

Meeting of West Berkshire District Council

Thursday 26 September 2024

Summons and Agenda



WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

To: All Members of the Council

You are requested to attend a meeting of
WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
to be held in the
**COUNCIL OFFICES, MARKET STREET,
NEWBURY**

on
Thursday 26 September 2024
at 7.00 pm

Sarah Clarke.

Sarah Clarke
Service Director – Strategy & Governance
West Berkshire District Council

Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday 18 September 2024

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).
(Pages 5 - 6)

2. **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman to report on functions attended since the last meeting and other matters of interest to Members.
(Pages 7 - 8)

3. **MINUTES**

The Chairman to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 July 2024.
(Pages 9 - 18)



Agenda - Council to be held on Thursday 26 September 2024 (continued)

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' [Code of Conduct](#).

(Pages 19 - 20)

5. PETITIONS

Councillors may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate body without discussion.

A petition has been received and will be presented by Councillor Martha Vickers, on behalf of Shaw-Cum-Donnington Parish Council, for a safer crossing at Donnington.

(Pages 21 - 22)

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules contained in the [Council's Constitution](#).

(Pages 23 - 24)

7. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The Council to agree any changes to the membership of Committees.

(Pages 25 - 26)

8. MOTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To note Motions which had been presented to a previous Council meeting.

(Pages 27 - 28)

9. UPDATES FROM COMMITTEES

The Council is asked to note the meetings held since the last ordinary meeting of Council:

- 8.a – The Licensing Committee has not met.
- 8.b – The Personnel Committee has not met.
- 8.c – The Governance and Ethics Committee met on 29 August 2024.
- 8.d – The District Planning Committee met on 11 September 2024
- 8.e – The Scrutiny Commission met on 24 September 2024
- 8.f – The Health Scrutiny Committee met on 23 August 2024
- 8.g – The Health and Wellbeing Board met on 12 September 2024



Agenda - Council to be held on Thursday 26 September 2024 (continued)

8.h – The Joint Public Protection Committee has not met.
(Pages 29 - 30)

10. HAMPSHIRE TOGETHER JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Purpose: To seek approval for West Berkshire Council to join the Hampshire Together Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(Pages 31 - 52)

11. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WEST BERKSHIRE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL 2024

Purpose: To set out the recommendations of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) following their meetings on the 4 and 5 June 2024.

(Pages 53 - 110)

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

To receive any Motions submitted in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules contained in the [Council's Constitution](#).

(Pages 111 - 112)

13. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Members of the Council in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules contained in the [Council's Constitution](#).

(Pages 113 - 114)

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Darius Zarazel on telephone 01635 519778.



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Item 1 – Apologies for Absence

Verbal Item

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Agenda Item 2.

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Item 2 – Chairman’s Remarks

Verbal Item

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Agenda Item 3.

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY 18 JULY 2024

Councillors Present: Antony Amirtharaj, Dennis Benneyworth, Jeff Brooks, Nick Carter, Heather Codling, Martin Colston, Jeremy Cottam, Iain Cottingham, Laura Coyle, Carlyne Culver, Lee Dillon, Billy Drummond (Chairman), Nigel Foot, Denise Gaines, Stuart Gourley, Owen Jeffery, Paul Kander, Janine Lewis, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro, David Marsh, Justin Pemberton, Vicky Poole, Christopher Read, Richard Somner, Louise Sturgess, Clive Taylor, Tony Vickers (Vice-Chairman) and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care), AnnMarie Dodds (Executive Director - Children's Services), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director - Resources), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director - Place), Honorary Alderman Paul Bryant, Honorary Alderman Tony Linden, Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Melanie Booth (Group Executive (Lib Dems)), Councillor Adrian Abbs, Councillor Geoff Mayes, Councillor Biyi Oloko, Jake Carpenter (Group Executive (Cons)), Benjamin Ryan (Democratic Services Officer) and Nicola Thomas (Service Lead: Legal and Democratic)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Phil Barnett, Councillor Dominic Boeck, Councillor Patrick Clark, Councillor Paul Dick, Councillor Clive Hooker, Councillor Jane Langford, Councillor Erik Pattenden, Councillor Matt Shakespeare, Councillor Stephanie Steevenson, Councillor Joanne Stewart, Councillor Martha Vickers, Honorary Alderwoman Hilary Cole, Honorary Alderman Adrian Edwards, Honorary Alderman Graham Jones, Honorary Alderman Rick Jones, Honorary Alderwoman Mollie Lock, Honorary Alderman Gordon Lundie, Honorary Alderman Graham Pask and Honorary Alderman Andrew Rowles

PART I

1. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman informed Members of the very sad news that Honorary Alderman Jeff Beck had recently passed away. Jeff had dedicated 16 years as a West Berkshire Councillor during which time he was Chairman of Council in 2014 and Mayor of Newbury in 2011, roles he was extremely proud to have fulfilled.

Condolences were passed to Jeff's family and friends.

Council then held a one minute silence in memory of Jeff.

A number of other Members made comments in memory of Honorary Alderman Jeff Beck. Members were unanimous in stating that Jeff was a hugely admired and respected councillor who worked extremely hard for residents living both within his Ward and across West Berkshire, and was devoted to public service. Jeff's sense of humour was well remembered as was his firm eye for detail.

Jeff was well known across his Ward and was very well thought of by residents. He was a superb advocate for residents. His wife, Alma, had also been a hard working ward councillor.

Jeff was also remembered by all as a true gentleman and an excellent chairman.

Thanks were expressed to Jeff for being an excellent mentor. He set excellent standards that all councillors should aspire to. Members were honoured to have served alongside Jeff. He would be much missed.

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The Chairman then reported that he had attended 18 events since the last Council meeting, and highlighted his attendance at the following events:

- He commented on the two citizenship ceremonies he attended and the pride felt by those citizens.
- He was impressed by the knowledge displayed by the young people at the mock trials and was pleased to report that Trinity School were the eventual winners of the competition.
- The Chairman and Mrs Drummond thoroughly enjoyed the event held at Daisy's Dream. This was an excellent charity that offered support to children and young people who had suffered a close bereavement. He added that Daisy's Dream was his chosen charity for his year as Chairman.

The Vice-Chairman reported on his attendance at two events. He attended Educafe, a charity which performed such valuable work in supporting residents, and the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Volunteer Centre, which recognised the huge importance of the work performed by volunteers.

The Chairman then shared the recent successes for West Berkshire Council and its employees at West Berkshire's Training Consortium "Rising Stars" Apprenticeship Awards. He felt honoured to report that the Council received the award for the best large apprenticeship employer.

The Chairman also highlighted the achievements of individual staff members and congratulated the apprentices who received a nomination. In particular he congratulated Tom Allport, Apprentice Shared Lives Administrator, who received two awards; Functional Skills Learner of the Year and Apprentice of the Year.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2024 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Richard Somner declared an interest in Agenda Item 20 by virtue of the fact that he was an employee of Royal Berkshire Hospital which was referenced in the report. However, he reported that as his interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

4. Petitions

No petitions were received.

5. Public Questions

It was agreed that the questions standing in the name of Mr William Richardson and Mr Simon Pike would receive written responses as they were unable to attend the meeting.

6. Membership of Committees

The following changes were proposed and approved to the membership of the Eastern Area Planning Committee:

Councillor Chris Read would replace Councillor Lee Dillon as a substitute on the Committee.

Councillor Janine Lewis would replace Councillor Jeff Brooks as a substitute on the Committee.

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7. **Motions from Previous Meetings**

Members noted that a response had been provided to the Motion from Councillor Heather Codling regarding 'Support for Care Experienced People' which had been tabled at a previous Council meeting.

Councillor Codling was pleased to note the progress being made in this area.

8. **Licensing Committee**

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Licensing Committee had met on 8 July 2024.

9. **Personnel Committee**

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Personnel Committee had met on 2 July 2024.

10. **Governance Committee**

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Governance Committee had met on 16 July 2024.

11. **District Planning Committee**

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the District Planning Committee had not met.

12. **Scrutiny Commission**

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Scrutiny Commission had met on 17 July 2024.

13. **Health Scrutiny Committee**

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Health Scrutiny Committee had met on 11 June 2024.

14. **Health and Wellbeing Board**

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Health and Wellbeing Board had met on 11 July 2024.

15. **Joint Public Protection Committee**

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Joint Public Protection Committee had met on 10 June 2024.

16. **Monitoring Officer's Annual Report 2023/24 - Conduct and Ethics (C4559)**

Council considered the annual report on matters relating to standards and conduct (Agenda Item 17). The report provided a summary of complaints or other problems within West Berkshire. In summary, the report highlighted that standards of conduct by councillors in West Berkshire remained high.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Jeff Brooks and seconded by Councillor Denise Gaines:

That the Council:

“note the content of the report, which will also be circulated to all parish/town councils in the district for information”.

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Councillor Brooks was pleased to note that only six complaints were received during 2023/24 in relation to district councillors and six in relation to parish councillors. This was a significant reduction from the number reported in the previous three years.

He felt this was a reflection of Members treating each other and residents respectfully. While there were disagreements between Members these were handled with respect in the majority of cases.

Councillor Brooks was hopeful that this positive trend would continue.

Turning to gifts and hospitality, Councillor Brooks advised of contact he had received from a member of staff asking why it was not necessary to declare all offers received and not just those with a value in excess of £25. This was a matter he would progress with the Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Jeremy Cottam explained that whilst Chairman he had received invitations to events from, for example, neighbouring local authorities. At such events he had accepted basic refreshments, particularly if held over the lunch period. He would always declare this, even though the value was well below £25, but he felt that it was appropriate to accept offers of hospitality in such circumstances. Offers of gifts or hospitality beyond this basic level would be rightly refused.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon advised that as part of his profession in finance he was a member of professional institutes where the guidance was to refuse any offers as there was the risk it could affect decision making.

Councillor Carlyne Culver expressed her thanks to the parish councillors for their high levels of good conduct. More specifically she thanked the parish council representatives who sat on the Governance Committee and its sub-committees for their input and advice.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

17. **Governance Committee Annual Report - 2023/24 (C4574)**

Council considered the annual summary of the activities of the Governance Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year (Agenda Item 18). The report provided a summary of key areas that the Committee had considered during 2023/24 as well as some of the actions and changes that had occurred due to the Committee's activities.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Iain Cottingham and seconded by Councillor Jeremy Cottam:

That Council:

"note the report".

Councillor Cottingham highlighted the importance of having an effective internal audit team. He commended officers in this team for their hard work in publishing the 2023/24 accounts on time.

It was therefore a matter of concern to the Governance Committee that the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, had not signed off the Council's accounts as they were contracted and paid to do. As a result, KPMG would be auditing the Council's accounts moving forward, but this could incur additional costs.

Councillor Cottingham also highlighted the Committee's important work on risk management and advised that an update would be conducted in due course on the Risk Management Strategy.

Councillor Richard Somner queried the potential risk to the Council of the accounts not being subject to external audit or whether this was offset by a disclaimer. Councillor

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Cottingham explained that while a disclaimer had been issued, an independent deep dive review was needed of the Council's accounts. Until this was conducted there could not be complete assurance, although Councillor Cottingham stated his full confidence in the work of the Council's officers.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon had, in the past, worked as an external auditor for four years and as such was very disappointed that Grant Thornton had not conducted their work and had only issued a disclaimer rather than giving an opinion on the Council's accounts.

Councillor Tony Vickers queried if action should be taken to reclaim the Council's costs. Councillor Cottingham asked Joseph Holmes to respond on this point as the Section 151 Officer.

Mr Holmes explained that a response was awaited from the Government on the Council's position with only receiving a disclaimer. He also clarified that Grant Thornton would only be paid for the work they had conducted.

Councillor Cottam, as seconder, added his disappointment when the accounts had been prepared by the Council's officers.

Councillor Cottingham explained that an initial assessment was awaited from KPMG and he looked forward to the outcome of this.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

18. **Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24 (C4556)**

The Council considered the annual scrutiny report for 2023/24 (Agenda Item 19). The report provided a summary of the work of the Scrutiny Commission and Health Scrutiny Committee, as well as the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Carlyne Culver and seconded by Councillor Justin Pemberton:

That Council:

"note the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2023/24".

Councillor Culver opened her presentation of the report by thanking her fellow Scrutiny Members (on both the Scrutiny Commission and Health Scrutiny Committee) for their work on the committees, and extended this to those Members who had sat on task and finish groups. She particularly thanked Councillor Martha Vickers for her hard work in the role as Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Culver extended her thanks to officers and representatives of external bodies who had attended meetings to give evidence and supply information.

Finally, she gave particular thanks to Gordon Oliver and Vicky Phoenix for their significant level of hard work in supporting the Scrutiny Commission and Health Scrutiny Committee respectively.

Councillor Culver then highlighted some of the areas of scrutiny work that had been conducted:

- Scrutiny of the work of Thames Water and the Environment Agency in relation to flooding and sewage concerns. Both organisations had been held to account by Committee Members as well as from members of flood forums, Action for River Kennet, and River Action.

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- The task and finish group that focused on healthcare in new developments had reported its findings, and the group focusing on Covid and recovery had just finalised its work. She thanked Councillor Paul Dick for chairing the latter of these groups.
- Detailed discussions of the Council's budgets.

Items for the future included:

- Follow up work with Thames Water and the Environment Agency.
- The attainment of children in receipt of free school meals.
- Task groups were due to be formed reviewing the Council's work in relation to the Sports Hub and on project management.

Councillor Culver added that this report was produced in line with a recommendation from the peer review. Further recommendations following the peer review were also being progressed, including ensuring that members of the public were aware of the opportunity to suggest scrutiny topics.

Councillor Nigel Foot thanked officers for the work conducted on health impact assessments, with West Berkshire Council being ahead of the curve in this area.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon paid tribute to Councillor Culver for all her hard work as Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission.

Councillor David Marsh highlighted the benefits of a non-Member of the Administration chairing the Scrutiny Commission. He added that there was constructive cross-party working within scrutiny.

Councillor Iain Cottingham felt that the corporate sector could learn from the Council's constructive approach to scrutiny.

Councillor Pemberton added praise for the role performed by Councillor Culver.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

19. **Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report 2023/24 (C4557)**

Council considered the annual report for 2023/24 (Agenda Item 20) which provided a summary of the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board. It outlined progress made in working towards the aims and objectives of the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Berkshire West and the implementation of the Delivery Plan for West Berkshire. The report demonstrated how the Board had continued to assess the health needs of the local population. It also showed how the Board had delivered in terms of integration of Health and Social Care through the Better Care Fund.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Heather Codling and seconded by Councillor Jeff Brooks:

That Council:

"note the Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report for 2023/24".

Councillor Codling stated that she had only recently commenced chairmanship of the Board and gave thanks to Councillor Alan Macro for fulfilling the role over the past year. She also thanked John Ashton, the outgoing Director of Public Health, for his work in supporting the Board.

She highlighted the benefits achieved by the different health professionals and bodies who were represented on the Board. Areas of work included:

- What could be done to support people who were struggling as part of the cost of living crisis.

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- Reviewing pharmacy provision.
- Looking at housing standards and how lower quality housing could impact on the health and health outcomes for residents.

Priorities moving forward included:

- The support given to individuals at high risk of poor outcomes to live healthier lives.
- Helping families with children in early years.
- Promoting good mental health and wellbeing for all residents.

Councillor Brooks praised the Health and Wellbeing Board for its role in bringing together the different professionals and services for the benefit of residents. He considered that the Board would benefit from greater representation from housing colleagues.

Councillor Brooks commended Gordon Oliver for all his efforts in supporting the Board.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

20. Notices of Motion

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 21 (a) refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs relating to proportional representation (submitted on Councillor Abbs' behalf by Councillor Justin Pemberton).

