

REVIEW OF MEMBERS
ALLOWANCES

INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL

HEATHER MORGAN
BRYONY HOULDEN
STEVE BARRIBALL

FEBRUARY 2018

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.0 Background	3
2.0 Events / Activities since the Panel's Last Report	6
3.0 Annual Meeting of Chairs and Advisers	8
4.0 Meeting with Group Leaders (8 November 2017)	8
5.0 Exit interviews	9
6.0 Dependant Carers Provision	10
7.0 Feedback from Members of the Council	13
8.0 Devolution Agenda	14
9.0 Comparisons and Benchmarking	15
10.0 Councillors Commission	18
11.0 National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013	20
12.0 Member Development Charter Status Plus	22
13.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations	24

1.0 **Background**

1.1 The Panel first reported in March 2000 and have reported every year since then, including May 2003 when a major review was undertaken. Most of the Panel's recommendations have been implemented. During 2015, the Panel also decided that a second major review of the scheme was required.

1.2 The last few years have seen an unprecedented period of austerity, restrictions and budget restraints in Local Government spending which has impacted on both staff wages and consequently Members allowances. The Panel have kept a close brief on national issues including budgets, policy directions, consultations and also the local landscape including allowances schemes and the actions of other Local Authorities.

1.3 The last report of the Panel (February 2017) commented on and recommended the following:

(a) that the structure of the current scheme, including the amounts, the multipliers and relativities were carefully thought out, especially in trying to allow and encourage people from all backgrounds to become Councillors. Careful consideration should be given, in the future, to the levels of allowances to ensure they keep pace with the economy generally;

(b) that following the demise of the LGA Median Wage and the difficulty of determining an alternative benchmark, the Council notes the Panels view that, in the current climate, the scheme is fit for purpose with sound principles and is commended to the Council, notwithstanding the allowances levels needing to be kept under close scrutiny;

(c) that the previously sustained reduction in the number of SRA's was welcomed and the Panel recommend that the levels be kept below the 50% threshold;

(d) that the Panel keep a watching brief on the Boundary Commission Review and also the Devolution Agenda to assess any impact on allowances;

(e) that the Panel feel the current procedures for performance management could be strengthened and therefore ask that Group Leaders take a robust approach to the performance management of their Members;

(f) that the Panel recognise the difficulties in attracting high calibre, younger Councillors to the role and, as such, recommend the following changes to the scheme for the new Council (from May 2017). See Appendix 1 for revised scheme, multipliers and amounts:

(i) A revised Basic Allowance of £12,360 (which includes the 1% pay award for 2017/2018) and the multipliers re-calculated accordingly;

(ii) An increase to the role of the Scrutiny Chairs from a multiplier of 0.73 to that of 0.75;

- (iii) That the Group Leaders SRA's be amended as follows.....
 - A multiplier of 1.0 for Groups more than 20% of the Councils size (therefore 12 or more members);
 - A multiplier of 0.50 for groups between 10% and 20% (therefore 6 or more Members (up to 11 Members); and
 - A multiplier of 0.25 for groups of less than 10% (2-5 Members)
- (iv) that, should the Elections in 2017 result in a hung Council, the Panel would like to see all Group Leaders Allowances revisited, in light of all Group Leaders then becoming high level decision makers.
- (v) that, if the Council make any major structural changes after the Elections, for example, Committee Structure, then the Panel would like to revisit their recommendations in light of this.

1.4 The composition of the Panel is:

Heather Morgan – (Chair) Tribunal Judge (since 2002)

Bryony Houlden – Chief Executive of South West Councils (appointed in 2015)

Steve Barriball – Chief Executive of Citizens Advice, Exeter (appointed in 2017)

1.5 Panel Members wished to pay tribute to the service, advice and loyalty over the years of Brian Tanner (formerly Chief Executive of Somerset County Council and formerly Chair of Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust), who resigned from the Panel in 2017.

1.6 The Panel's appointments are until May 2021, having been re-appointed in 2017 through the Annual meeting of the Council (and via delegated powers afforded to Leaders and Whips in the case of the most recent appointment).

