate officer of the Council. Childcare rates should be at market rates upon production of receipts.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Dependants' Carers' Allowance should be based on two rates. Rate one for Childcare be at the market rate, reimbursed upon production of receipts, with no monthly maximum claim. Rate two should be for specialist care based at cost upon production of receipts and requiring medical evidence that this type of care is required.

WE ALSO RECOMMEND that no change should be made to the current eligibility conditions for receipt of this allowance, and that the duties for which this allowance is payable should be in accordance with the list of approved Councillor duties. *The Council should also actively promote the allowance to prospective and new councillors both before and following an election.*

Approved Councillor Duties

- 4.41 The Panel reviewed the recommended duties for which Dependants' Carers' Allowance and Travelling and Subsistence Allowance should be payable and have recommended that no changes be made.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the recommended duties for which Dependants' Carers' Allowance and Travelling and Subsistence Allowance should be payable should be in accordance with the Approved Councillor Duties.

Parental Leave

- 4.42 There is no uniform/ national policy to support councillors who require parental leave for maternity, paternity or adoption leave. According to the Fawcett Society (Does Local Government Work for Women, 2018) a *'lack of maternity, paternity provision or support' is a real barrier for women aged 18-44 to fulfil their role as a councillor*.
- 4.43 We are of the view that support should be provided for parental leave although we do not wish to stipulate an exact policy/procedure of another Council, the Panel is aware that the Local Government Association (LGA) has developed a model policy that has been adopted by a growing number of councils across the south east region.
- 4.44 There is no legal right to parental leave of any kind for people in elected public office. However, as a way of improving the diversity of Councillors the Panel would recommend that the Members' Allowance Scheme should be amended to include provisions that clarify that:
- a. All Councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full for a period up to six months in the case of absence from their councillor duties due to leave relate to maternity, paternity, adoption shared parental leave or sickness absence
 - b. Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full for a period of six months, in the case of absence

from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence

- c. Where for reasons connected with sickness, maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave or shared parental leave a councillor is unable to attend a meeting of the Council for a period of six months, a dispensation by Council can be sought in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972
- d. If a replacement to cover the period of absence under these provisions is appointed by Council or the Leader (or in the case of a party group position the party group) the replacement shall be entitled to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance pro rata for the period over which the cover is provided.

4.45 The Panel is conscious that these provisions do not replicate the LGA policy but that policy introduces elements that are more akin to employees which in terms of employment legislation does not include Councillors. We feel that our recommendations more simply and adequately reflect the situation relating to Councillors and clarify for them what they can expect. Borough Councillors however may wish to further develop the above recommendations so that they reflect the LGA policy.

WE RECOMMEND that the approach outlined is adopted as a basis of a policy to support parental leave for councillors.

Information Technology Allowance

4.46 The Council provides an Information Technology (IT) Allowance of £16.08 per month. The Panel is of the view that this should continue at the current rate subject to any Indexation that may apply. However, should the Council review its existing approach to IT Provision for Councillors during the next four- year period then the Panel will review the IT Allowance when required.

WE RECOMMEND that the current IT Allowance for Councillors of £16.08 per month continues, subject to any indexation that may apply. Should the Council review its existing approach to IT provision for Councillors during the next four – year period then the Panel will review the IT Allowance when required.

Indexing of Allowances

4.49 A scheme of allowances may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances in line with a specified index. The previous scheme made provision for the basic allowance, the special responsibility allowances and the dependants' carers' allowance to be adjusted annually. The Panel recommend that this indexation should be in line with increases in staff salaries at Swale Borough Council.

WE RECOMMEND that the basic allowance, each of the SRAs, the IT Allowance and the Co-optees' Allowance be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries until 2024, at which time the Scheme shall be reviewed again by an Independent Remuneration Panel.

Revocation of current Scheme of Allowances / Implementation of new Scheme

4.50 The 2003 Regulations provide that a scheme of allowances may only be revoked with effect from the beginning of a financial year, and that this may only take effect on the basis that the authority makes a further scheme of allowances for the period beginning with the date of revocation.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the new scheme of allowances to be agreed by the Council be implemented with effect from the beginning of the 2020-21 municipal/financial year, at which time the current scheme of allowances will be revoked.

5. OUR INVESTIGATION

Background

- 5.1 As part of this review, a questionnaire was issued to all councillors to support and inform the review. Responses were received from 14 of the 47 councillors, which represents 30% of the Council. The information obtained was helpful in informing our deliberations.
- 5.2 We interviewed eight current councillors, including the Leader, Deputy Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition Group. We are grateful to all our interviewees for their assistance.