Prior to the moving of the Motion, Councillor Jeff Brooks explained that it was being moved on Councillor Abbs' behalf at his request (Councillor Abbs being away on a long standing and pre-arranged holiday).

Councillor Pemberton was therefore doing so.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Justin Pemberton and seconded by Councillor Clive Taylor:

“Overview

First Past the Post (FPTP) originated when land-owning aristocrats dominated parliament and voting was restricted to property-owning men.

Historically FPTP and the whole structure of elections, created absurd anomalies with the existence of “rotten boroughs” such as Old Sarum, Dunwich and Gatton. Old Sarum was by local reckoning “one man, two cows and a field” and yet returned two MPs to Westminster! Gatton, a village in Surrey, returned one MP yet had just one voter in it.

The 1832, 1867 and 1884 Reform Acts changed a lot of the more absurd abuses that surrounded the electoral system so vividly described by Charles Dickens in “Pickwick Papers”.

In 2019, 43.6% of the vote produced a government with 56.2% of the seats and 100% of the power.

Therefore, Council Notes that

- *Internationally over **90 countries** use either a form of Proportional Representation or a mixed system to elect their primary chamber.*
- *PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.*
- *PR ensures all votes count, have equal value, and that seats won match votes cast.*
- *PR would end minority rule.*
- *37 councils have already passed a motion to write to HM Government demanding a move to PR*

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- *PR is the national policy of the Liberal Democrats.*

The Motion

This Council therefore resolves to write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws and to enable Proportional Representation to be used for UK general elections."

The Chairman informed Council that the Motion would be debated at the meeting in order to facilitate the discharge of business in accordance with Procedural Rule 12.6.3.

AMENDED MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Justin Pemberton and seconded by Councillor Clive Taylor:

The Motion

*This Council therefore resolves to write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws and to enable Proportional Representation to be used for UK general elections **under the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system and;***

To call upon West Berkshire's two MPs to push for a change to electoral law to implement Proportional Representation (under the STV system) and to promote the matter for debate within Parliament."

Councillor Pemberton referred to the recent General Election. The Labour Party won with a high majority but the turnout of voters was low. Councillor Pemberton also referred to the number of seats won by the Liberal Democrats in 2019 and the relatively high increase in 2024. However, there was only a 0.6% increase in the Liberal Democrat's total share of the vote.

Councillor Pemberton felt that it was time for a changed system where elected representatives were more representative of the votes cast. He considered that the STV system would result in politicians changing their offering and appealing to a wider cohort of voters.

Should there be concern that this could result in the need for coalition governments, Councillor Pemberton referred to the most recent coalition government which was not unsuccessful.

Councillor Abbs felt that it was timely to be considering this Motion. He understood, at a national level, that the turnout of voters was only 52%, with the Labour Party receiving 35% of the votes cast. He was concerned that this was undemocratic.

While the first past the post system had some positive aspects, there were a number of negatives.

Councillor Abbs felt that this alternative election system would create a platform for greater political stability and the ability to set longer term plans.

Councillor Brooks noted that a similar Motion had been put at 37 other local authorities.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon noted that Council had considered a number of important Council functions at this meeting, but in his view this matter was a concern for Westminster and not the Council. If residents had concerns on this matter they could take it up with West Berkshire's two MPs.

Councillor Lee Dillon declared an interest in paragraph two of the amendment as the MP for Newbury. He would therefore not participate in the debate or vote on the Motion.

Councillor David Marsh felt that the Motion could have benefited from making mention of local elections. He considered that the STV system could benefit local democracy and therefore West Berkshire's residents. As well as potentially increasing the level of

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turnout. Nationally, this change would help achieve greater representation of parties with a significant number of votes.

Councillor Nick Carter felt that residents had other reasons for choosing not to vote. He questioned if low turnout related to the voting methodology.

Councillor Clive Taylor stated that while he was of course pleased at the outcome of the General Election, he was concerned that there was not a higher turnout. He added that it was important for voters to feel they could have a say and that their vote could make a difference. Councillor Taylor concluded by stating that he would raise this with Olivia Bailey, the Labour MP for Reading West and Mid Berkshire.

The Amended Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

It was then debated.

Councillor Abbs reiterated the concern that a number of people felt it was not worth voting. Change was needed to give voters a greater choice.

The Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 21 (b) refers) submitted in the name of Councillor David Marsh relating to companion bus passes.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor David Marsh and seconded by Councillor Carolyn Culver:

That the Council notes that:

“Companion bus passes enable people with disabilities that prevent them travelling alone, such as blindness, to take a companion, free of charge, on their journey. This could literally transform the lives of some of our residents.

West Berkshire Council offered a companion bus pass scheme until the “austerity” cuts of 2016. However, neighbouring councils continue to offer companion bus passes, in some cases allowing reciprocal travel between different authorities.

Companion bus passes are funded, in full or in part, by central government so reintroducing them would not put a large financial burden on council tax payers.

By failing to enable all its residents to enjoy the benefits of bus travel, West Berkshire is in effect discriminating against some of them.

Council accordingly resolves to:

Reinstate a companion bus pass scheme in West Berkshire at the earliest possible opportunity.

Explore the possibility of reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring authorities.”

The Chairman informed Council that the Motion would not be debated at the meeting. It would be considered by the Transport Advisory Group and then the Executive, in line with Procedure Rule 12.6.1 of the Council’s Constitution.

Councillor Marsh presented the Motion and explained that people with a severe disability who could not travel independently needed to be accompanied by a companion. This was previously provided without charge, but currently companions needed to pay for the transport. The scheme remained without cost in many other local authorities.

A companion may not always be able to afford the fare, creating a restriction to the disabled person’s ability to travel. Councillor Marsh hoped the scheme, which would not be overly costly, could be reinstated as it would make a real difference to people’s lives.

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In response, Councillor Stuart Gourley advised that the matter would be considered at the next meeting of the Transport Advisory Group.

Councillor Gourley clarified that there was no central government funding for companion bus passes. The scheme, if reintroduced, would need to be funded from the Council's revenue budget.

He also added that central government would be reviewing the eligibility on concessionary travel and this guidance would be reviewed when received alongside the Council's approach.

21. Members' Questions

A full transcription of the Member question and answer session is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 8.45pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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Item 4 – Declarations of Interest

Verbal Item

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Item 5 – Petitions

Verbal Item

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Item 6 – Public Questions

To Follow

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Item 7 – Membership of Committees

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Item 8 – Motions from previous meetings

Verbal Item

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Council – 26 September 2024

Item 9 – Updates from Committees

Verbal Items

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Hampshire Together Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Committee considering report: | Council |
| Date of Committee: | 26 September 2024 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Jeff Brooks |
| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 18 September 2024 |
| Report Author: | Gordon Oliver |
| Forward Plan Ref: | C4584 |

1 Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for West Berkshire Council to join the Hampshire Together Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2 Recommendations

Council is asked to:

- (a) SUPPORT the proposal for West Berkshire Council to join the existing Hampshire Together Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a mandatory committee to provide independent scrutiny of the 'Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services' Programme;
- (b) DELEGATE scrutiny powers in relation to matters set out in (a) above to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) AGREE to the terms of reference for the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in Appendix B of this report; and
- (d) Approve the appointment of Councillor Martha Vickers as the West Berkshire Council representative on the Hampshire Together Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication | Commentary |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <p>Financial:</p> | <p>There would be a small additional cost associated with elected members and officers attending meetings. These would be met from existing budgets. It is only likely that there will be one or two more meetings of this committee.</p> <p>The work of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) will require support in terms of overall co-ordination, setting up and clerking of meetings, underpinning policy support, and administrative arrangements. Clerking and administrative support will be provided by Hampshire County Council.</p> <p>Policy support would be provided by the West Berkshire Council Public Health Team. This would be delivered by existing staff.</p> <p>(Agreed by Melanie Ellis 5 June 2024)</p> |
| <p>Human Resource:</p> | <p>There are no HR implications associated with this report. Officers attending meetings will be covered within existing roles.</p> |
| <p>Legal:</p> | <p>The statutory powers and duties relating to the scrutiny of health services are set out in the National Health Service Act 2006 as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The relevant regulations are the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 (“the Regulations”).</p> <p>The JHOSC operates formally as a mandatory joint committee, i.e. where the affected local authorities have been required under Regulation 30 (5) to appoint a joint committee for the purposes of the consultation on substantial developments or variations in services.</p> |
| <p>Risk Management:</p> | <p>There are no significant risks associated with this proposal.</p> |
| <p>Property:</p> | <p>There are no property implications associated with this proposal.</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|---|----------------|-----------------|---|
| Policy: | Officers are not aware of any policies at national or local levels that relate specifically to health scrutiny. However, the proposal is in line with Government guidance on Health Scrutiny. | | | |
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
| Equalities Impact: | | | | |
| A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality? | X | | | Scrutiny of the ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme will help to identify, and more effectively address, current and future health inequalities. |
| B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | X | | | Scrutiny of the ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme should have a beneficial impact on the delivery of health services for residents of West Berkshire, delivering benefits for all service users, including those with protected characteristics. |
| Environmental Impact: | | X | | The proposal will not result in any significant environmental impact. |
| Health Impact: | X | | | Scrutiny of the ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme will help to improve the planning, development, and delivery of NHS services, and in turn will improve health outcomes for local residents. |
| ICT Impact: | | X | | There are no ICT implications for the Council arising from the proposal. |
| Digital Services Impact: | | X | | Meeting agendas and minutes will be posted to the host authority’s website, Meetings will be live-streamed, with |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | | | | recordings made available for the public to view after the meetings. This work will be undertaken by Hampshire County Council, so there are no additional impacts for West Berkshire Council. |
| Council Strategy Priorities: | | X | | Undertaking scrutiny of proposed changes to health services relates to the Council Strategy priority ‘Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice’, particularly the commitment to ‘Work with partners to maintain a safe District and improve Health and Wellbeing’. |
| Core Business: | | X | | There are no particular implications for core business. |
| Data Impact: | | X | | This proposal is considered to be ‘business as usual’ with no particular implications for data. |
| Consultation and Engagement: | <p>Councillor Jeff Brooks – Leader and Executive Portfolio Holder: Strategy and Communications</p> <p>Sarah Clarke – Service Director, Strategy, ICT & Governance</p> | | | |

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Health bodies have a legislative duty to consult a local authority’s Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or equivalent committee in an upper-tier or unitary holding health scrutiny powers) about any proposals they have for a substantial development or variation in the provision of health services in their area. When these substantial developments or variations affect a geographical area that covers more than one local authority, the affected local authorities must appoint a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) for the purposes of the consultation.
- 4.2 In response to the ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme, a joint health overview and scrutiny committee has been set up to consider proposed changes to hospital services affecting the patient-flow geography across Hampshire, Southampton, and West Berkshire. West Berkshire Council has applied to be a member of this committee on the basis that there are significant patient flows from West Berkshire for some services, particularly maternity and emergency services.
- 4.3 This report sets out proposals for West Berkshire Council to join the existing new JHOSC. This requires the Council to delegate health scrutiny powers in relation to the ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme,

and agree to the terms of reference, which have been amended to allow West Berkshire Council to join. Legally, the Executive cannot make decisions in relation to scrutiny matters, so the decision must be made by Council.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 Within West Berkshire, health scrutiny is undertaken by the Health Scrutiny Committee where matters relate to services provided in the district.
- 5.2 A JHOSC has been set up to undertake scrutiny of the 'Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services' Programme, which is developing proposals for how to invest between £700 million and £900 million in hospital services across Hampshire. The JHOSC currently includes representation from Hampshire County Council and Southampton City Council.
- 5.3 Local authority health scrutiny committees have powers to:
 - Review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the area, including the finances of local health services.
 - Require local NHS bodies to provide information about the planning, provision and operation of health services in the area.
 - Require employees of local NHS bodies to attend committee meetings to answer questions.
 - Make reports and recommendations to local NHS bodies and expect a response within 28 days.
 - Request that the Secretary of State considers use of their intervention powers to call-in the reconfiguration proposals in the event that: the committee believes the consultation has been inadequate; there were inadequate reasons for not consulting; or if the proposals would not be in the interests of the local health service.
- 5.4 Health bodies have a legislative duty to consult a local authority's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or equivalent committee in an upper-tier or unitary authority that holds health scrutiny powers) about any proposals they have for a substantial development or variation in the provision of health services in their area. When these substantial developments or variations affect a geographical area that covers more than one local authority, the affected local authorities must appoint a JHOSC for the purposes of the consultation.
- 5.5 The Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides surgical, medical, family and clinical support services to residents of Hampshire and parts of West Berkshire, and its sites include the Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital and the Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester, as well as the Andover War Memorial Hospital.

5.6 In 2019 the government announced a national programme to deliver 40 new hospitals by 2030. The Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is in Cohort 4 of the New Hospital Programme. The proposals include a new hospital for North and Mid Hampshire and a major refurbishment of the Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester.

5.7 The Trust has received funding to develop its business case according to a three stage process:

- (1) **Strategic Outline Case** – makes the case for change
- (2) **Outline Business Case** – makes the economic, commercial, strategic, financial and management case, and includes the design development and testing of options
- (3) **Full Business Case** – the procurement process to contract for the build

5.8 Current redevelopment options are summarised below

| Option 1 | Option 2 (preferred option) | Option 3 |
|--|---|---|
| New specialist acute hospital on the current Basingstoke hospital site and refurbishment at Winchester hospital | New specialist acute hospital near Junction 7 of the M3 and refurbishment at Winchester hospital | New specialist acute hospital near Junction 7 of the M3 and refurbishment at Winchester hospital |
| N/A | Services at the current Basingstoke hospital site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatients, diagnostics and therapies • Planned day-case surgery | Services at the current Basingstoke hospital site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatients, diagnostics and therapies • Planned day-case surgery • Nurse-led step-down reablement and rehabilitation beds |
| Services at Winchester hospital in all options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 doctor-led urgent treatment centre and same day emergency care • Step-up and step-down inpatient beds for general medicine and care of the elderly • Dedicated planned surgery centre • Freestanding midwife-led birthing unit • Outpatients, diagnostics and therapies | | |
| Services at the new specialist acute hospital in all options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency department with trauma unit, children’s emergency department, 24/7 doctor-led urgent treatment centre and same day emergency care • Specialist inpatient care e.g. stroke and heart attack and inpatient beds, including for general medicine and care of the elderly • Complex planned and emergency surgery • Obstetrician-led birthing unit and alongside midwife-led unit | | |

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conditions for a level 2 neonatal care unit• Cancer treatment centre• Outpatients, diagnostics and therapies |
|--|

Background

5.9 Officers are of the view that:

- Joining the joint health scrutiny committee to consider the ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme is a requirement under current legislation;
- Elected Members from West Berkshire, Hampshire and Southampton need to have collective oversight of what is being proposed for the Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital and to have the opportunity to debate the relative merits of different options;
- The Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust would gain a greater awareness of the impacts of their proposals on local communities in West Berkshire and would receive more balanced feedback on the relative merits of competing options;
- A joint committee should be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen and add value to the existing local scrutiny arrangements.

Proposal

5.10 Members are asked to support the proposal for West Berkshire Council to join the existing JHOSC as set out in this report, and in doing so approve the delegation of health scrutiny powers in relation to the ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme to the JHOSC. Members are also asked to approve the draft Terms of Reference document attached to this paper in Appendix B.

5.11 The updated Terms of Reference will also be considered by the existing Members of the JHOSC. If changes to the terms of reference were to be requested by the other local authorities, then an amended version would need to be brought back to full Council for approval.