1.7 In preparation for this years report, the Chair has maintained regular contact with the Council, regularly meeting both the IRP advising officer and then the Leader of the Council (on 4 October 2017) to keep abreast of events and changes affecting the Council such as Impact of the Elections, Combined Authority Proposals, Organisational Restructure, Budgetary constraints and planned reductions for 2018/19 and the future funding of the Council with the disappearance of the revenue grant by 2020, Devolution, Committee Re-organisation and Cabinet Member Remits. This also included a discussion on the appetite of the Council for a rise in allowances and whether any detail was known on proposed staff pay rises in light of discussion at national level of removal of the public sector pay cap.

- 1.8 The Panel met on 7 August 2017, 19 October 2017, 8 November 2017 (also meeting with Political Group Leaders on the same day), 8 December 2017 and 15 January 2018 to consider events since the last Panel report, the national context, including the recently published Councillor Commission report, legislative changes, issues the Panel had been asked to consider (e.g childcare / dependents provision), Devolution issues, comparisons with other authorities, benchmarking data (South West Council's and National Census data) and potential recommendations and content for the final report.
- 1.9 The Panel agreed their timetable for the review at their first meeting and this is outlined below.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
7 August 2017 @ 13.00	Panel meeting
4 October 2017 @ 9.30am	Panel Chair to meet Leader of the Council
19 October 2017 @ 3.00pm	Panel Meeting
8 th November @ 12.30 (rising of Cabinet)	Panel meeting with Group Leaders
November / December 2017	Draft final report
8 December 2017 @ 10.30am	Panel Meeting to consider draft of final report
Early January 2018	Finalise report based on panel comments
26 th January 2018	Final Report for dispatch with Procedures papers
6 th February 2018	Procedures Committee
22 nd February 2018	Council meeting

2.0 Events Since the Panel's Last Report

- 2.1 On a national level, there has been nine years of cuts to public sector funding. This has been reflected in many Councils, including Devon, by freezing allowances and making further cuts for the ongoing tough times, including a number of structural and organisational reviews. This is likely to continue up until 2019/2020, a greater timescale for austerity than previously envisaged.
- 2.2 The five years from 2010/2011 to 2017/2018 saw the Authority's actual funding reduced by approximately £150 million. Furthermore, there were anticipated reductions in the region of £30 million for 2018/2019.
- 2.3 To date, staff reductions have been in excess of 3000 (excluding schools) and the Panel noted that the vacancy management process (originally undertaken in 2010/2011) recommenced in 2014. More recently, and as part of the savings programme (and a decision at Cabinet in 2016), a recruitment freeze was agreed. From 1 January 2017, any recruitment to vacant posts was restricted to those deemed 'business critical'. This is still an ongoing process.
- 2.4 The national spending reviews each seem to highlight that public sector spending cuts were expected up until 2020, which was a longer period of austerity than anyone anticipated. This also coincides with the disappearance of the revenue grant in 2020 and the introduction of business rates retention, the impact of which is, as yet, unknown.
- 2.5 More recently, the impacts of the BREXIT vote and the process for the UK leaving the European Union had implications for the Council in terms of EU grants, the pension fund (including valuations and employer contributions) and cost of staffing (particularly in the care sector), medium term financial planning and the treasury management strategy.
- 2.6 There was a staff pay freeze from 2009/10 up until 2012/2013. In 2013/2014 there was a 1% pay increase for 'public service' staff but this did not include senior / chief officers or chief executives and no pay award was given. For 2014 – 2016 there was a fairly complex pay offer (which amounted to 2.2% for most staff over a two year period. Those at the lower spinal column point (SCP) were awarded higher percentage rises). The pay award for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 were for staff with salaries starting at £17,714 per annum to get a 1% increase in both 2016/17 and 2017/18. Those earning less than this would receive higher increases to take account of the new National Living Wage. The Council has budgeted for a 1% pay increase for 2018/2019, but an offer of 2%, with higher increases at the lower spinal column points, had been made but not yet accepted.
- 2.7 The Panel also noted that on a national level, MP's received a 1.4% pay rise (increasing to £76,011 from £74,962), from April 2017.
- 2.8 There have been various money saving strategies over the last few years, including an Estates Strategy for 2012 to 2017 which aimed for a 35% reduction in the Councils property portfolio, divestment of youth services, meals services, day care services, highways maintenance reductions, no

direct provision of adult residential or day care services, waste management, public transport and a new library service which is a 'mutuals' operating model. Consultations on general service reductions are an ongoing process.