Councillors' views on the level of allowances

- 5.3 A summary of the councillors' responses to the questionnaire is attached as Appendix 2.

Mark Palmer (Independent Remuneration Panel, Chair)

Chris Webb (Independent Remuneration Panel)

Lionel Robbins (Independent Remuneration Panel)

March 2020

Appendix 1 – Summary of Panel Recommendations

Allowance	Current Amount for 2019-20	Number	Recommended Allowance (40% PSD)	Recommended Allowance Calculation
Total Basic:	£5,218	47	£5,444	

Special Responsibility:				
Leader of the Council	£19,305	1	£20,143	370% of BA
Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member	£11,583	6	£12,086	60% of Leader's Allowance
Minority Leader of the Largest Minority Party	£5,792	1	£6,043	30% of Leader's Allowance
Deputy Cabinet Member	£5,792	6	£6,043	30% of Leader's Allowance
Minority Leader of Other Minority Parties	£1,931	0	£2,014	10% of the Leader's Allowance

Scrutiny Committee Chair	£5,792	1	£6,043	30% of Leader's Allowance
Policy Development and Review Committee Chair	£5,792	1	£6,043	30% of Leader's Allowance
Planning Committee Chair	£6,756	1	£7,050	35% of Leader's Allowance
Audit Committee Chair	£1,931	1	£2,014	10% of Leader's Allowance
Licensing Committee Chair	£1,931	1	£2,014	10% of Leader's Allowance

Co-optees Allowance	£10 per meeting		£10 per meeting	
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Dependent Carers' Allowance	Carers' Allowance £9.30		Childcare and Carers' of Dependents: reimbursed at cost	
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Appendix 2: IRP Review of Councillor Allowances – Responses to Questionnaire 2020

RESPONSES

In a typical week how, many hours do you spend on Council business relevant to your role as a ward Councillor?	
1	16hrs
2	30hrs
3	18.5hrs
4	7hrs
5	6hrs
6	27+hrs
7	23hrs
8	13hrs
9	9hrs
10	26hrs
11	8-9hrs average
12	5hrs
13	30hrs
14	8hrs

Please indicate how this time will be spent:

	a) Attending meetings (including travelling)	b) Community/Parish representations	c) Case work (dealing with issues in your	d) Research
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			ward	
1	4hrs	4hrs	5hrs	3hrs
2	10hrs	5hrs	10hrs	5hrs
3	8.5hrs	1hr	2hrs	7hrs
4	2hrs	5hrs	0	0
5	/	/	4hrs	2hrs
6	6hrs	/	14hrs	7hrs
7	4hrs	4hrs	10hrs	5hrs
8	5hrs	2hrs	3hrs	3hrs
9	3.5hrs	2hrs	2hrs	1.5hrs
10	6hrs	5hrs	10hrs	5hrs
11	2hrs	1hr	2-3hrs	1-2hrs
12	2hrs per meeting	Less than 3 hours per month	1hr	1-3 hrs per case work
13	15hrs	5hrs	5hrs	5hrs
14	3hrs	Included in (a)	3hrs	2hrs

In a typical week, how many hours do you spend on Council business relevant to the role(s) that you hold in addition to front-line councillor? Please provide details separately for each role if more than one additional role is held?

	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3	Role 4
1	14hrs	7hrs	13hrs	11hrs
2	30hrs	18hrs	6hrs	5hrs
3	8.5hrs	1hr	2hrs	7hrs
4	19hrs	1hr	/	/
5	/	/	4hrs	2hrs
6	4hrs	4hrs	/	/
7	24hrs	6hrs	3hrs	/
8	6hrs	/	/	/
9	9hrs	2.5hrs	1hr	.5hrs
10	3hrs	3hrs	2hrs	3hrs
11	12-15hrs	1hr	/	/
12	/	/	/	/
13	30hrs	10hrs	2hrs	/
14	/	6hrs per year	6hrs per year	10 hrs per year

Please indicate how this time is spent and give separate answers for each additional role held:

a) Attending meetings including travelling

	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3	Role 4
1	5hrs	3hrs	5hrs	4hrs
2	10hrs	6hrs	3hrs	3hrs
3	3.5hrs	2.5hrs	0.5hrs	/
4	12hrs	1hr	/	/
5	5hrs	1hr	/	/
6	2hrs	2hrs	/	/
7	10hrs	2hrs	1hr	/
8	1hr	/	/	/