6 Other options considered

6.1 Under current legislation, there are no viable alternatives to establishing a JHOSC to consider ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme, since patient flows are drawn from across West Berkshire, Hampshire and Southampton. West Berkshire Council could choose not to participate in the JHOSC, but this would mean that Members would not be able to participate in scrutiny of the redevelopment proposals.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The JHOSC ensures that the affected local authorities across West Berkshire, Hampshire and Southampton are able discharge their legal responsibilities when consulted by the Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on their proposals to

redevelop their sites. West Berkshire Council joining the JHOSC would help to ensure that the needs of local citizens are properly considered in relation to the redevelopment proposals.

7.2 Permitting West Berkshire Council to join the JHOSC requires all relevant local authorities (as outlined in this paper) to agree the Terms of Reference.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Equity Impact Assessment

8.2 Appendix B – Terms of Reference

Background Papers:

[National Health Services Act \(2006\)](#)

[Health and Social Care Act \(2012\)](#)

[The Local Authority \(Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny\) Regulations 2013](#)

[Guidance Local Authority Health Scrutiny, 9 January 2024, Department of Health and Social Care](#)

[Hampshire Together website](#)

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report is to note only | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Wards affected: All wards

Officer details:

Name: Gordon Oliver
Job Title: Principal Policy Officer
Tel No: 01635 519486
E-mail: Gordon.Oliver1@westberks.gov.uk

West Berkshire Council Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE

March 2023

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Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| Directorate and Service Area | Resources Strategy and Governance |
| What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | It is proposed that West Berkshire Council joins the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Commission set up for the purposes of providing independent scrutiny to the Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services Programme. |
| Is this a new or existing function or policy? | New |
| Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment). | Scrutiny of the ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme will help to identify, and more effectively address, current and future health inequalities. Scrutiny of this programme by the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Commission should have a beneficial impact on the delivery of health services for residents of West Berkshire, delivering benefits for all service users, including those with protected characteristics. |
| Completed By | Gordon Oliver |
| Authorised By | |
| Date of Assessment | 5 August 2024 |

Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p> | <p>NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight (the NHS body responsible for planning and buying health services for the population), together with NHS England in relation to specialised services, are consulting on how to spend up to £900 million in improving hospitals and the quality and sustainability of hospital services. Since the proposals affect patient flows across local authority boundaries, the affected local authorities are obliged to appoint a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) to review those proposals. The JHOSC was originally established in December 2020. West Berkshire Council has asked to join the JHOSC since the number of West Berkshire residents using particular services are significant, including Maternity and Emergency Services.</p> |
| <p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p> | <p>It is proposed that West Berkshire Council joins the existing JHOSC as set out in this report, and in doing so, approves the delegation of health scrutiny powers in relation to the ‘Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services’ Programme to the JHOSC.</p> <p>This will allow West Berkshire Council to be active partners in reviewing the proposals and the associated consultation process.</p> |
| <p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p> | <p>Patient flows from West Berkshire are believed to account for around 15% of flows for maternity and emergency services at the existing Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital.</p> |

Equity Impact Assessment

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p> | <p>West Berkshire Council could choose not to participate in the JHOSC, but this would mean that Members would not be able to participate in scrutiny of the hospital redevelopment proposals.</p> |
|--|--|

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Age | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | West Berkshire has a higher proportion of elderly residents than Hampshire. They are more likely to require hospital services. The JHOSC will seek to ensure their needs are taken into account when designing the new facilities. | West Berkshire Council joining the JHOSC would help ensure that the needs of this group are properly considered. | | |
| Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Disabled people are more likely to require hospital services. The JHOSC will seek to ensure their needs are taken into account when designing the new facilities. | West Berkshire Council joining the JHOSC would help ensure that the needs of this group are properly considered. | | |

Equity Impact Assessment

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Gender Reassignment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | No impact, since neither gender dysphoria clinics nor reassignment surgery are provided at the Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital or Royal Hampshire Council Hospital. | N/A | | |
| Marriage & Civil Partnership | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This group would not be affected by any changes to NHS services. | N/A | | |
| Pregnancy & Maternity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | West Berkshire residents account for approximately 15% of patients using maternity services at Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital. The JHOSC will seek to ensure their needs are taken into account when designing the new facilities. | West Berkshire Council joining the JHOSC would help ensure that the needs of this group are properly considered. | | |
| Race | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This group would not be affected by any changes to NHS services. | N/A | | |
| Sex | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This group would not be affected by any changes to NHS services. | N/A | | |

Equity Impact Assessment

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----|--|--|
| Sexual Orientation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This group would not be affected by any changes to NHS services. | N/A | | |
| Religion or Belief | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | This group would not be affected by any changes to NHS services. | N/A | | |

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Rural communities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rural populations generally have older populations who are more likely to use hospital services and poorer connectivity to hospitals. | West Berkshire Council joining the JHOSC would help ensure that the needs of this group are properly considered. | | |
| Areas of deprivation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | People living in poverty find it harder to live healthy lives, harder to access NHS services, live with greater illness and die earlier than the rest of the population. | West Berkshire Council joining the JHOSC would help ensure that the needs of this group are properly considered. | | |

Equity Impact Assessment

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Displaced communities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | People from displaced communities often find it harder to access NHS services. | West Berkshire Council joining the JHOSC would help ensure that the needs of this group are properly considered. | | |
| Care experienced people | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Children and young people who grow up in care are up to four times more likely to suffer poor health 30 years later than those who grew up with their parents. | West Berkshire Council joining the JHOSC would help ensure that the needs of this group are properly considered. | | |
| The Armed Forces Community | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | This group would not be affected by any changes to NHS services. | N/A | | |

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Equity Impact Assessment

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Review Date | N/A |
| Person Responsible for Review | N/A |
| Authorised By | N/A |

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Hampshire Together Programme)

Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. Health Services are required to consult a local authority's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee about any proposals they have for a substantial development or variation in the provision of health services in their area. When these substantial developments or variations affect a geographical area that covers more than one local authority, the local authorities are required to appoint a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) for the purposes of the consultation (where those authorities consider the change a 'substantial' change).

2. These terms of reference set out the arrangements for Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and West Berkshire Council to operate a JHOSC in line with the provisions set out in legislation and guidance.

Terms of Reference

3. The JHOSC will operate formally as a statutory joint committee i.e. where the councils have been required under Regulation 30 (5) Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Well-being Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 to appoint a joint committee for the purposes of providing independent scrutiny to the 'Hampshire Together – Modernising our Hospitals and Health Services' Programme.

4. The purpose of the JHOSC is to:

- a. make comments on the proposal consulted on
- b. require the provision of information about the proposal
- c. gather evidence from key stakeholders, including members of the public
- d. require the member or employee of the relevant health service to attend before it to answer questions in connection with the consultation
- e. should the Joint Committee not support the proposed reconfiguration, to write to the Secretary of State for Health to request that the Secretary of State consider calling in the proposal, in line with relevant legislation and statutory guidance (should attempts to resolve the Joint Committee's concerns locally fail).

5. With the exception of those matters referred to in paragraph [4] above, responsibility for all other health scrutiny functions and activities remain with the respective local authority Health Scrutiny Committees.

Governance

6. Meetings of the JHOSC will be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders of the host Local Authority.

Host authority

7. The JHOSC will be hosted by Hampshire County Council as the Local Authority with the largest population affected by the proposals.

Membership

8. Membership of the JHOSC will be appointed by the respective Local Authorities and their appointments notified to the host authority. A Local Authority may amend their appointments to the JHOSC and this will take effect when formal notification has been received by the host authority.

9. Each member of the JHOSC must be a properly elected Councillor to a seat on their respective authority and will cease to be a member of the JHOSC with immediate effect should they no longer meet this requirement.

10. Seats on the JHOSC are allocated in proportion to the relative population of each Local Authority area and the relative health impact on each area. Accordingly, the JHOSC will comprise 9 Members, with 7 being appointed by Hampshire County Council, 1 being appointed by Southampton City Council and 1 by West Berkshire Council.

11. Appointments by each authority to the JHOSC will reflect the political balance of that authority.

12. The quorum for meetings will be 3 voting members.

Chairman & Vice Chairman

13. The Chairman of the JHOSC for the duration of the Committee shall be elected at its first formal meeting and drawn from those Members in attendance at that meeting. Should the Chairman cease to be a member of the JHOSC, a new Chairman shall be elected at the next formal meeting.

14. The Vice-Chairman of the JHOSC for the duration of the Committee shall be elected at its first formal meeting and drawn from those Members in attendance at that meeting. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman shall assume all Chairmanship responsibilities. Should the Vice-Chairman cease to be a member of the JHOSC, a new Vice-Chairman shall be elected at the next formal meeting.

15. In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman at any Meeting of the JHOSC, Members in attendance shall appoint a Chairman for that Meeting from amongst their number, who shall, while presiding at that Meeting, have any power or duty of the Chairman in relation to the conduct of the Meeting.

Task & Finish Groups

16. The Committee may appoint such Working Groups of their members as they may determine to undertake and report back to the Committee on specified investigations or reviews as set out in the work programme. Appointments to such Working Groups will be made by the Committee, ensuring political balance as far as possible. Such panels will exist for a fixed period, on the expiry of which they shall cease to exist.

Committee support

17. The overall coordination, facilitation of meetings, policy support and other administrative arrangements will be undertaken by the host authority.

18. Meetings of the committee will be arranged and held by the host authority in accordance with Access to Information Regulations and other relevant legislation.

19. Communications with the media will be led by the host authority on behalf of the JHOSC.

20. Legal advice and support to the JHOSC will be provided by the host authority.

Meetings

21. The JHOSC will meet as often as required to fulfil its purpose, which is likely to include:

- An initial meeting to establish and set the scene of the proposals;
- a meeting to comment on the planned public consultation process;
- a meeting to comment on the results of the public consultation and any further relevant analysis of the options; and
- a meeting to agree whether to support the proposed outcome.

22. Dates for meetings will be arranged in advance and notified by the host authority.

23. Meetings of the JHOSC will be avoided during any pre-election period if possible.

24. Once the purpose of the JHOSC has been fulfilled the Committee will cease.

Reporting

25. Members of the JHOSC may provide updates to their Local Authority on its proceedings in accordance with the requirements of their respective authority.

26. Any recommendations of the JHOSC will be published and communicated to relevant parties by the host authority.

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Recommendations of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel 2024

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Committee considering report: | Council |
| Date of Committee: | 26 September 2024 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Jeff Brooks |
| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 5 September 2024 |
| Report Author: | Stephen Chard |
| Forward Plan Ref: | C4595 |

1 Purpose of the Report

To set out the recommendations of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) following their meetings on the 4 and 5 June 2024.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider and, if appropriate, agree the recommendations of the IRP as set out in paragraph 5.9 of this report.
- 2.2 That authority be delegated to the Service Director (Strategy and Governance) to amend Part 14 of the Constitution (Members’ Allowances Scheme) and the associated procedures and guidance in line with any changes agreed by full Council.
- 2.3 That the Council, once it has agreed the basic allowance for its Members, circulates the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for West Berkshire Parish and Town Councils to all of its town and parish councils for information.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication | Commentary |
|-------------------|---|
| Financial: | If Members are minded to approve the recommendations the cost of Members Allowances for 2024/25 would be £595k (including estimated index linked increases as set out in the report). If implemented from 1 April 2024. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------|--|
| Human Resource: | None | | | |
| Legal: | <p>The Panel was set up in accordance with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"), as amended.</p> <p>The terms of reference of the IRP 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)</p> | | | |
| Risk Management: | Any increases to Members Allowances are likely to be the subject of scrutiny by both residents and Council employees. | | | |
| Property: | None | | | |
| Policy: | The West Berkshire Council Members' Allowances Scheme (Part 14 of the Constitution) and any associated guidance will need to be amended as a result of any changes agreed by Council. | | | |
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
| Equalities Impact: | | | | |
| A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality? | X | | | <p>The scheme of allowances should be seen as neither an incentive nor a barrier to service as a councillor in West Berkshire.</p> <p>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.</p> |

Recommendations of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel 2024

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|------|
| B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | | x | | |
| Environmental Impact: | | x | | None |
| Health Impact: | | x | | None |
| ICT Impact: | | x | | None |
| Digital Services Impact: | | x | | None |
| Council Strategy Priorities: | | x | | None |
| Core Business: | | x | | None |
| Data Impact: | | x | | None |
| Consultation and Engagement: | District Members and Parish Councils were consulted by the IRP. | | | |

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 All Councils are required to convene an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their Members' Allowances Scheme. The Council must 'pay regard' to their Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Scheme.
- 4.2 The membership and Terms of Reference of the 2024 West Berkshire IRP were agreed under delegated authority by the Service Director: Strategy and Governance in consultation with the Group Leaders. The Panel comprised:
- Kate Barrow – Chief Executive, Education Business Partnership and resident
 - John Davies - resident of West Berkshire
 - Mark Palmer – Development and Governance Director, South East Employers (Chair).
- 4.3 Their 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;
 - (iv) parental leave; and
 - (v) Independent Person's allowance.
 - (c) whether payment of allowances may be backdated if the scheme is amended at any time to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made.
 - (d) 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.
- 4.4 In addition, they were invited to review the Chairman and Vice Chairman allowances. Whilst the 2003 Regulations do not require councils to include such allowances in any formal review, the Council has agreed that it would be appropriate in terms of openness and transparency to ask the Panel to review these allowances as part of the general review of the scheme of councillors' allowances.
- 4.5 The Panel met on the 4 and 5 June 2024. They interviewed ten current councillors using a structured questioning process. A questionnaire was also issued to all councillors to support and inform the review. Responses were received from 17 Councillors (40% of Councillors). In addition, the Panel considered benchmarking data for neighbouring and other comparable authorities.

- 4.6 A copy of their findings and recommendations is attached at Appendix A to this report. The Council is required to publish the recommendations of the Panel under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 4.7 The Parish Remuneration Panel was also convened by West Berkshire Council as the 'Responsible Authority' in accordance with the 2003 Regulations. The findings and recommendations are set out in Appendix B to this report.
- 4.8 The Panel was asked to consider and make recommendations to Parish Councils regarding:
- (a) Basic Allowance
 - (b) Chair's Allowance
 - (c) Travel and Subsistence Allowance
 - (d) Indexation
- 4.9 All Parish and Town Councils were invited to provide views through a questionnaire and the opportunity to speak to the Panel in respect of the Parish Basic Allowance, the Chair's Allowance, Travel and Subsistence and Indexation. 14 Parish and Town Councils responded to the questionnaire, but no Parish or Town Council met the Panel as part of the review. No Parish or Town Council advised the Panel that they pay the Parish Basic Allowance or Chair's Allowance.
- 4.10 The recommendations set out in the Parish Remuneration Report are based on the basic allowance awarded to West Berkshire Councillors. Once the level of this allowance has been agreed the report can be circulated to all parish and town councils. It is then up to each Parish or Town Council what if any of the two allowances they award and the level of the allowances up to the maximum recommended.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 After considering the Council's current scheme, the benchmarking data, the outcome of the members' survey and the oral representations made to them the Panel recommended that the current basic allowance should be increased from £8,289 per annum to £8,768 per annum. The rationale for this increase is set out in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.14 of Appendix A.
- 5.2 In setting the basic allowance the Panel considered three variables in their calculation: the time required to execute the role effectively; the public service discount; and the rate for remuneration. The Panel ascertained, from the information provided to them by Members, that the average number of hours necessary per week to undertake the role of a councillor (with no special responsibilities) continues to be 16 hours per week.
- 5.3 The Panel considered the percentage of these hours for which 'Councillors ought to be remunerated' and the element which should be established as the voluntary contribution by Members (often referred to as the Public Service Discount or PSD). They concluded that a PSD of 45% should be applied after taking into consideration 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.