2.9 There have always budgetary pressures in the 'People's (Adult and Children's Services) and the 16/17 outturn showed a net overspend of £9,737,000, meaning the Council had to invest additional money in the service area. The forecast for revenue spending at year-end (17/18) is currently showing an underspend of £2.457 millions, an increase in underspend of £0.461 million from the position at Month 4 (a forecasted underspend of £1.996 millions), although, with winter pressures, it is too early to predict the end year forecast.

2.10 The Panel have been concerned over the last few years that, following their first large scale review in 2003, the level of allowances do not become 'too far removed' from the figures originally proposed. The Panel have therefore been keeping a record of allowance rates and what the allowances would have been if the mean wage increases (up to 2010) and staff increases (from 2010 to the current day including the predicted 2% for 2018/2019 being applied). These are detailed below and have informed the current review.

<u>Allowance / SRA</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>If rises implemented</u>
Basic Allowance	£10,970	£12,607
Leader	£25,000 (fixed)	£31,518
Cabinet Member	£16,455	£18,911
Scrutiny Chair	£ 8,000	£ 9,203
Scrutiny Vice-Chair	£ 4,000	£ 4,602
Committee Chairman	£ 2,743	£ 3,152
Group Leader (LD/Lab)	£ 5,485	£ 6,304
Group Leader (Ind)	£ 2,743	£ 3,152

2.11 The Devon County Council Elections in May 2017 did not result in any change of political administration. However, there was a decrease of 2 Members (following the Boundary Review), an increased Conservative majority (from 38 to 42) and the loss of the UKIP group on the Council (resulting in 1 fewer SRA).

2.12 The Council also reviewed its Committee Structure which resulted in a change to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees, changing from four Scrutiny Committees to three Committees, thereby achieving 2 further reductions in the numbers of SRA payments (1 Chair and 1 Vice Chair SRA).

2.13 The current figure in relation to the percentage of Members receiving an SRA payment is 43%. Last year, the figure was 47%, so there has been a reduction in roles that attract an SRA payment, largely due to the Scrutiny Committee re-organisation. With a reduction of two Members of the Council, the reduction, in real terms, is slightly more than a 5% reduction.

3.0 Annual Meeting of Panel Chairs and Advisers

- 3.1 It was discussed by the Panel in August 2016, and again in August 2017 that due to the retirement of Mr Graham Russell (the organiser of this event, but funded by South West Councils), there had been no willing volunteer(s) to take over this role.
- 3.2 The Panel felt this was a useful event, with good attendance from across the South West, covering a range of topics which were helpful to Panel Chairs and their advisers in conducting reviews.
- 3.3 South West Councils undertook to look at the current situation to see if anything could be done to reinstate these annual meetings.
- 3.4 It had also been suggested that the Association of Democratic Service Officers (SW Branch) might have been able to facilitate alongside their usual conferences and meetings, but South West Councils have now proposed a meeting date of 19th June 2018 for the event, to be hosted at Devon County Council offices. The meeting will also be informed by another survey of allowances and panels across the South West.