9	.5hrs	.5hrs	.5hrs	.5hrs
10	2hrs	2hrs	1hr	2hrs
11	8hrs	.5hrs	/	/
12	3hrs	3hrs	/	/
13	15hrs	5hrs	1hr	/
14	/	5hrs p. a	5hrs p. a	5hrs pa

b) Community representation

	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3	Role 4
1	2hrs	1hr	2hrs	2hrs
2	5hrs	12hrs	3hrs	2hrs
3	3.5hrs	2.5hrs	.5 hrs	/
4	/	/	/	/
5	/	/	/	/
6	/	/	/	/
7	1hr	/	/	/
8	/	/	/	/
9	2hrs	/	/	/
10	/	/	/	/
11	3hrs	/	/	/
12	3hrs per month	/	/	/
13	5hrs	3hrs	1hr	/
14	/	/	/	/

c) Case work (dealing with issues relevant to the role)

	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3	Role 4
1	3hrs	1hr	3hrs	2hrs
2	/	/	/	/
3	/	/	/	/
4	2hrs	/	/	/
5	2hrs	/	/	/
6	/	/	/	/
7	5hrs	2hrs	/	/
8	/	/	/	/
9	2hrs	/	/	/
10	/	/	/	/
11	2hrs	/	/	/
12	3hrs per month	/	/	/
13	5hrs	1hr	/	/
14	/	1hr per yr.	1hr per yr.	1hr per yr.

d) Research

	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3	Role 4
1	4hrs	2hrs	3hrs	3hrs
2	/	/	/	/
3	1hr	1hr	/	/
4	5hrs	/	/	/

5	3hrs	/	/	/
6	2hrs	2hrs	/	/
7	8hrs	2hrs	2hrs	/
8	5hrs	/	/	/
9	/	2hrs	/	/
10	1hr	1hr	/	1hr
11	4-6hrs	/	/	/
12	1-2hrs	1-2hrs	/	/
13	5hrs	1hr	/	/
14	/	1hr pa	1hr pa	1hr pa

Do you incur any significant costs which you believe are not covered by your present allowance?

Responses:

All no, except:

Childcare @ £10p/hr

Not significant but additional time is required when I could be working and earning a wage

Time off work for earlier meetings

Government guidance states that “it is important that some element of the work of Members continues to be voluntary” As part of their deliberations, Independent Remuneration Panels will assess what Public Services Discount should apply to the basic allowance. That is the percentage of their time Councillors expect to give without any financial remuneration.

What do you feel is an acceptable amount of time to be given, unremunerated – expressed as a percentage?

1. 40%
2. –
3. 25%
4. 25%
5. 25%
6. 50%
7. 7.40%
8. Don't know but some should be voluntary
9. 10%
10. 40%
11. 50%
12. 10%
13. 50%
14. 33%

Do you think the present level of Basic Allowance £5217.61 payable to all Councillors is appropriate?

Yes: 9

No:5

Comments:

Higher - £7,500

Lower – but only if certain committees get special allowances – it should be reduced, it is disproportionate as you have one Councillor not sitting on a Committee, some on the busiest Committees

Higher – the current levels dissuade working age individuals from standing for Council and prevent the development of a more diverse and representative Council membership

Should be increased in line with inflation and average salary increments for local authorities and should be pensionable

Higher – as we encourage a more diverse Council, this means people will be of a working age and may be primary carers of children and this needs to be treated as a job and therefore paid accordingly

Using the current level, it should remain linked to the average staff pay rise, and increase slightly by that amount annually

Special Responsibility Areas

On separate sheet

Changes

High basic wage and reduced SRA

Where an individual qualifies for 2 or more SRAs they should be able to receive them

Mayor allowance should be increased

More accountability and evidence outputs from people in the SRA seats, particularly Cabinet members

Should be reflective of Council staff wages

The chair of Planning should receive more as that involves a large amount of extra work

Personally, I think the Mayor's allowance is an insult given the importance of the job. Most mayors over the past five years have done the job for love but have nearly all found themselves financially worse off

As per the Member allowance, SRAs should continue to be linked to changes to staff pay

Would you like to see any new SRA's?

Area Committee allowance x 2

Planning Committee should get a £2000 allowance given the Committee is the only Committee scheduled to meet 13 times a year but actually meets closer to 20 due to extraordinary meetings. Scrutiny committee member £1,000 as they spend the second most amount of time in meetings.