5.4 The final part of the equation required the Panel to identify an hourly rate for calculating allowances. To establish this they utilised relevant statistics about the local labour market published by the Office for National Statistics and selected the average (median), full-time gross wage per hour by place of residence for West Berkshire which currently equated to £19.16.

5.5 This data was fed into the equation set out below:

Required time – PSD x Remuneration Rate = Basic Allowance

(16hrs per week x 52 weeks) – 45% x £19.16 = £8,768 per annum

5.6 There would also be a commensurate increase in the Special Responsibility Allowances as they are based on multipliers of the Basic Allowance. The SRAs were based on the tier system set out in paragraph 4.28 of the report.

5.7 The Panel's reasoning for setting the allowances at these levels are articulated in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.7 of their report. They have proposed allowances that in their opinion provide reasonable financial compensation for councillors for expenses they incurred and the time they committed in relation to their role. They also reflected on the overall need to ensure that the scheme of allowances was neither an incentive nor a barrier to service as a councillor in West Berkshire.

5.8 The Panel noted that, in order to attract candidates from more diverse backgrounds, the Basic Allowance should be set at a level to mitigate some of the factors that may dissuade some people from standing for election. They also stated that the Council should seek to highlight its Dependants' Carers' Allowance and the Parental Leave Policy to prospective and new councillors both before and following an election.

5.9 The Panel therefore made the following recommendations in relation to allowances:

- that the Basic Allowance payable to all Members of West Berkshire Council be £8,768 per annum;
- that no Councillor shall be entitled to receive at any time more than one Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) and that this One SRA Only Rule be adopted into the Scheme of Allowances;
- that the Council work towards a maximum number of SRAs payable at any one time not exceeding 50% of Council Members (22 Members);
- that the Leader of the Council continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 250% of the basic allowance i.e. £21,920;
- that the Deputy Leader receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 60% of the Leader's Allowance i.e. £13,152;
- that the Executive Members receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the Leader i.e. £10,960;
- that the Leader of the Opposition should continue to receive an allowance of 40% of the Leader i.e. £8,768;

- that the role of Chairman of Council continues to be recognised at Tier Five and therefore receives an allowance of £6,576 (30% of the Leader's Allowance);
- that the Chairmen of the Planning Committees and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 25% of the Leader's Allowance i.e. £5,480;
- that the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, the Chairman of the Governance Committee, the Chairman of the Personnel Committee, and the Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 15% of the Leader's Allowance i.e. £3,288;
- that the Opposition Groups Spokespersons receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 30% of the Leader of the Opposition's Allowance i.e. £2,630;
- that the Leaders of Minority Groups should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 10% of the Leader's Allowance i.e. £2,192 and that the criteria for receiving the allowance should be two or more Group Members;
- that the Vice Chairman of the Council receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 20% of the Chairman of the Council's Allowance i.e. £1,315;
- that Independent Persons continue to receive an allowance of £1,132;
- that travelling and subsistence allowance should be payable to councillors and Independent Persons in connection with any approved duties as follows:

Motor Mileage Allowance:

Cars: 45p per mile
Motor Cycles: 24p per mile

Cycle Allowance: 20p per mile

Day Subsistence Allowance:

Breakfast £5.00
Lunch £7.00
Tea £3.00
Evening Meal £12.00

- that the Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA) should be based on two rates. Rate one for general care be linked to the Real Living Wage as recommended by the Living Wage Foundation (currently £12 per hour) with no monthly maximum claim. This rate is reviewed by the Living Wage Foundation every November. 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, with no monthly maximum claim when undertaking approved councillor duties.
- that the Council should also actively promote this allowance to prospective and new councillors both before and following an election and on an annual basis. This may assist in supporting greater diversity of councillor representation.

- that the West Berkshire Council Parental Leave Policy continues to be adopted within the Members Allowance Scheme;
- that the Council support an active 'Be A Councillor' programme to encourage and support a greater diversity of future councillor representation.
- that the basic allowance, each of the SRAs, the Independent Persons Allowance and the Dependants' Carers' Allowance be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries from April 2024 for a period of up to four years. After this period the Scheme shall be reviewed again by an independent remuneration panel;
- that the political groups should not renunciate any indexation of allowances on a group basis and renunciation should be at the discretion of individual Councillors. The procedure for renunciation is outlined in the current scheme;
- that the new scheme of allowances to be agreed by the Council be implemented with effect from the beginning of the 2024-25 financial year, at which time the current scheme of allowances will be revoked;
- that no changes are made to the Approved Duties as outlined in the Members' Allowance Scheme.

Proposals

- 5.10 It is recommended that the Council considers, and if appropriate agrees the recommendations as set out in paragraph 5.9 of this report.
- 5.11 That authority be delegated to the Service Director (Strategy and Governance) to amend Part 14 of the Constitution (Members' Allowances Scheme) and the associated procedures and guidance in line with any changes agreed by full Council.
- 5.12 That the Council, once it has agreed the basic allowance for its Members, circulates the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for West Berkshire Parish and Town Councils to all of its town and parish councils for information.

6 Other options considered

Not to accept the recommendations of the IRP or to accept them in part only.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Panel, in arriving at its recommendations, took into account the views, written and oral, of Members; the scope and level of allowances paid in similar councils in Berkshire; and the current and future financial challenges. The changes proposed are not significant and it is therefore recommended that the Council accept the recommendations of the IRP.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – The report of the IRP appointed to review the allowances paid to Councillors of West Berkshire Council
- 8.2 Appendix B – The report of the IRP for West Berkshire’s Parish and Town Councils

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position
- Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Wards affected: All

Officer details:

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Job Title: Democratic Services Manager
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E-mail: stephen.chard@westberks.gov.uk

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**The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel  
appointed to review the allowances paid to Councillors  
of West Berkshire Council**

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June 2024

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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 West Berkshire Council formally appointed the following persons to undertake this process and make recommendations on its future scheme.

Kate Barrow – Chief Executive, Education Business Partnership and resident
John Davies - Resident of West Berkshire
Mark Palmer –Director Development and Governance, 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;
 - (iv) parental leave and.
 - (v) Independent Persons' allowance.

and the amount of such allowances.

- (c) whether payment of allowances may be backdated if the scheme is amended at any time to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made.
- (d) 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 In addition, we were again invited to review the Chairman and Vice Chairman allowances. Whilst the 2003 Regulations do not require councils to include such allowances in any formal review, the Council has agreed that it would be appropriate in terms of openness and transparency to ask the Panel to review these allowances as part of the general review of the scheme of councillors' allowances.

2. CURRENT SCHEME

2.1 The last full review of councillors' allowances was undertaken by West Berkshire IRP in September 2020, a light touch review was also undertaken in June 2021 to review two specific roles. The scheme of allowances was agreed at Full Council at the meeting on the 3rd December 2020.

2.2 The Scheme currently provides that all councillors are each entitled to a total basic allowance of £8,289 per annum, with effect from April 2022. 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. The Council also had adopted a Parental Leave Policy for Councillors in 2020.

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 many 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 previous IRP reviews in West Berkshire and was quantified in 2015. 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 continues to subscribe 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

¹ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, and HM Revenue and Customs, *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) 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
 - (iii) the overall need to ensure that the scheme of allowances is neither an incentive nor a barrier to service as a councillor in West Berkshire.
- 3.8 The Panel as in 2020 continues to 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.

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.

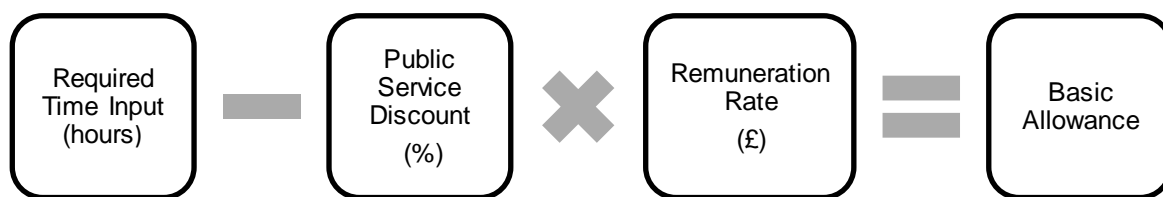
4. CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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, a number of working groups involving councillors also operate. Many councillors are also appointed by the Council to a number of external organisations.
- 4.3 We recognise that councillors are responsible to their electorate as:
- Representatives of a particular 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.

³ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Department for Levelling UP, Housing & Communities and HM Revenue & Customs, *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraph 67.

⁴ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and HM Revenue and Customs, *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraphs 66-81.



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 with councillors and through reference to the relevant Councillor Role Profiles. 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 continues to be 16 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 again recommend a Public Service Discount of 45 per cent to the calculation of the basic allowance. This percentage sits within the upper 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. That is to say, we 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 West Berkshire. The latest available figure is £19.16.⁷

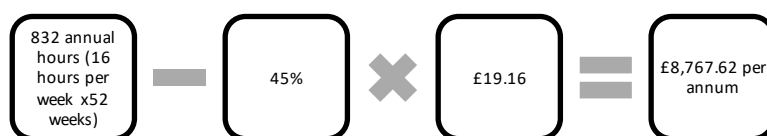
Calculating the basic allowance

4.11 After determining the amount of time required each week to fulfil the role (16 hours), the level of PSD to be applied (45%) and the hourly rate to be used (£19.16), we calculated the basic allowance as follows:

⁵ The summary responses to the questionnaires are available on request.

⁶ The basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, dependants' carers' allowance, and co-optees' allowance 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 2023.



- 4.12 The gross Basic Allowance before the PSD is applied is **£15,941.12**. Following the application of the PSD this leads to a basic allowance of **£8,767.62** per annum.
- 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 Berkshire unitary councils (see table below and Appendix 3).

| Council | Berkshire Unitary Councils: Basic Allowances (£) 2023 ⁸ |
|---|---|
| Bracknell Forest Council | 9,038 |
| Reading Borough Council | 8,942 |
| Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead | 8,472 |
| Slough Borough Council | 8,438 |
| West Berkshire Council | 8,768 |
| Wokingham District Council | 7,784 |
| Average | 8,574 |

- 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 had begun to make recommendations to ensure that the current basic was in accordance with the principle of fair remuneration and the 2024 review has further consolidated this approach.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Basic Allowance payable to all members of West Berkshire Council be £8,768 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.
- 4.20 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
- 4.21 We conclude from the evidence we have considered that the following offices bear *significant* additional responsibilities:

⁸ Figures drawn from the South East Employers, Members' Allowances Survey 2023 (October 2023).

⁹ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and HM Revenue and Customs, *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraph 72.

- Leader of the Council
- Deputy Leader of the Council
- Members of the Executive (7)
- The Chairman and Vice Chairman
- Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission
- Chairman of the Planning Committee
- Chairman of the Governance and Ethics Committee
- Chairman of the Licensing Committee
- Chairman of the Personnel Committee
- Opposition Spokespersons
- Leader of the Opposition
- Leaders of the Minority Groups

One SRA Only Rule

- 4.22 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**. If a councillor is able to receive more than one SRA then the public are unable to ascertain the actual level of remuneration for an individual councillor from a reading of the Scheme of Allowances.
- 4.23 Moreover, 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 SRA's Payable

- 4.24 In accordance with the 2006 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 72) the Panel is of the view that the Council should work towards no more than 50% of Council Members (22) should receive an SRA at any one time.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Council work towards a maximum number of SRA's payable at any one time does not exceed 50% of Council Members (22 Members).

Calculating SRAs

- 4.26 The Panel continued with the criteria and formula for calculating the Leader of the Council allowance. Based on a multiplier of the Basic Allowance, this role carries the most significant additional responsibilities, and is the most time consuming.
- 4.27 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.
- 4.28 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:



4.29 The rationale for these ten tiers of responsibility is discussed below.

Leader (Tier One)

4.30 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 Executive. The Leader is also responsible for the appointment (and dismissal) of members of the Executive and their respective areas of responsibility.

4.31 The multiplier we have again applied to calculate the Leader's SRA is 250% (2.5 times) the basic allowance. If the recommended option of a basic allowance with a PSD of 45% is adopted, this results in a Leader's Allowance of £21,920.

WE RECOMMEND that the Leader of the Council continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 250% of the basic allowance, £21,920.

Deputy Leader (Tier Two)

4.32 The Deputy Leader usually acts on the Leader's behalf in their absence. From the information we gathered, we continue to consider this additional responsibility should be reflected in the level of allowance. Therefore, we again recommend the Deputy Leader's 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 £13,152.

WE RECOMMEND that the Deputy Leader receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 60% of the Leader's Allowance, £13,152.

Members of the Executive (Tier Three)

- 4.33 From the evidence gathered, including questionnaire responses and face to face interviews, we consider the members of the Executive should receive an allowance of £10,960, 50% of the Leader's Allowance.
- 4.34 Evidence from the interviews we undertook with councillors, underlines the responsibility of the members of the Executive for many of the Council's functions. Members of the Executive hold considerable responsibility for their respective portfolios. In addition, we found the time commitment for the role to be significant.

WE RECOMMEND that the Executive Members receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the Leader, £10,960.

Leader of the Opposition (Tier Four)

- 4.35 The role of Leader of the Opposition continues to be a key role in ensuring accountability and in holding to account the executive decisions. The Leader of the Opposition also has to manage the group.

WE RECOMMEND that the Leader of the Opposition should continue to receive an allowance of 40% of the Leader, £8,768.

Chairman of the Council (Tier Five)

- 4.36 The Panel continues to be of the view that the role of Chairman of the Council continues to have a high impact and profile across the area and has a high number of engagements and commitments. We therefore recommend that the role continues to be recognised at Tier Five and receive an allowance of £6,576, 30% of the Leader's Allowance.

WE RECOMMEND that the Chairman of the Council should continue to receive an allowance of 30% of the Leader's Allowance, £6,576.

Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission and Chairman of the Planning Committee (Tier Six)

- 4.37 The newly named Scrutiny Commission does not have formal decision-making powers but is influential and new Government Statutory Guidance (April 2024) has sought to embed the scope and influence of the scrutiny function. We continued to consider the requirements of the Scrutiny Commission Chair and consider that it continues to be a significant function that has a statutory legal requirement. We consider this role should continue to receive a Tier Six allowance of £5,480, 25% of the Leader's Allowance.
- 4.38 The Chairman of East and West Planning Committees continue to be demanding roles with a high number of meetings. We therefore recommend that these roles also receive a Tier Six allowance, 25% of the Leader's Allowance, £5,480

WE RECOMMEND that the Chairman of the Planning Committees, the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 25% of the Leader's Allowance, £5,480.

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee, the Chairman of the Governance and Ethics Committee, Chairman of the Personnel Committee and Chairman of Health Scrutiny (Tier Seven)

- 4.39 The allowance for the Chairman of the Licensing Committee should continue to be within Tier Seven of the recommended SRAs, which is 15% of the Leader's Allowance, and amounts to £3,288.
- 4.40 The Panel is of the view that the allowance for Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Chairman of the Governance and Ethics Committee and Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee should each receive an allowance of £3,288, 15% of the Leader's Allowance.

WE RECOMMEND that the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, the Chairman of the Governance and Ethics Committee, the Chairman of the Personnel Committee and the Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 15% of the Leader's Allowance, £3,288.

Opposition Spokespersons (Tier Eight)

- 4.41 The Panel is of the view that the Opposition Group Spokespersons should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 30% of the Leader of the Opposition's Allowance, £2,630

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Opposition Groups Spokespersons receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 30% of the Leader of the Opposition's Allowance, £2,630.

Leaders of Minority Groups (Tier Nine)

- 4.42 The Panel continues to be of the view that the Special Responsibility Allowance for Minority Group Leaders should continue to be 10% of the Leader's Allowance, £2,192 and that the criteria to receive this allowance should be two or more Group Members.