4.0 Meeting with Group Leaders (8 November 2017)

- 4.1 The Panel have always felt it important to obtain the feedback from Group Leaders on the current scheme and of any issues which might impact on allowances and, as such, a meeting was arranged for 8 November 2017 where the Panel discussed Group Leader Allowances, last years recommendations and also feedback on the current scheme.
- 4.2 Members highlighted that it had been nine years since the last rise in Members allowances which had impacted in the age and gender profile of Councillors potentially not reflecting or representing diverse communities.
- 4.3 It was also reported that it would be difficult to give up work to become a Councillor as the expenses did not cover costs of living. It was asked whether it was possible to identify a 'working persons allowance'. The Panel felt this was an interesting concept, but under equality legislation and the ethos of the Basic Allowance as outlined in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 would not be possible to progress, in accordance with the law.
- 4.4 There was deemed to be merit in increasing allowances, in line with staff pay awards.
- 4.5 Other specific issues raised included;
- the SRAs to be re-considered for the Chair of Appeals (Transport) Committee and Chair of Development Management, due to the increased number of site visits and time taken to conduct these;

- Childcare and carers allowance – and to ensure that the Council fully consider this matter; and
- Overnight allowances for London – currently at £90 which was unrealistic in today's climate for booking accommodation in the city.

4.6 The general view was the scheme was fit for purpose, but a rise needed to be carefully considered. To have Councillors reflecting society, both in terms of age and gender, attracting candidates of working age and the need for good support, including child care allowances, was seen as increasingly important.

5.0 Exit interviews

5.1 Exit interviews were offered to those Councillors who were standing down and questions were asked on a number of matters including allowances, training and development etc.

5.2 In respect of allowances, those Members standing down were asked if the allowance scheme was adequate to attract good new Councillors and if not how should it be altered?

5.3 Those responses varied from

- 'Yes – more than adequate';
- Candidates know the rates before they stand; and
- Yes – very generous allowance, The Districts pay considerably less.

Through to

- They maybe need to be higher to attract those of working age;
- No – to deal with current Councillor demographic, the rates needs to be significantly more. The scheme can discriminate against those who need to be encouraged;
- The rate doesn't compare with that of a full time position, you cannot hold down full time employment and the financial compensation is not equal to the work expected;
- The impact of rurality;
- There should be bigger wards and bigger allowances (in the region of £20,000)... For example, a unitary set up with the same number of Councillor as is currently the case;
- Case load is high and meetings are during the day; and
- Childcare is an issue, both from the perspective of ad hoc meeting times and also the way in which the childcare industry works.

5.4 The Panel noted that the comments which related to the allowances being sufficient / generous / adequate were generally from Councillors over the age of 65.

5.5 The feedback from a former Councillor (female with a young family) was regarding meetings happening during the day and the high caseload for Councillors, meaning it was difficult to maintain employment. Therefore the

allowance needed to be high enough to compensate for the loss of a wage. Her view was that the financial compensation was not equal to the work expected.

- 5.6 Also raised was the way in which the childcare industry worked (i.e children need regular bookings at nurseries several times a week) and the erratic nature of meetings and attendance meant it was not always possible. For example, children often need to be in childcare on the same days at the same times and Councillors cannot claim because there isn't a meeting, but the nursery place needs to be held and paid for.

6.0 Childcare / Dependent / Carers Allowances

- 6.1 The Panel had been asked by the Procedures Committee to consider the issue of Carers Allowances within the scheme, following a Member request for the Council to review the Scheme of allowances currently payable in respect of 'the expenses of arranging for the care of children or dependants and as to the amount of such allowance' to reflect more accurately common usage, the charging practice of providers of child care, nursery or before/after school clubs and not thereby discriminating against any Member(s).
- 6.2 It had been posited that the existing policy was unrealistic in that it did not take into account how childcare settings operated and therefore discriminated against people who required childcare and nursery provision, especially working parents and most commonly women, nor did it reflect the charging policy of the majority of, if not all, providers.
- 6.3 The Panel reminded themselves that whilst Councils were required to make a scheme of allowances in line with the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 2000, the detailed requirements were set out in of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021/2003) which provided that Councils may make, inter alia, a payment of 'dependants carers' allowance'.
- 6.4 The Regulations also make it clear that in claiming expenses (whether for travelling, subsistence or 'caring') a Member might only claim for expenses that were necessarily incurred in the attendance at or travelling to a meeting, committee or other body or of any other duty approved by the Council relating to the discharge of the Council's functions and not for an extended period. Whilst the Council cannot alter the legal basis of how payments might be made be made for specific duties, how any 'dependant carers' allowance' was constructed within a Scheme was a matter for the Council to determine having regard to the IRP's views.
- 6.5 The current scheme, which was amended by the Panel approximately three years ago (aimed at increasing the flexibility of the provision to attract younger Councillors who might have Carer responsibilities), provides that a Member can claim up to £7.78per hour (equivalent to the Council's Salary Scale Column Point 6) for each dependant. The position regarding nursery provision was more flexible where 'reasonable costs' might be reimbursed (meaning