Area Committee chair should NOT carry an SRA

Other Comments

Consider childcare provision and key carer allowance

Whilst I have expressed hours in my role as Planning Chairman as an average of 18/month the reality is that I often exceed the hours stated on research due to the significant strategic importance that Planning has on the organisation the community impact. In fact, in fairness, I have probably understated the actual hours under all the headings and roles.

Whilst I think some remuneration is required Member need to be mindful of the current economic situation and the poverty levels in the UK. Members should not be encouraged into the role of Local Councillor for what they can get. Members should look at what they can give to the community.

IT allowance is a little low compared to current cost of running required devices (mobile phones and broadband bills).

An allowance should be available for those with caring responsibilities i.e. parents or careers for disable relatives to cover the cost of care for when they are at meetings. I feel that Members should have allowances reduced when their attendance drops below 50% (unless due to illness).

If we are to move forward with a broader range of candidates and potentially Councillors in the future, to create a more diverse and representative local democracy then a review of Councillor allowances is required. The average age of Councillors in England is currently 59, with 45% of Councillors retired compared to just 20% of the overall population. Only 36% of Councillors in England are women, despite women making up 51% of England's population (in Swale just 19% of Councillors are women while women make up 50.5% of Swale's population). We need to look carefully at the barriers to increasing diversity amongst Council

Members and a key element of that is going to be looking at the allowances. Please see articles and reports:

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/30/abuse-long-hours-and-pitiful-pay-younger-councillors-abandon-local-politics>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Councillors%27%20Census%202018%20-%20report%20FINAL.pdf>

The Council members should be a reflection of the community they serve, yet the meetings (many changes this year I know), are aimed at retired Councillors. Also, the time it takes is far above that anticipated. Therefore, a remuneration reflecting that should be considered. The current system discriminates against people on low incomes and the primary carer of school age children to stand. As a single parent juggling with a low paid job, running a home and being both a Town and Borough Councillor I find it a challenge to juggle my time, especially when some meetings I have to be at Swale House for 5pm. Also, the allowance does not cover the cost of mobile devices or services. Therefore, the Member needs to supply the tools they required for the post. I am one of the 19% of women Councillors at Swale and I believe raising the allowance will encourage more diversity.

I feel that each Councillor should be provided with a laptop/notebook computer to enable better joined up working and view of papers online, etc. The IT provided really isn't helping Councillors maximise their time particularly when researching things or ensuring the Council receive best value for money. If provided, then this should mean the loss of the IT allowance.

I believe that the basic allowance paid to all members is far and should remain the same, only to be increased in line with staff salaries. I do however believe that the basic allowance should better reflect attendance at meetings and training sessions/briefings. Regular absences without apologies should trigger an instant reduction in allowance. Allowances are far from equal when a Member attending 10 meetings a month is paid the same as a member attending 1 meeting every 6 months.

I would do away with subsistence allowance.

Appendix 4. Financial Implications

1. SRA not payable due to 1 SRA Rule

Allowance	Current Allowance (2019-20) £	Number	Current total per annum £	Recommended Allowance (40% PSD) £	Recommended Allowance Calculation	Recommended Allowance total per annum £
Basic (BA)						
Total Basic:	5,218	47	245,246	5,444	–	255,868
Increase £						10,622

Special Responsibility:						
Leader of the Council	19,305	1	19,305	20,143	370% of BA	20,143
Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member	11,583	6	69,498	12,086	60% of the Leader's SRA	72,516
Minority Leader of the Largest Minority Party	5,792	1	5,792	6,043	30% of the Leader's SRA	6,043
Deputy Cabinet Member	5,792	6	34,752	6,043	30% of the Leader's SRA	36,258

Minority Leader of Other Minority Parties	1,931	0	0	2,014	10% of the Leader's SRA	0
Scrutiny Committee Chair	5,792	1	5,792	6,043	30% of the Leader's SRA	6,043
Policy Development and Review Committee Chair	5,792	1	0 1	6,043	30% of the Leader's SRA	0 1
Planning Committee Chair	6,756	1	6,756	7,050	35% of the Leader's SRA	7,050
Audit Committee Chair	1,931	1	1,931	2,014	10% of the Leader's SRA	2,014
Licensing Committee Chair	1,931	1	0 1	2,014	10% of the Leader's SRA	0 1
Total SRA'S			143,826			150,157
Increase £						6,331
BA + SRAs			389,072			406,025
Increase £						16,953

Dependants' Carers' Allowance	9.30 per hour Carers' Allowance			Childcare and Carers' of Dependents reimbursed at costs upon production of receipts		
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