WE RECOMMEND that the Leaders of Minority Groups should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 10% of the Leader's Allowance, £2,192. We also recommend that the criteria for receiving the allowance should be two or more Group Members.

Vice Chairman of the Council (Tier Ten)

- 4.43 The Vice Chairman of Council continues to play an active role in supporting the Chairman of the Council and therefore the Panel continue to recognise the role as one requiring a Special Responsibility Allowance. The Panel recommends that the Vice Chairman of the Council receive an allowance of 20% of the Chairman of the Council's Allowance, £1,315.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Vice Chairman of the Council receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 20% of the Chairman of the Council's Allowance, £1,315.

Independent Persons Allowance

- 4.44 An IRP may recommend payment, and the level of an allowance for those who serve on the committees or sub-committees of a Council but are not members of the Council. We recognise that in so doing, an element of the contribution made by the Independent Persons should be voluntary.

WE RECOMMEND that the Independent Persons continue to receive an allowance of £1,132.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowance

- 4.45 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 (see paragraph 5.10). Similarly, such an allowance may also be paid to co-opted/Independent Persons 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.

The current scheme of councillors' allowances provides for the following levels of travelling and subsistence allowance:

Motor Mileage Allowance:

Cars: 45p per mile

Motor Cycles: 24p per mile

Cycle Allowance: 20p per mile

Day Subsistence Allowance

Breakfast: £5.00

Lunch: £7.00

Tea: £3.00

Evening Meal: £12.00

In respect of any approved duties, Councillor's and Independent Persons are reimbursed the cost upon production of receipts or evidence of expenditure.

WE RECOMMEND that travelling and subsistence allowance should be payable to councillors and Independent Persons in connection with any approved duties.

Dependants' Carer's Allowance.

- 4.46 The Panel in 2020 recommended some significant changes to this allowance that were adopted by Council. The Panel continues to be of the view recommended in 2020 that the Dependants' Carers Allowance should be based on two rates, general care and specialist care. 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 to continue to be reimbursed at the rate of the Real Living Wage as recommended by the Living Wage Foundation, currently £12 per hour and reviewed annually. For both Specialist Care and Childcare their should be no maximum claim when undertaking approved councillor duties.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Dependants' Carers' Allowance should be based on two rates. Rate one for general care be linked to the Real Living Wage as recommended by the Living Wage Foundation, currently £12.00 per hour, with no monthly maximum claim. This rate is reviewed by the Living Wage Foundation every November.

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, with no monthly maximum claim when undertaking approved councillor duties.

WE ALSO RECOMMEND that the Council should also actively promote the allowance to prospective and new councillors both before and following an election and on an annual basis. This may assist in supporting greater diversity of councillor representation.

Parental Leave

- 4.47 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.
- 4.48 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 continue to include the West Berkshire Council Parental Leave Policy for Members developed and approved in January 2020
- 4.49 The Panel continues to support the provisions within the West Berkshire Council Parental Leave Policy for Members. The Panel is of the view that the Policy should be promoted actively to potential and prospective councillors. That the Policy alongside the Dependants' Carer's Allowance should be promoted as part of a wider 'Be A Councillor' (LGA led initiative) programme led by the Council and supported by political groups; to increase the diversity of councillor representation

WE RECOMMEND that the West Berkshire Council Parental Leave Policy Continues to be adopted within the Members Allowance Scheme. WE ALSO RECOMMEND that the Council support an active 'Be A Councillor' programme to encourage and support a greater diversity of future councillor representation.

Indexing of Allowances

- 4.50 A scheme of allowances may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances in line with a specified index. The present scheme makes provision for the basic allowance, the special responsibility allowances, Independent Persons and the dependants' carers' allowance to be adjusted annually in line with staff salaries at West Berkshire Council.

WE RECOMMEND that the basic allowance, each of the SRAs, the Independent Persons Allowance and the Dependants' Carer's Allowance be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries from April 2024 for a period of up to four years. After this period the Scheme shall be reviewed again by an independent remuneration panel.

WE ALSO RECOMMEND as in 2020 that the political groups should not renunciate any indexation of allowances on a group basis and renunciation should be at the discretion of individual Councillors. The procedure for renunciation is outlined in the current scheme.

Revocation of current Scheme of Allowances / Implementation of new Scheme

- 4.51 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 2024-25 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 17 councillors, which represents 40% of Councillors. The information obtained was helpful in informing our deliberations.
- 5.2 We interviewed ten current councillors using a structured questioning process. 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.

6. APPROVED COUNCILLOR DUTIES

- 6.1 The Panel reviewed the recommended duties for which allowances should be payable and recommend that no changes be made.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND: That no changes are made to the Approved Duties as outlined in the Members' Allowance Scheme.

**Mark Palmer (Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel)
Director of Development and Governance, South East Employers
June 2024**

Appendix 1: Summary of Panel's Recommendations

| Allowance | Current Amount for 2019-20 | Number | Recommended Allowance (45% PSD) | Recommended Allowance Calculation |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Basic (BA) | | | | |
| Total Basic: | £8,289 | 43 | £8,768 | |

| Special Responsibility: | | | | |
|---|---------|----------------|---------|---|
| Leader of the Council | £20,721 | 1 | £21,920 | 250% of BA |
| Deputy Leader | £12,432 | 1 | £13,152 | 60% of Leader's Allowance |
| Executive Members | £10,362 | 7 ¹ | £10,960 | 50% of Leader's Allowance |
| Leader of the Opposition | £8,289 | 1 | £8,768 | 40% of Leader's Allowance |
| Chairman of Council | £6,217 | 1 | £6,576 | 30% of Leaders Allowance |
| Chairman of Planning Committee | £5,179 | 2 | £5,480 | 25% of Leader's Allowance |
| Chairman of Scrutiny Commission | £5,179 | 1 | £5,480 | 25% of Leader's Allowance |
| Chairman of Licensing Committee | £3,108 | 1 | £3,288 | 15% of Leader's Allowance |
| Chairman of Governance & Ethics Committee | £3,108 | 1 | £3,288 | 15% of Leader's Allowance |
| Chairman of Personnel Committee | £3,108 | 1 | £3,288 | 15% of the Leader's Allowance |
| Chairman of Health scrutiny | £3,108 | 1 | £3,288 | 15% of the Leader's Allowance |
| Opposition Spokespersons | £2,486 | 4 | £2,630 | 30% of Leader of the Opposition Allowance |
| Leaders of Minority Groups | £2,048 | 1 | £2,192 | 10% of Leader's Allowance |

¹ Excludes the Leader and Deputy Leader, i.e., the Executive has 9 members.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|---|--------|---------------------------------------|
| Vice Chairman of Council | £1,244 | 1 | £1,315 | 20% of the Chairman's Allowance |
| Independent Persons | £1,132 | | £1,132 | Indexation to apply |

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Q1 In a typical week how many hours do you spend on Council business?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 20 | 5/27/2024 7:00 PM |
| 2 | 5 | 5/22/2024 12:59 PM |
| 3 | 40 | 5/22/2024 12:47 PM |
| 4 | 5 | 5/21/2024 3:36 PM |
| 5 | 20 | 5/21/2024 3:07 PM |
| 6 | 20 | 5/21/2024 10:28 AM |
| 7 | 20-25 | 5/20/2024 5:26 PM |
| 8 | 30 | 5/20/2024 10:00 AM |
| 9 | 10 | 5/19/2024 1:59 PM |
| 10 | 5 hours | 5/19/2024 12:17 PM |
| 11 | 8hrs | 5/18/2024 6:37 PM |
| 12 | 10 | 5/17/2024 7:15 PM |
| 13 | Between 5 and 15 hours | 5/17/2024 4:10 PM |
| 14 | 16-20 hrs | 5/17/2024 10:54 AM |
| 15 | 18 | 5/17/2024 10:26 AM |
| 16 | 18 | 5/17/2024 9:04 AM |
| 17 | 25 | 5/16/2024 6:57 PM |

Q2 If you hold a role(s) within the Council i.e. Portfolio Holder, Chair etc., how many hours do you spend in a typical week on Council business relevant to the role(s). [Please provide details separately for each role if more than one additional role is held.] Please specify specific roles below and hours spent on each role:

Answered: 13 Skipped: 4

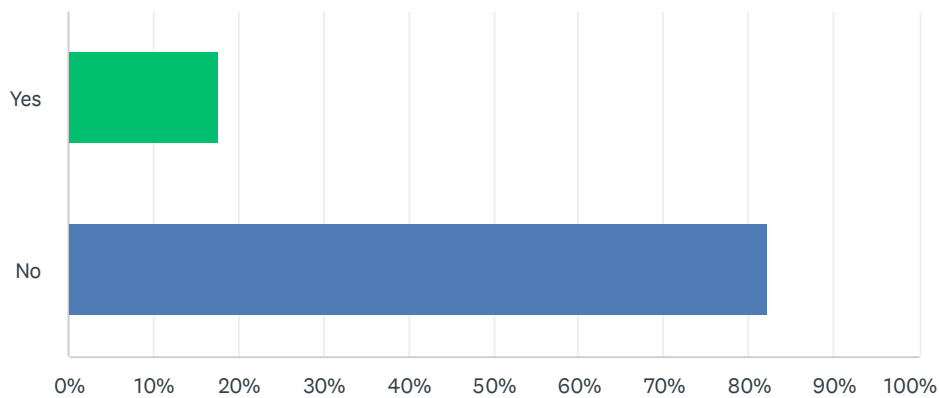
| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|---|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Western Area Planning - 8hours for preparation and each meeting - usually once a month and occasionally twice District Planning Committee - new appointment unknown Governance Committee Vice Chair - 4 hours a month Full Council - 6 meetings a year - 6 hours each including prep . Also 4 Joint Public Protection Committee meetings a year - 2 hours each Shadow Executive Member for Housing Leisure & Sport Culture, Countryside and Public Safety - 3 monthly briefings from Officers - about an hour each Executive - 10 a year - 6 hours each including prep Property Investment Board - 4 meetings a year -2 hours each including prep Also numerous member briefings some of which are compulsory and of course ward casework. | 5/27/2024 7:00 PM |
| 2 | Portfolio - housing and Planning 25 hours Deputy leader 15 hours | 5/22/2024 12:47 PM |
| 3 | n/a | 5/21/2024 3:36 PM |

Independent Remuneration Panel Members' Allowances Questionnaire 2024 - West Berkshire Council

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 4 | Leader, Minority Group, 10 | 5/21/2024 10:28 AM |
| 5 | Scrutiny chairman - approx 7 hours per week spread across the year | 5/20/2024 5:26 PM |
| 6 | Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, and Young People's Services | 5/20/2024 10:00 AM |
| 7 | n/a | 5/19/2024 1:59 PM |
| 8 | 15 hours - Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health | 5/19/2024 12:17 PM |
| 9 | Executive 15hrs | 5/18/2024 6:37 PM |
| 10 | N/A | 5/17/2024 7:15 PM |
| 11 | Backbencher. However I am a 'champion', and time spent on this role is variable, from nothing to half a day in a week. I am also on several outside bodies. This week an outside body took up 2.5 hours of my time. | 5/17/2024 4:10 PM |
| 12 | Barn and Burial Ground Chairman - 10-16 When I was Chairman of the full Parish Council, it was almost full time and I received no remuneration at all | 5/17/2024 10:54 AM |
| 13 | Chairman WBC, 17 Ward Member 15 | 5/16/2024 6:57 PM |

Q3 Do you incur any significant costs which you believe are not covered by your present allowance?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Yes | 17.65% | 3 |
| No | 82.35% | 14 |
| TOTAL | | 17 |

| # | IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS: | DATE |
|---|---|-------------------|
| 1 | computer purchase and supplies | 5/27/2024 7:00 PM |
| 2 | Travel to six parishes in my ward. Last week alone I drove 44 miles to meetings in my parishes. | 5/20/2024 5:26 PM |
| 3 | Landry and dry cleaning. | 5/16/2024 6:57 PM |

Q4 Government guidance states that “it is important that some element of the work of Councillors continues to be voluntary”. As part of their deliberations, Independent Remuneration Panels will assess what Public

Service Discount should apply to the basic allowance - that is the percentage of their time Councillors expect to give without any financial remuneration. Accordingly, what do you feel is an acceptable amount of time to be given, unremunerated, if any, expressed as a percentage?

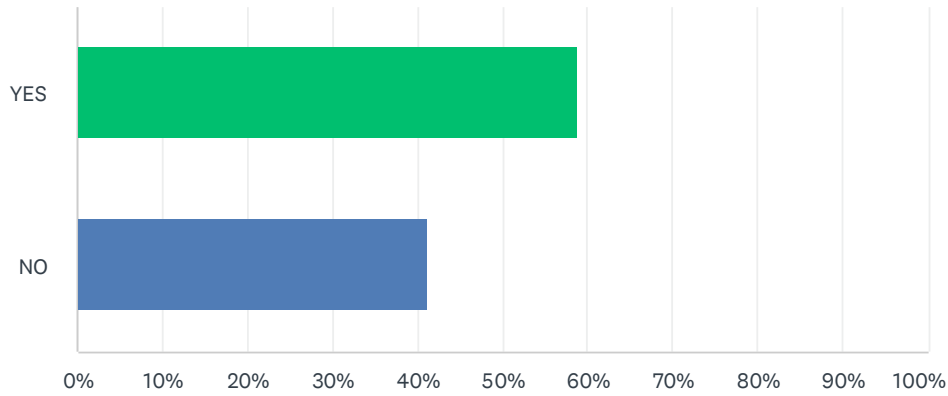
Answered: 17 Skipped: 0

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | 50% | 5/27/2024 7:00 PM |
| 2 | 20 | 5/22/2024 12:59 PM |
| 3 | 50% | 5/22/2024 12:47 PM |
| 4 | 25% | 5/21/2024 3:36 PM |
| 5 | 50 | 5/21/2024 3:07 PM |
| 6 | 50% | 5/21/2024 10:28 AM |
| 7 | Zero. I already do a lot of my role voluntarily. Going to six parish council meetings, attending events for the elderly and vulnerable in my community, attending meetings with Thames Water when there is sewage causing a health hazard, etc etc is not a formal part of my role, but they are an obligation in my opinion, that are necessary to engage with to be a good councillor. Those activities are above and beyond the case work and preparation for/attendance at formal meetings that are core to my role as a councillor. When I divide my allowance by the number of hours I do I get below the minimum wage. Many WBC councillors are town councillors, for which they get nothing at all. The more of this role we do for free, the more pressure that puts on us to find paid work elsewhere in order to pay the bills. If you want good councillors, from a range of backgrounds including young people and single parents, pay them properly; if you don't want to pay, you'll get people who don't do their casework, have a poor attendance record, and who would not be recognised by their electorate if they walked past them in the street. This undermines democracy because the electorate think councillors are a waste of space. | 5/20/2024 5:26 PM |
| 8 | 20% | 5/20/2024 10:00 AM |
| 9 | Most voluntary roles would take up 2-4 hours per week. it's difficult to express this a percentage. it really should be a fixed ammount | 5/19/2024 1:59 PM |
| 10 | 50 per cent | 5/19/2024 12:17 PM |
| 11 | 25% | 5/18/2024 6:37 PM |
| 12 | 40% | 5/17/2024 7:15 PM |
| 13 | I am also a Town Councillor and that requires a batch of hours to be spent upon those duties, e.g. a visit to a resident this week, of 2 hours. Perhaps those are my voluntary hours. | 5/17/2024 4:10 PM |
| 14 | 25% | 5/17/2024 10:54 AM |
| 15 | 50% | 5/17/2024 10:26 AM |
| 16 | Current allowance is sufficient. | 5/17/2024 9:04 AM |
| 17 | 5% | 5/16/2024 6:57 PM |