Members could claim the 'fixed cost' of a session or sessions (am or pm or both) which cover, in whole or in part, the period of any specific approved duty (including travelling time to and from the place of the duty).

- 6.6 As part of this process, an Impact Assessment had been undertaken, which can be viewed at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/members-carersallowance2017> to ensure there were no discrimination issues within the scheme. The Scheme was aimed at enabling people from all spectrums of society to be reimbursed for their time and costs associated with being a Member and as it was the same allowance for all members (apart from SRAs), it was not discriminatory.
- 6.7 Also, there were no direct equalities implications arising from an Allowances Scheme. Whilst there might be Members from protected groups, an allowances scheme applied to all Members equally and there was no impact in relation to the protected characteristics; the scheme provided for a 'dependant' carers allowance to be paid to all eligible Members which was again intended to assist in removing barriers to persons standing for election who might have relatives in need of dependent care, in line with the spirit of equality legislation.
- 6.8 In line with the recommendation of the Procedures Committee, the Panel received and acknowledged the content of the updated Impact Assessment and agreed to look at the issues relating to carers/dependants allowances, including the suitability of current provision and level of payments referred to above.
- 6.9 The Panel then considered how it might vary or amend the current rates or methodology of payment that may be made under the scheme or impose specific bands reflecting the length or timing of periods for which claims might be made or introduce an overall cap which more accurately reflected the charges/charging policy of providers.
- 6.10 In considering this issue the Panel also referred to the recently published [Fawcett report](#) which looked at Local Government in detail, in particular, the aspects and stages of the process from becoming a candidate for Election through to becoming a Leader of a council. The report made a series of recommendations that would help bring more women into local government and help play a full role at all levels.
- 6.11 Whilst there were many recommendations relating to improving women's representation in Local Government, for example and inter alia, political parties setting targets for increasing women's representation at local elections, term limits for Councillors, reasonable adjustment policies for disabled Councillors, a review of how Councillor performance is assessed and challenging racism, the Panel focused upon the report's consideration of 'Removing Structural Barriers to Progress' which highlighted concerns over the historic male domination of town halls which have not supported women, who still have the bulk of caring responsibilities. It was reported that Women Councillors experienced patchy provision for maternity, childcare, and flexible working.

- 6.12 The report wanted to see the introduction of maternity, paternity and parental leave entitlements for Councillors across England, in line with leave available to employees. Also, that Childcare and caring costs must be covered, thereby asking the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to issue guidance to independent remuneration panels to promote their proposed model for a comprehensive dependent carers' allowance scheme so all childcare and adult dependent care costs were covered. The report further recommended that the law needed to be changed so that Councillors' childcare expenses were reported separately to the main Members' Allowances data, so that reporting of them did not deter women from claiming support.
- 6.13 Further recommended by the report was to legalise the remote attendance at Council meetings and use technology to support inclusion, including issues such as voting rights, through Skype or other technological solutions as well as consult on meeting times to better suit the needs of those with caring responsibilities.
- 6.14 The Panel also took evidence from Councillor Brennan, as a user of the current childcare provision in the scheme, who highlighted her experience of child care provision, expenses and the scheme, pointing out several barriers that had been experienced both before the elections and since.
- 6.15 The Panel noted that Councillor Brennan spent at least 30 minutes per week organising childcare. In addition, the current method of booking meant you had to book 4 weeks in advance (mid month for the following month) and that childminders did not offer total flexibility. In order to secure the place you needed to book at least half a day per week (same day) regardless of whether you required it). The charge for most providers was for the whole day, even if only 2 hours was required;
- 6.16 Councillor Brennan also said that prior to the annual meeting, it was difficult to gauge what childcare was required as appointments to Committees hadn't been confirmed and provision was booked up quickly, but also acknowledged the support of her Group in recognising this and that the appointments process was a short-term issue.
- 6.17 More of a concern was the cancellation of meetings, as reimbursement could only happen with 4 weeks notice or if the space could be filled. Currently, Committee meetings could be cancelled at 8 working days notice, in line with Standing Orders.
- 6.18 Councillor Brennan stated that, in her opinion, the hourly rate outlined in the scheme was sufficient.
- 6.19 The amount of time spent on emails and administration equated to roughly 1.5 days per week and she questioned whether the scheme allowed for childcare / support with this.

- 6.20 As an average, Councillor Brennan felt she was approximately 2 days per week out of pocket with Council duties and child care provision.
- 6.21 The Panel considered if there was any flexibility, for example paying more for a single session as opposed to block booking, but nurseries didn't offer this option.
- 6.22 Councillor Brennan asked whether there was scope for assistance for supporting candidates with childcare in standing for Election. Research showed there was no provision within law to be able to do this. Political Groups might be able to provide some assistance, but there was also a role for Government to legislate in this respect.
- 6.23 Councillor Brennan felt that on-site provision at the Council would be most welcomed.
- 6.24 The Panel considered all of the issues raised by the Procedures Committee, Impact Assessment and Fawcett report as well as its own deliberations and proposed to amend the scheme, as outlined at Appendix 3.

7.0 Feedback from Members of the Council

- 7.1 The Panel requested general feedback from Members of the Council on the scheme and whether there was any appetite for increases or maintain the status quo. The Panel greatly welcomed the volume of replies. A variety of opinions were expressed as well as some specific issues in relation to SRA payments.
- 7.2 In relation to support for an increase, some of the comments included;
- being a County Councillor was virtually a full time job;
 - the need to attract a bigger range of people from the community, especially younger Councillors;
 - the need to become a more inclusive Council;
 - the current basic allowance didn't adequately reward the time input required;
 - it needed to be sufficiently rewarding to attract people with the right qualifications and skills sets;
 - whilst most Councillors did not stand for the allowance, that doesn't mean they should be poorly rewarded;
 - the allowance had not been increased for nine years;
 - that a person with a young family could not consider being a Councillor (i.e. people to support and a house to buy / rent / run);
 - allowances should be increased in line with any employee rises;
 - whilst large increases in Councillor's allowances was unacceptable, it is a mistake to freeze allowances completely; and
 - many members are adversely affected by current levels of remuneration.

7.3 In relation to comments that were not supportive of an increase, these included;

- Leadership will encourage others in the public sector to show restraint and the status quo should remain for a little longer;
- hard to justify any increase to the basic allowance in light of officers and staff in Councils having seen little or no benefit in real term pay improvements for many years;
- no to any increase in allowances – we all knew what we were signing up to;
- immoral to increase whilst education and health services are under pressure; and
- being an elected representative is not a job.

7.4 There was also specific feedback in terms of the SRA payments, for the Chair of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee in light of recent developments regarding the Brunel Pooling Partnership.

7.5 The Devon Pension Fund now demands a large amount of time, experience and travel to fulfil the role and has greatly expanded in recent years. There are many internal and external meetings (including quarterly meetings in London) as well as mandatory training. The new responsibility relating to the Brunel Pool covering ten funds and totalling in excess of £28 billion, means a greater responsibility as well as monthly meetings in Bristol with lengthy and complex agenda.

7.6 The Panel considered benchmarking data in relation to this SRA, which showed Devon was mid-range at £2,743. Both Wiltshire and Gloucester paid a higher SRA. It might be the case that many local authorities had not yet reviewed their scheme in relation to the additional workload experienced by the Brunel Pooling Partnership.

8.0 Devolution Agenda

8.1 The Panel had noted over its last two or three reviews that Government had invited all local authorities in England to develop their own local proposals as part of a move towards the greater devolution of powers and budgets.