Q5 The present level of Basic Allowance payable to all Councillors is £8,289. Do you think this is appropriate?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0

Independent Remuneration Panel Members' Allowances Questionnaire 2024 - West Berkshire Council



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|-----------|
| YES | 58.82% 10 |
| NO | 41.18% 7 |
| TOTAL | 17 |

| # | IF NO, SHOULD IT BE LOWER OR HIGHER? PLEASE GIVE A REASON FOR YOUR ANSWER: | DATE |
|---|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Higher | 5/27/2024 7:00 PM |
| 2 | Higher. WBC has one of the lowest allowances in England. One of the reasons so many Cllrs are retired is because you can't afford the time / to reduce hours on other employment to be a Cllr | 5/21/2024 3:38 PM |
| 3 | I would like to receive the minimum wage for the hours I work. | 5/20/2024 5:38 PM |
| 4 | Higher - many councillors give up paid work to take on this role. It also often replaces other volunteering work we do. This then becomes a bar to younger people who cannot afford to give up paid employment time. | 5/20/2024 10:01 AM |
| 5 | Higher | 5/18/2024 6:38 PM |
| 6 | higher | 5/17/2024 10:27 AM |
| 7 | Higher | 5/16/2024 6:59 PM |

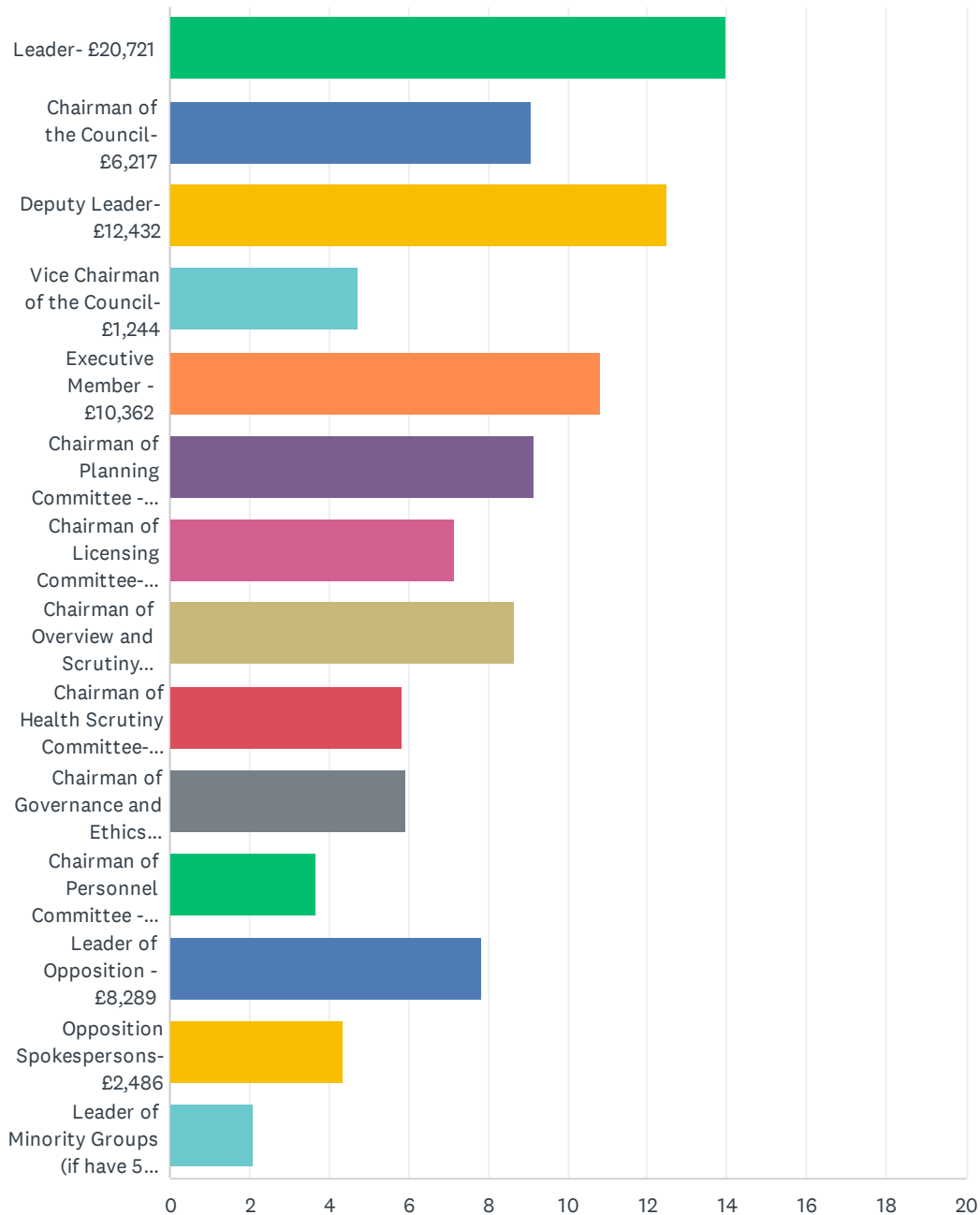
Q6 If you are able to, please indicate an appropriate level £:

Answered: 7 Skipped: 10

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | £12000 | 5/27/2024 7:00 PM |
| 2 | Whatever the average is across England | 5/21/2024 3:38 PM |
| 3 | Based on the average hours I work (20-25 per week, not including special responsibilities) at minimum wage would be £13,384.80 per annum. | 5/20/2024 5:38 PM |
| 4 | 9500 | 5/18/2024 6:38 PM |
| 5 | OK as now | 5/17/2024 10:54 AM |
| 6 | £10,000 | 5/17/2024 10:27 AM |
| 7 | 10/15% | 5/16/2024 6:59 PM |

Q7 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are currently paid as follows: [To assist the Panel to produce a more consistent group of allowances, please can you score each role / position in respect of importance and impact, with 1 being the most important.

Answered: 12 Skipped: 5



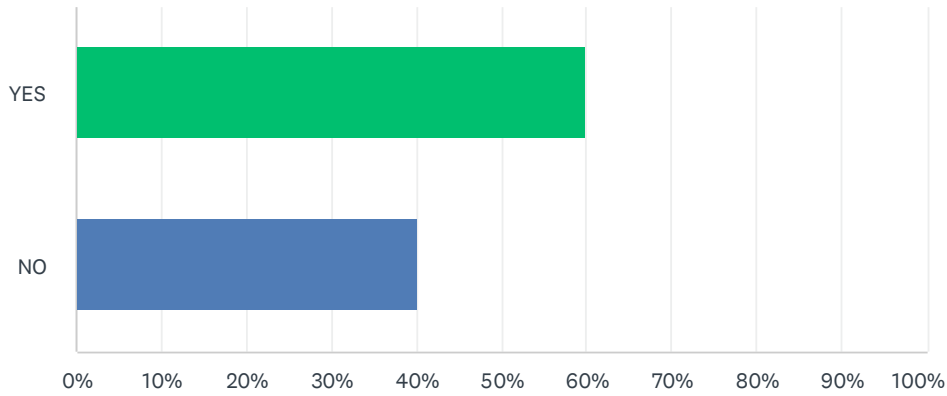
Independent Remuneration Panel Members' Allowances Questionnaire 2024 - West Berkshire Council

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|--|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Leader- £20,721 | 100.00% 12 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | C |
| Chairman of the Council- £6,217 | 0.00% 0 | 16.67% 2 | 8.33% 1 | 16.67% 2 | 16.67% 2 | 8.33% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 8.33% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 8 |
| Deputy Leader- £12,432 | 0.00% 0 | 75.00% 9 | 16.67% 2 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | C |
| Vice Chairman of the Council- £1,244 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 9.09% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 9.09% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 9.09% 1 | 18.18% 2 | 18 |
| Executive Member - £10,362 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 58.33% 7 | 16.67% 2 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | C |
| Chairman of Planning Committee - £5,179 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 16.67% 2 | 33.33% 4 | 8.33% 1 | 8.33% 1 | 16.67% 2 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | C |
| Chairman of Licensing Committee- £3,108 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 9.09% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 18.18% 2 | 18.18% 2 | 18.18% 2 | 27.27% 3 | 0.00% 0 | C |
| Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission - £5,179 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 16.67% 2 | 16.67% 2 | 25.00% 3 | 8.33% 1 | 25.00% 3 | 8.33% 1 | 0.00% 0 | C |
| Chairman of Health Scrutiny Committee- £3,108 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 25.00% 3 | 8.33% 1 | 33.33% 4 | 16.67% 2 | C |
| Chairman of Governance and Ethics Committee- £3,108 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 16.67% 2 | 16.67% 2 | 8.33% 1 | 16.67% 2 | 25 |
| Chairman of Personnel Committee - £3,108 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 33 |
| Leader of Opposition - £8,289 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 16.67% 2 | 25.00% 3 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 16.67% 2 | C |
| Opposition Spokespersons- £2,486 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 16.67% 2 | 8.33% 1 | 8.33% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 8 |
| Leader of Minority Groups (if have 5 Group Members) - £2,048 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 8.33% 1 | 8 |

Q8 Would you like to see any of these changes made to these allowances?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 2

Independent Remuneration Panel Members' Allowances Questionnaire 2024 - West Berkshire Council

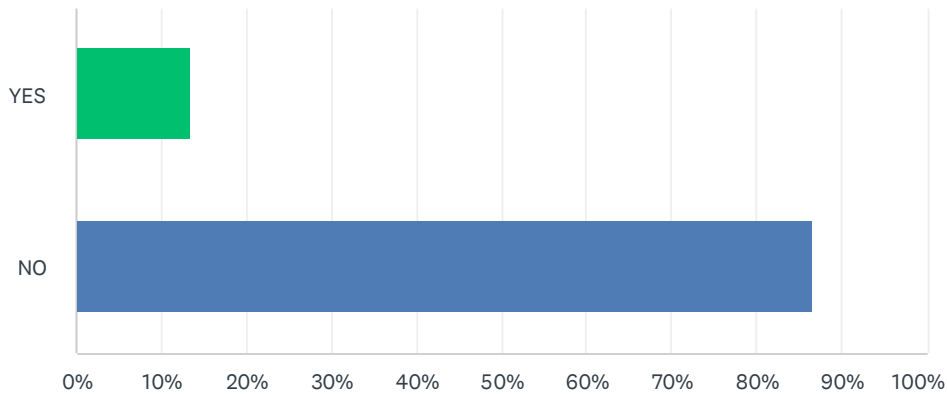


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|-----------|
| YES | 60.00% 9 |
| NO | 40.00% 6 |
| TOTAL | 15 |

| # | IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS: | DATE |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | I order listed | 5/27/2024 7:13 PM |
| 2 | Make them the average across England | 5/21/2024 3:41 PM |
| 3 | reduce by 10 % | 5/21/2024 3:11 PM |
| 4 | Leader of the Minority Group has much the same responsibilities as Leader of the Opposition (if anything, the role is more demanding as I don't have as many members, so have to cover areas that Opposition spokesperson cover.) I can't see any reason why the Minority Group Leader should not receive the same SRA as the Leader of the Opposition, or at least the differential should be reduced. | 5/21/2024 10:32 AM |
| 5 | as previous answer, these need to reflect reasonable compensation against loss of earnings | 5/20/2024 10:04 AM |
| 6 | Leader/Deputy/Exec to increase | 5/18/2024 6:41 PM |
| 7 | A fair share for the responsibility | 5/17/2024 4:15 PM |
| 8 | maybe 10% higher | 5/17/2024 10:29 AM |

Q9 Would you like to see any new SRAs introduced?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 2



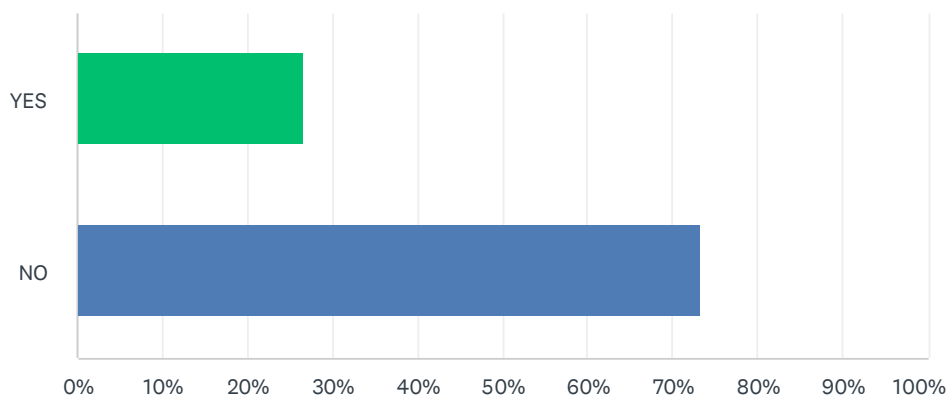
Independent Remuneration Panel Members' Allowances Questionnaire 2024 - West Berkshire Council

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|-----------|
| YES | 13.33% 2 |
| NO | 86.67% 13 |
| TOTAL | 15 |

| # | IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS: | DATE |
|---|---------------------------------|------|
| | There are no responses. | |

Q10 Dependent Carer's Allowance - Rate 1 general care linked to the Real Living Wage, £12 per hour per hour. Rate 2 specialist care reimbursed at cost. Do you think these rates should be increased?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 2



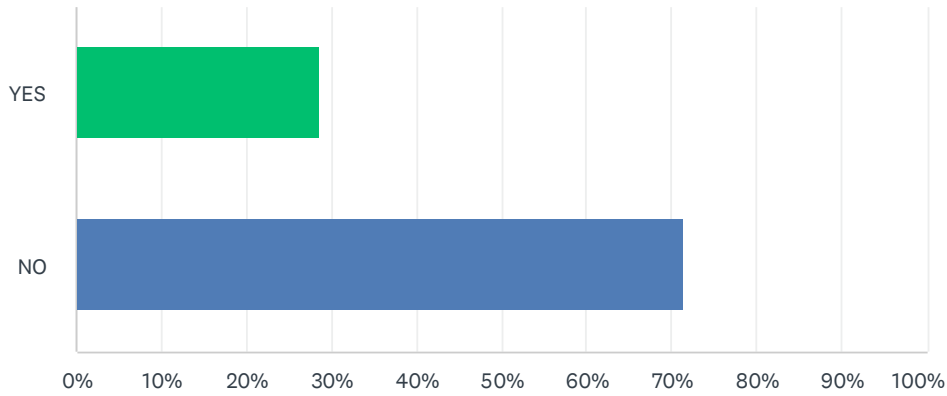
| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|-----------|
| YES | 26.67% 4 |
| NO | 73.33% 11 |
| TOTAL | 15 |

| # | IF YES, PLEASE INDICATE RATE AND SEASON: | DATE |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | It would reflect positively on the important work that carers do. | 5/19/2024 12:18 PM |
| 2 | £15 per hour would be more realistic | 5/17/2024 4:15 PM |
| 3 | no strong view on increase | 5/17/2024 10:30 AM |

Q11 The current scheme of travel allowances are linked to those recommended by HMRC level. Do you have any comments on the current scheme for Councillors?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 3

Independent Remuneration Panel Members' Allowances Questionnaire 2024 - West Berkshire Council



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|-----------|
| YES | 28.57% 4 |
| NO | 71.43% 10 |
| TOTAL | 14 |

| # | IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS: | DATE |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | never claim...surely the allowance and free parking in Kennet Centre is sufficient? | 5/21/2024 3:12 PM |
| 2 | We don't get paid travel expenses for parish meetings | 5/20/2024 5:59 PM |
| 3 | We should look to encourage alternative methods of transport beyond car use. | 5/19/2024 12:18 PM |
| 4 | HMRC rate has not increased for a long time yet car costs have | 5/17/2024 10:32 AM |