8.2 Since August 2015, Devon and Somerset County Councils, all Somerset and Devon Districts, Torbay Council, Plymouth City Council, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups had worked in partnership to progress towards securing a devolution deal for the Heart of the South West (HotSW) area focusing on delivering improved productivity. Since that time the partnership has continued to progress its objectives despite policy shifts at a national level.

8.3 On 16 February 2017, the Council gave 'in principle' approval to the establishment of a HotSW Joint Committee, subject to approving the Joint

Committee's constitutional arrangements and an inter-authority agreement necessary to support the Joint Committee.

- 8.4 Since the General Election, there has been a shift on the national policy position. As was discussed by the Chair with the Leader of the Council, on 3th October 2017 representatives of HotSW (from the Somerset, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay upper tier authorities) met Jake Berry MP, Minister for Devolution to clarify the position of the Government and the HotSW Partnership on the devolution issue. The partnership was given a clear message that the Government would welcome a bid from the partnership to progress productivity ambitions by identifying areas where it could work together Government and more importantly, the Minister indicated there was no requirement to have an elected mayor.
- 8.5 The proposed establishment of a Joint Committee, it was felt, would provide the ideal governance framework to take forward this dialogue with Government.
- 8.6 The key role of the HotSW Joint Committee is to develop, agree and ensure the implementation of the Productivity Strategy, which will be a common vision for increased prosperity through economic growth informed by a local evidence base and engagement with local stakeholders. This proposal was approved in December 2017.
- 8.7 The Panel agreed to keep a watching brief on the situation for any impact on allowances.
- 8.8 There has also been an officer group established to consider the implications of Brexit, particularly looking at the opportunities that it presents, as well as Member Development sessions across the Heart of the South West to learn more about Devolution and contribute to proposals.
- 8.9 From the Panel's perspective, they were keen that any impact on the workloads of Councillors be closely monitored, and associated consideration to the allowances scheme.

9.0 Comparisons and Benchmarking

- 9.1 The Panel considered the recent (2017) SW Councils survey on allowances. The SRA's paid in Devon are now in the mid-range of other South West Shire Counties, which was a change from several years ago, where Devon was one of the higher paying authorities in terms of the Basic Allowance. Having said that the population of Devon is significantly higher than in those Shire Counties.
- 9.2 The Panel, in 2015, undertook a large scale review in which they considered how the Basic Allowance had been calculated to ensure it was still fit for purpose. The calculation was the average non manual daily rate, less 33% for the public service ethos. As the data was no longer collected, the Panel researched other baselines, which included one used by Cheltenham Borough

Council (median salary for the South West) and a calculation which had been determined by Surrey's IRP (median salary level for full time white collar workers resident in Surrey, with a 33% discount as the voluntary element and the time commitment of the role as 18 hours per week (0.5 FTE)) which gave a Basic Allowance of £13,191.

- 9.3 The Panel applied this Surrey methodology to Devon, using the gross median weekly wage for Devon.

$$^1£25,376 \text{ less } ^233\% (\text{£}8,374) = \text{£}17,002 \text{ } \times ^3 0.72 = \text{£}12,241$$

¹ median salary for white-collar workers in Devon (2017)

² public service discount

³ adjustment for full-time equivalent – using DCC figures from National Census of 26.6 hours

- 9.4 The allowance for Devon (if calculated in this manner) made the basic £12,241, not far from the figure that would have been paid if the LGA median wage rise and staff pay increases been applied. The Panel were therefore satisfied that the calculation currently used was fit for purpose.

- 9.5 The Panel also felt it prudent to use the most recent data available, so utilised the National Census Data, extracting the figures submitted by Members of Devon County Council.

- 9.6 The Panel recognise the difficult position of Councils, particularly the unenviable position of Members voting themselves an increase, which is seen as unpalatable in the current climate. The Panel had previously noted the negative press coverage in recent years from those authorities who had increased their allowances.

- 9.7 Having said that, the Devon Panel remain concerned about the prospect of paying unreasonably low allowances and urged the Council not to lose sight of the fact that allowances are falling behind the Panels structured scheme following several years of them being frozen.