Q12 If you have any other comments on Members' Allowances, please detail below:

Answered: 3 Skipped: 14

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | nil | 5/21/2024 3:12 PM |
| 2 | No, thank you | 5/17/2024 4:16 PM |
| 3 | small political groups should have some admin support | 5/17/2024 10:32 AM |

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Previous years' data - did not submit 2023 return, data taken from 2022 return

NB: some cells contain notes denoted by a red mark

| | | MINIMUM | £7,784.00 | £3,317.00 | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| | | MAXIMUM | £13,900.00 | £1,042,650.00 | | | | |
| | | AVERAGE | £10,540.82 | £725,853.40 | | | | |
| Council name | Type of council | County area | Population | Basic Allowance for 2023/2024 | Overall budget for Member Allowances | Total number of councillors | Percentage of Public Service Discount*, if applicable (%) | Comments on Basic Allowance |
| Bracknell Forest Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 124607 | £9,038.04 | £582,100 | 41 | 33% | No comments |
| Brighton & Hove City Council | Unitary | East Sussex | 276300 | £13,593.00 | £1,042,650 | 54 | | The Basic Allowance is indexed linked to the agreed salary |
| Buckinghamshire Council | Unitary | Buckinghamshire | 551560 | No data provided | | | | |
| Isle of Wight Council | Unitary | Isle of Wight | 14000 | £8,832.00 | £335,616 | 39 | | Current basic allowance subject to confirmation of 2023/24 staff pay award (average percentage increase to be applied) |
| Medway Council | Unitary | Kent | 275000 | £11,474.00 | £969,277 | 59 | 25 | N/A |
| Milton Keynes Council | Unitary | Buckinghamshire | 290000 | £11,689.00 | £990,000 | 57 | 0 | 0 |
| Portsmouth City Council | Unitary | Hampshire | 208100 | £11,684.00 | £649,400 | 42 | N/A | The basic allowance is index linked to any annual pay |
| Reading Borough Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 162000 | £8,942.13 | £598,200 | 48 | | *Basic allowance will be increased once the Local Government Pay Settlement has been agreed. |
| Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead | Unitary | Berkshire | 145000 | £8,472.00 | £550,000 | 41 | 49% | None |
| Slough Borough Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 164000 | No data provided | | | | |
| Southampton City Council | Unitary | Hampshire | 263769 | £13,900.00 | £927,801 | 51 | | The IRP held in October 2022 recommended the Basic Allowance is linked to the Real Living Wage. At Full Council |
| West Berkshire Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 158527 | No data provided | | | | |
| Wokingham Borough Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 174000 | £7,784.00 | £613,490.00 | 54 | 50 | A Basic Allowance is payable to all Councillors monthly. The current Basic Allowance is an annual amount of -£7,784 which comprises: a) -£600 for out of pocket expenses b) -£6,684 for |

| Council name | Type of council | County area | Population | Travelling/mileage (pence per mile) | Bicycle mileage (pence per mile) | Subsistence allowance | Carers' allowance | IT allowance | Any other allowances | Maternity/parental leave |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| Bracknell Forest Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 124607 | £0.45 | N/A | Tea £3.76 and Evening meal £11.76) For meals that cannot be pre-booked and paid by the Council and are in excess of current rates payable to officers, councillors' reasonable costs shall be reimbursed on production of receipts up to a limit of £25 per day. | £56 per approved duty | All members are entitled to receive such computer hardware and software that enables them to perform their duties more effectively. Help desk support is provided. Executive councillors, Group Leaders, or Chairman of a Committee may receive a mobile phone or smartphone dependent on their role within the Council. | Parking, taxi, rail and air travel. | N/A |
| Brighton & Hove City Council | Unitary | East Sussex | 270000 | £0.45 | £0.20 | Breakfast - £6.77; Lunch - £9.30; Tea - £3.50; Evening Meal - | £9 per hour | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Buckinghamshire Council | Unitary | Buckinghamshire | 551560 | No data provided | | | | | | |
| Isle of Wight Council | Unitary | Isle of Wight | 14000 | £0.45 | N/A | Individual per claim submitted | Individual per claim submitted | | 0 | 0 |
| Medway Council | Unitary | Kent | 275000 | £0.45 | £0.20 | Breakfast allowance Four hours or more away from home STARTING BEFORE 7.30 am £5.00 2. Lunch allowance Four hours or more away from home INCLUDING period 12 noon to 2 pm £7.00 3. Tea allowance Four hours or more away from home ENDING AFTER 6.30 pm £3.00 4. Evening meal | (a) Dependent childcare is reimbursable up to a maximum of £10.90 per hour. This is indexed against the Living Wage Foundation rate for the next four years; and (b) For dependent adult care or children with special needs is reimbursable up to £19.44 per person and indexed against the Council's commissioned hourly home care rate for the next four years. | | 0 Travel by motor cycle 21.3p per mile | All Councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full for a period up to 6 months in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence. Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall |
| Milton Keynes Council | Unitary | Buckinghamshire | 290000 | £0.45 | £0.20 | All reasonable claims for subsistence expenses whilst carrying out Approved Duties will be paid provided they are supported | a) Childcare - Real Living Wage of £10.90 per hour b) Specialist Care - actual costs subject to medical evidence supporting the requirement for specialist care | Councillors are provided with one device (laptop or surface go) | no | Yes |
| Portsmouth City Council | Unitary | Hampshire | 208100 | £0.45 | £0.20 | N/A | The rate of reimbursement for carers is equivalent to the Living Wage Foundation rate of -£9.90 per hour. This is per person cared for and is unlimited. | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Reading Borough Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 162000 | £0.45 | £0.30 | Breakfast allowance (more than four hours away from normal place of residence or where the authority permits, a lesser period, before 11.00am) £9.15; Lunch allowance (more than four hours away from normal place of residence or where the | Claims may be made for up to £9.90 per hour for childcare for up to 15 hours per week. Claims may be made for up to £9.90 per hour for the paid care attendant for an elderly or disabled relative (including a disabled child) for up to 15 hours per week. | N/A | N/A | Yes - the Council adopted the Local Government Association, Parental Leave Policy for Councils on 27 January 2022 |
| Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead | Unitary | Berkshire | 145000 | £0.45 | £0.20 | | The hourly rate payable will be as follows: A. Childcare - to be paid at and indexed to the hourly minimum wage applicable to the age of the carer (who must be 16 years of age or over) or less for actual reimbursement; B. Care for dependants on social/medical grounds; A. the hourly rate paid to be the Royal Borough's average hourly homecare charge. | 0 | 0 | The Basic Allowance should continue to be paid during any period of maternity, adoption or paternity leave, noting that any period of absence from qualifying meetings greater than six months would require special dispensation by Full Council. For maternity and adoption leave, the Member to continue to receive SRA payments on the following basis: A. Six weeks at 90% of actual SRA level Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Constitution Part 9 A Part 9A - B. A. Twelve weeks at 50% of actual SRA level For paternity leave, the Member to continue to receive SRA payments in full for a period of two weeks. No qualifying period to apply for entitlement to receive either the Basic Allowance or SRA payments during a period of maternity, adoption or paternity |
| Slough Borough Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 164000 | No data provided | | | | | | |
| Southampton City Council | Unitary | Hampshire | 263769 | £0.45 | £0.37 | Breakfast allowance (more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence, before 11.00 am): £6.00 Lunch allowance (more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence, | like for like reimbursement | n/a | n/a | in line with LGA Policy |
| West Berkshire Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 158527 | No data provided | | | | | | |
| Wokingham Borough Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 174000 | £0.45 | £0.35 | Breakfast allowance more than a four hours away from normal place of residence before 11am 4.92 Lunch allowance more than four hours away from normal place of residence, including the lunchtime between 12 noon and 2pm 6.77 Tea allowance more than four hours away from normal place of residence including the period 3pm to 6pm 2.67 Evening meal allowance more than four hours away from normal place of residence ending after 7pm 8.38 Overnight if Members attend a training course or conference which is held at a venue beyond reasonable daily travelling distance, the reasonable cost of overnight accommodation (e.g. 3* star hotel) may be claimed subject to agreement with the Budget Manager prior to booking | From April 2021 the following will take effect: i) A maximum claimable rate of -£10 per hour be instated, to rise with the national living wage rate as and when this overtakes the stated figure. This rate is claimable by Members with direct caring responsibilities, and should primarily be used for non-specialist childcare (e.g. babysitting); ii) A maximum claimable rate of -£20 per hour be instated, to rise by the same monetary increase as granted to part i) of the Dependent and Carers allowance. This rate is claimable by Members with direct caring responsibilities, and should be used for specialist care (e.g. medically trained staff care including mental health, care for a number of young children for which a babysitter would not be appropriate, care which includes lifting or moving an adolescent or adult); An invoice, of any description, is required to claim for this rate. Both of the above are claimable up to a combined maximum of 35 hours total per month, and the carer must not be a member of the Councillor's family that lives at the same address. | -£500 as part of the basic allowance | 0 | 0 |

| Council name | Type of council | County area | Population | How are current levels of SRA calculated? Please provide a brief summary (eg as a percentage of the Leader's SRA) | Date current allowances were approved? | Date of your next review | How your allowances been updated since last year, or frozen? | Other | How you established a formula for updating the allowances annually? | Yes/ no/ please detail | How did you recruit your Independent Remuneration Panelists? If you advertised, please state where. | What rate of pay do Independent Remuneration Panelists receive? | Please detail any recent changes to the structure within your authority (including number and/or political persuasion of members involved)? | Is the Leader full-time? | If the Leader is not full-time, please detail the number of hours worked on average per week | Please detail the number of hours your Cabinet members work on average per week | Please detail any significant changes made to SRA. | Please detail the size and composition of your authority's Overview and Scrutiny committee(s) and panels. |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------|---|--|--------------------------|--|---|---|------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Bracknell Forest Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 124607 | A multiple of 3.33 over the current basic members allowance. | 24/02/2022 | 31/12/2025 | Updated | | At the same rate as the nationally agreed pay increase for local government employees. | Yes | Advertise through local voluntary organisations website, the council website and through Bracknell Forest partnership members. | At the LGA's recommended rate. | Local government boundary review which introduced new borough wards reducing from 18 to 15 and overall councillor numbers from 41 to 41. The result of the elections held on those new arrangements in May 2023 resulted in a change in political leadership for the first time since the authorities establishments moving from a Conservative administration to a Labour majority administration. Political make up is now: 22 Labour 10 Conservative 7 Liberal Democrat 2 Green | Yes | | An accurate picture of this has not yet emerged since the recent election. | N/A | The council has an Overview and Scrutiny committee made up of 12 Councillors plus 2 church representatives and 2 Parent Governor Representatives. The oversees 3 panels: Adult Social Care, Health and Housing (12 councillors) plus 1 Co-opted representative and 1 Local Healthwatch Bracknell Forest Observer. Children, Young people and Learning (9 Councillors) plus 2 Church representatives, 2 Parent Governor representatives, 1 Teacher representative and 1 Social Care representative. Environment, Culture and Communities (9 Councillors plus one non-voting Councillor) |
| Brighton & Hove City Council | Unitary | East Sussex | 270000 | As a percentage of the Leader's SRA. | 13/12/2018 | 27/02/2024 | Frozen | | Indexed linked to salary increase for NIC staff at the Council. | Yes | Advertised in local press. | £568.74 | Labour 38; Green 7; Conservative 6; Brighton & Hove Independent 2; Independent 1 | Yes | 29 hours for all Councillors. | Some roles are part-time; one deputy mayor role is being covered on a job-share basis and the two Members receive 50% of the SRA plus 50% of the Chair's SRA as they also chair a committee. Other | Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee only - 10 Clls, chaired by Opposition Member - 7 Labour; 2 Green; 1 Conservative. There are no Panels | |
| Buckinghamshire Council | Unitary | Buckinghamshire | 551566 | No data provided | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Isle of Wight Council | Unitary | Isle of Wight | 14000 | SRA's are calculated on a multiplier of the basic allowance | 15/03/2023 | 02/10/2023 | Updated | | Allowances (and SRA's) are updated annually based on the indexed level agreed by consultation with the IRP | Yes | No change in IRP members since last years survey | £301 each per annum | Council currently in control of minority group following departure of some members to other or new political groups - https://www.merger.co.uk/members/berkshire.aspx?N=PARTY&VW=LIST&P=C=0 | Yes | Unknown/not recorded | None | Corporate Scrutiny is made up of 9 members, 1 voting co-opted representative from WALSAC and 1 non-voting co-opted rep from NALC. Policy & Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills is made up of 7 members and 4 Statutory education co-optees. Policy & Scrutiny for Health and Social Care is made up of 7 members. Policy & Scrutiny for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration is made up of 6 Members. | |
| Medway Council | Unitary | Kent | 275000 | Benchmarked as percentage of Basic Allowance | 22/05/2019 | 30/11/2023 | Updated | | The level of basic allowance and amount for attendance at Licensing Hearing Panels payable are raised annually in line with the median Council staff hourly pay | Yes | Advertised for in Quarterly magazine delivered to every household in the borough. | £50 per formal panel meeting + Travel and Subsistence expense at same rate as council staff | Changed from Conservative Majority to Labour Majority. 2 Additional Councillors resulting from a review of ward boundaries. | Yes | 30-40 (Full Time equivalent) | N/A | Unless Support: 14 Members (8 Labour, 5 Conservative, 1 Independent). Children and Young People: 4 elected Members + 3 Vacancies (8 Labour + 3 Vacancies, 5 Conservative, 1 Independent); 4 co-opted members with voting rights on educational issues only (1 Cllr, 1 Roman Catholic and 2 Parent Governor Roles); 10 co-opted members without voting rights from local schools, student, parent and health organisations. Health and Adult Social Care: 14 Elected Members (8 Labour, 5 Conservative, 1 Independent); 2 added members without voting rights representing Healthwatch Medway and Medway Pensioner Forum. Regeneration Culture and Environment: 14 Elected Members (8 Labour, 5 Conservative, 1 Independent) | |
| Milton Keynes Council | Unitary | Buckinghamshire | 290000 | As a percentage of the Leader's SRA. | 18/01/2023 | 04/12/2023 | Updated | | in line with staff pay increase | Yes | 0 | £500 | 0 | Yes | N/A | N/A | 1 x management committee and 5 themed committees between 9-11 members | |
| Portsmouth City Council | Unitary | Hampshire | 208100 | As a multiple of the basic allowance | 16/09/2021 | 01/09/2024 | Updated | | The basic allowance is index linked to any annual pay adjustment that may be awarded to local government officers. | Yes | Existing panel who have served for a number of years | 0 | Following May 22 elections, Conservatives lost four seats, Labour gained 1 seat, Lib Dem gained 1 seat and Portsmouth Independent Party gained 2 seats. | Yes | 7 | None | Scrutiny Management Panel (9 Members) plus four themed panels with 6 members each | |
| Reading Borough Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 162000 | They are updated each year taking into account the Local Government Pay Award and any increase in allowance | 31/01/2023 | 30/01/2024 | Other (please specify) | They will be updated once the Local Government Pay Settlement has been agreed | The increase reflects the LGP settlement, although the increase was linked to the increase in allowances when the settlement announced was a lump sum payment across all grades | Yes | N/A | No payment is given to Panel Members | N/A | If not, please detail the number of hours worked on average per week | 30 | 20 | N/A | N/A |
| Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead | Unitary | Berkshire | 140000 | Percentage of Leader's SRA | 27/10/2020 | 01/04/2024 | Updated | | updated annually in line with the average pay increase given to Royal Borough employees - however this is currently under review *July 2022 | Yes | Local newspaper | 0 | Review of indexation currently underway (July 2022) | If not, please detail the number of hours worked on average per week | not known | Not known | None | 3 Panels of 11 Members each |
| Slough Borough Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 164000 | No data provided | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Southampton City Council | Unitary | Hampshire | 263769 | Leader = 2 SA. Cabinet = 1 SA. Leader of Opposition = 1/2th of SA. number in group Regulatory Panels & Committees = 3 SA. Non Regulatory Panels & Committees = 4 SA | 16/11/2022 | 01/10/2026 | Frozen | | in line with the RLW, RLW hourly rate = 27 hours = Basic Allowance | Yes | Used previous IRP Panel Members | £500 per panel member | Following Boundary Review and All Out Elections in May 2023 changed the political landscape from 16 Wards to 17 Wards and increase in Members from 48 to 51. | Yes | 25 | N/A | 8 Elected Members and 3 co-opted Members | |
| West Berkshire Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 198322 | No data provided | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wokingham Borough Council | Unitary | Berkshire | 174000 | One SRA = £5,000. SRA's are a multiple of this e.g. Leader = 4x SRA = £20,000 | 25/01/2021 | 19/01/2023 | Other (please specify) | Biennial review, no review last year | N/A | No | N/A | No advertised on social media and the local paper | None at present, we are currently undergoing a Boundary review | If not, please detail the number of hours worked on average per week | 30-50 hours, they are not technically full-time but they carry out full-time hours | 15 | N/A | One main Committee - 11 members. Community & Corporate O&S - 9 members. Health O&S - 9 members. Children's O&S - 7 members |



**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
FOR
WEST BERKSHIRE PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS**

JUNE 2024

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| Introduction | Page 1 |
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Report from the Parish and Town Councils Independent Remuneration Panel June 2024

1. Introduction

The Parish Remuneration Panel was convened by West Berkshire Council as the 'Responsible Authority' so required by the 2003 Regulations:

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 1021 and the amendment – Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 1692

The Guidance issued on these regulations for Parish Allowances/ or Members of Parish Council is:

“91. Parish councils may choose to pay their members an allowance, known as ‘parish basic allowance’, to recognise the time and effort they put into their parish duties. There is no obligation on parish councils to pay such allowances. Each parish council may make an allowance available to its chair only, or to each of its members. Where all members receive an allowance, the amount payable to the chair may be different to that paid to other members, but otherwise the amount paid to each member must be the same. Parish basic allowance is a discretionary allowance. It may be paid in a lump sum, or at intervals throughout the year.

92. If a parish council wishes to pay a basic allowance, it should have regard to a recommendation from its parish remuneration panel. This is a panel set up to make recommendations to parishes in its area. The membership of a parish remuneration panel will be the same as the independent remuneration panel of the district or county council within whose area the parish is situated. The panel will make a recommendation as to whom basic allowance should be paid, and the level of the allowance.”

(New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances, DCLG, 2003)

2. Terms of Reference

The Panel was asked to consider and make recommendations to Parish Councils regarding:

- Basic Allowance
- Chair's Allowance
- Travel and Subsistence Allowance
- Indexation

The Parish Independent Remuneration Panel

The Parish Independent Remuneration Panel comprised of the same membership as the Independent Remuneration Panel which met on **4th and 5th June 2024** to review the allowances for West Berkshire Council and the members of the panel are set out below:

The Panel comprised the following members:

- Mark Palmer, Director of Development & Governance, South East Employers (Chair)
- Kate Barrow, Chief Executive, Education Business Partnership and Local Resident
- John Davies, Local Resident

The Panel met virtually via MS Teams. The Panel meeting was held in private session.

3. Approach

All Parish and Town Councils were invited to provide views through a questionnaire and the opportunity to speak to the Panel in respect of the Parish Basic Allowance, the Chair's Allowance, Travel and Subsistence and Indexation. Fourteen Parish and Town Councils responded to the questionnaire, no Parish or Town Council met the Panel as part of the review. No Parish or Town Council advised the Panel that they pay the Parish Basic Allowance or Chair's Allowance.

The Panel thanks the fourteen Councils who responded to the questionnaire. The responses to the questionnaire are attached as Appendix 1. The Panel also paid close attention to the Government Guidance.

4. Arriving at the Recommendations

The Panel was of the view that whilst parish councillors did not stand for office for any financial reward, an allowance could actively support someone in the councillor role and that it was essential to be able to attract parish councillors from a wide range of backgrounds. Councillors should also not be out of pocket for undertaking the role.

5. Recommendations

Basic Allowance

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 1021 state the basic allowance recommended by a Parish Independent Remuneration Panel can be for any amount up to 100 per cent of the basic allowance paid by West Berkshire Council.

The Panel therefore recommends that those parishes who feel that a basic allowance would be appropriate should be able to pay an amount up to 5% of the Basic Allowance for West Berkshire Council.

The recommended Basic Allowance for West Berkshire Council for 2024/25 is £8,768; 5% of this is **£438**. This should only be paid to Members who are elected not those co-opted.

Chair's Allowance.

The Chair's allowance that can be recommended by the Parish Independent Remuneration Panel can be for any amount up to 100 percent of the Basic Allowance paid by West Berkshire Council. The Panel is of the view that any decision regarding the payment of a Chair's Allowance and the level of that allowance should be left entirely to the discretion of individual parish councils, taking into account individual local circumstances, whilst adhering to the recommended maximum allowance.

The Panel therefore recommends the Chair's Allowance should be up to 15% of West Berkshire Council's recommended Basic Allowance. The recommended Basic Allowance is £8,768; 15% of this is £1,315. The Chair's allowance can be in addition to the Basic Allowance, or not, if no Basic Allowance is paid.

Travel and Subsistence.

The Panel recommended that travel and subsistence for Parish and Town Councils should be at the same rates paid to West Berkshire Council Members. **The Panel recommends that the Parish Councils should pay a mileage allowance of 45p per mile (for a car) which is in line with the HMRC recommendations. Subsistence rates should be paid in line with West Berkshire Councillors.**

Indexation of Allowances

The indexation of the allowances paid to Members of the parish and town councils should be in line with the indexation applied to Members Allowances at West Berkshire Council, namely linked to staff salary increases of West Berkshire Council employees.

Withdrawal of Allowances

The Panel recommends that where a member is suspended or partially suspended, all or part of their allowance should be withheld. This would also apply to Travel and Subsistence allowances

Forgoing Allowances

A parish/town councillor may choose not to receive all or part of any allowance to which they would otherwise be entitled. To do so they must give written notice to the proper officer of the parish/town council.

Publicity

Regarding the allowances, the Panel recommends that the Parish Councils act in accordance with the following guidance (Section 5, Paragraph 30 of the Regulations (SI2003 No. 1021):

“Parish councils are required to publicise their allowances in a notice or notices conspicuous in their area. These notices must remain in place for at least 14 days. In addition, they must make a record of the allowances they have paid available for inspection at reasonable notice. They must provide copies of this record on request and may charge a reasonable fee for this. Parishes must also publish details of the parish remuneration panel reports. Again, these are minimum requirements, and parish councils may wish to go further in making local people aware of their allowances scheme and payment levels. For example, they may wish to circulate details of their allowances in the parish newsletter, if they have one, place them on a website, or publish them in one or more local newspapers.”

Publication

The Panel recommends that the Parish Clerk should publicise the allowances scheme to all Parish Councillors

Implementation

The Panel recommends the change to the Basic Allowance and Chair’s Allowance should be implemented from May 2024.

**Mark Palmer
Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel
June 2024**

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Q1 Does the parish council currently pay an allowance to the Chairman in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 (i.e, such reasonable allowance as the parish council thinks appropriate for the purpose of enabling the Chairman to meet the expenses of his office) and, if so, what is the level?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | No | 5/29/2024 9:38 AM |
| 2 | No | 5/27/2024 4:24 PM |
| 3 | No | 5/24/2024 11:28 AM |
| 4 | £50.00 | 5/21/2024 4:48 PM |
| 5 | No | 5/21/2024 3:08 PM |
| 6 | No | 5/21/2024 12:07 PM |
| 7 | no | 5/21/2024 9:45 AM |
| 8 | No | 5/21/2024 9:04 AM |
| 9 | no | 5/20/2024 9:42 AM |
| 10 | Nothing is paid | 5/19/2024 10:20 PM |
| 11 | Aldermaston Parish Council does not pay an allowance, but the Chairman may submit claims for modest costs incurred in carrying out the role. Our budget has £150 against this expenditure for the year 2024/25. | 5/18/2024 2:19 PM |
| 12 | Pays an allowance as and when appropriate, not a regular amount. The Chair does not claim anything other than an actual expense, such as reclaiming costs for refreshments at residents meeting. | 5/17/2024 8:05 PM |
| 13 | NO allowance | 5/17/2024 4:18 PM |
| 14 | No. | 5/17/2024 3:29 PM |

Q2 Does the parish council wish to consider paying the Chairman a basic allowance for time spent on that office under an allowances scheme made in accordance with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | No | 5/29/2024 9:38 AM |
| 2 | No as we wish to keep the precept as low as possible for our parishioners | 5/27/2024 4:24 PM |
| 3 | No | 5/24/2024 11:28 AM |
| 4 | The last time this was debated the Council agreed no. | 5/21/2024 4:48 PM |
| 5 | No | 5/21/2024 3:08 PM |
| 6 | No | 5/21/2024 12:07 PM |
| 7 | no | 5/21/2024 9:45 AM |
| 8 | No | 5/21/2024 9:04 AM |
| 9 | no | 5/20/2024 9:42 AM |
| 10 | Not at this time | 5/19/2024 10:20 PM |
| 11 | Aldermaston Parish Council has not considered this and is unlikely to do so in the immediate term | 5/18/2024 2:19 PM |
| 12 | Not at this time unless requested by Chair | 5/17/2024 8:05 PM |
| 13 | NO | 5/17/2024 4:18 PM |
| 14 | No. | 5/17/2024 3:29 PM |

Q3 Does the parish council wish to consider paying elected parish councillors a basic allowance under an allowances scheme made in accordance with the 2003 regulations to cover (a) time spent as a councillor and (b) expenses incurred?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | No | 5/29/2024 9:38 AM |
| 2 | no - as above | 5/27/2024 4:24 PM |
| 3 | No | 5/24/2024 11:28 AM |
| 4 | The last time this was debated the Council agreed no. | 5/21/2024 4:48 PM |
| 5 | No | 5/21/2024 3:08 PM |
| 6 | No | 5/21/2024 12:07 PM |
| 7 | no | 5/21/2024 9:45 AM |
| 8 | No | 5/21/2024 9:04 AM |
| 9 | no | 5/20/2024 9:42 AM |
| 10 | Not at this time | 5/19/2024 10:20 PM |
| 11 | As above. | 5/18/2024 2:19 PM |
| 12 | No, we are very small council | 5/17/2024 8:05 PM |
| 13 | NO | 5/17/2024 4:18 PM |
| 14 | No. | 5/17/2024 3:29 PM |

Q4 Does the parish council wish to consider paying travelling and subsistence allowance to parish councillors (whether elected or otherwise) under a scheme made in accordance with the 2003 regulations?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 1 | No | 5/29/2024 9:38 AM |
| 2 | No | 5/27/2024 4:24 PM |
| 3 | No | 5/24/2024 11:28 AM |
| 4 | The last time this was debated the Council agreed no. | 5/21/2024 4:48 PM |
| 5 | No | 5/21/2024 3:08 PM |
| 6 | No | 5/21/2024 12:07 PM |
| 7 | no | 5/21/2024 9:45 AM |
| 8 | No | 5/21/2024 9:04 AM |
| 9 | no | 5/20/2024 9:42 AM |
| 10 | Not at this time | 5/19/2024 10:20 PM |
| 11 | The need to pay parish councillors travelling and subsistence allowance has not arisen to date and is unlikely to do so unless circumstances change. | 5/18/2024 2:19 PM |
| 12 | Councillors live in village | 5/17/2024 8:05 PM |
| 13 | NO | 5/17/2024 4:18 PM |
| 14 | No. | 5/17/2024 3:29 PM |

Q5 How often does the parish council and (if relevant) its committees and sub-committees meet?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Average of 8 meetings a year. | 5/29/2024 9:38 AM |
| 2 | 4 x per year | 5/27/2024 4:24 PM |
| 3 | Every other month (6 times yearly) | 5/24/2024 11:28 AM |
| 4 | 21 times per year across all committees and full council, and annual meetings | 5/21/2024 4:48 PM |
| 5 | Every 3 months | 5/21/2024 3:08 PM |
| 6 | 6 times a year | 5/21/2024 12:07 PM |
| 7 | bi-monthly | 5/21/2024 9:45 AM |
| 8 | At least four times | 5/21/2024 9:04 AM |
| 9 | approx 3 times a month on average | 5/20/2024 9:42 AM |
| 10 | Parish meetings are held ever 6 months. Parish officers communicate regulary and meet approx every 6 weeks, | 5/19/2024 10:20 PM |
| 11 | Aldermaston PC has no committees or sub-committees. We have a meeting of the whole PC (7 elected councillors and a Clerk) once a month | 5/18/2024 2:19 PM |
| 12 | we meet every 2 months plus the APM | 5/17/2024 8:05 PM |
| 13 | once a month, no committees | 5/17/2024 4:18 PM |
| 14 | bi-monthly. | 5/17/2024 3:29 PM |

Q8 Organisation

Answered: 13 Skipped: 1

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Beedon Parish Council | 5/29/2024 9:38 AM |
| 2 | Wokefield Parish Council | 5/27/2024 4:24 PM |
| 3 | Chaddleworth Parish Council | 5/24/2024 11:28 AM |
| 4 | Holybrook Parish Council | 5/21/2024 4:49 PM |
| 5 | Ashampstead Parish Council | 5/21/2024 12:08 PM |
| 6 | East Garston Parish Council | 5/21/2024 9:46 AM |
| 7 | West Ilsley parish council | 5/21/2024 9:05 AM |
| 8 | Hungerford Town Council | 5/20/2024 9:43 AM |
| 9 | Winterbourne Parish | 5/19/2024 10:23 PM |
| 10 | Aldermaston Parish Council | 5/18/2024 2:20 PM |
| 11 | Beech Hill Parish Council | 5/17/2024 8:06 PM |
| 12 | Brimpton Parish Council | 5/17/2024 4:19 PM |
| 13 | Speen Parish Council | 5/17/2024 3:30 PM |

Q9 What is your position within the organisation

Answered: 13 Skipped: 1

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Clerk & RFO | 5/29/2024 9:38 AM |
| 2 | Interim Clerk | 5/27/2024 4:24 PM |
| 3 | Clerk | 5/24/2024 11:28 AM |
| 4 | Clerk | 5/21/2024 4:49 PM |
| 5 | Clerk/RFO | 5/21/2024 12:08 PM |
| 6 | Clerk | 5/21/2024 9:46 AM |
| 7 | Deputy Chair | 5/21/2024 9:05 AM |
| 8 | Hungerford Town Council TOWN Clerk | 5/20/2024 9:43 AM |
| 9 | Winterbourne Parish Clerk | 5/19/2024 10:23 PM |
| 10 | Chairman (currently carrying out admin duties for the PC, with the support of a Locum Clerk, whilst we advertise for a new Clerk) | 5/18/2024 2:20 PM |
| 11 | Beech Hill Parish Council Clerk | 5/17/2024 8:06 PM |
| 12 | Clerk | 5/17/2024 4:19 PM |
| 13 | Clerk & RFO | 5/17/2024 3:30 PM |

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Council – 26 September 2024

Item 12 – Notice of Motions

Verbal Item

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Council – 26 September 2024

Item 13 – Member Questions

To Follow

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