- 9.8 The Panel have previously expressed, and wish to do so again, its concern over the number of 'twin trackers' (where a Councillor is a Member of more than one Authority). With Elections in May 2017, the figure was 39 Councillors out of the 60 who were on District Council as well as the County Council (65%). After the last Elections in 2013, the number was 41 out of 62, (66%) so the situation remains largely unchanged. The Council is still a fair way away from the figure of 50% seen in 2009 – 2013. This problem is exacerbated when Members all also Parish Councillors. The Panel reiterated their concern that there was no coordination regarding multiple payments, but did note that reminders were regularly issued to Members.

- 9.9 In terms of Bench Marking for Special Responsibility Allowances, the Panel were keen to benchmark against other shire counties for allowances relating to Chair positions for Appeals (Transport), Development Management and Investment and Pension Fund Committees. The results are shown over the page.

	Devon	Cornwall	Wiltshire	Gloucester	Somerset	Dorset
Chair Appeals (Transport)	£2,743	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Chair Development Management	£5,485	£7,720.35 (3 Sub-Area Planning Committee's @ £5,146.90)	£6,470	£5,460	£6,477	£5,321
Vice Chair of Development Management	£2,743	£3,860.18 (3 Sub-Area Planning Committee's @ £1,544.07)	£0	£0	£1,079	£0
Chair Investment & Pension Fund	£2,743	£2,573.45	£3,235	£5,460	£2,160	£5,231

- 9.10 Devon would appear to be slightly out of kilter with the Chair role for the Development Management Committee with only Gloucester paying marginally less. No other Authority pays an SRA for the role of Chair of Transport Appeals. In terms of the SRA in respect of the Chair of the Investment and Pension Fund, again Devon is mid range, but the Panel wondered if other authorities had had the opportunity to review the scheme in light of the new responsibilities relating to the Brunel Pool, see paragraph 7.5 and 7.6, which outlined that the Devon Pension Fund now demanded a larger amount of responsibility, time, experience and travel to fulfil the role.
- 9.11 The Panel felt that, on balance, in view of the additional responsibility relating to the Brunel Pooling Partnership, there was sufficient evidence to consider an increase in the SRA of the Chair of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee.
- 9.12 Also, in view of the evidence collated and that all Members of Development Management and Appeals (Transport) undertook site visits, there was no compelling evidence for an increase for the Chair of either Committee and the Panel were not persuaded to increase the current SRA payments for either of the two positions.

10.0 Councillor Commission Research

10.1 The Panel received a briefing note on the interim report of the Councillor Commission Research which was to independently review the role and work of the Councillor (being undertaken by the Local Governance Research Unit, based at Leicester Business School).

10.2 The Commission, chaired by Colin Copus, (Professor of Local Politics, De Montfort University) had the following terms of reference:

“To explore and consider the roles, functions, tasks, responsibilities and powers of the Councillor so as to assess their relevance and effectiveness in enabling Councillors to sustain a viable system of local democracy, local leadership and local government”

It was noted that the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) contributed to the Commission’s work.

10.3 The timetable was originally from January 2016 to August 2016 for the collection of evidence through formal written submissions and workshops with Councillors and other interested parties, although the timetable changed in that the deadline for submissions was extended.

10.4 The Panel noted that the interim report did not include a mention of allowances, but a small reference to allowances appeared in the final version, reflecting the opposing views as expressed in Devon as part of the exit interviews:

Councillors are overseeing multi-million pound budgets; we are balancing complex financial pressures; we are making decisions that will affect our areas for decades to come; I saw somewhere that local government has 132 different responsibilities (or something like that) – how many private companies have that range of products or interests? We have to work with leaders of industry and public bodies on salaries of two or three hundred thousand pounds and we are on peanuts and they know it; we work with officers paid much more than Councillors and they know it – the way we are paid, just doesn’t reflect the reality of what we do (Conservative County Councillor).

10.5 On the other hand, the research found that there was a strong current of opinion opposed to increases in allowances or a radical change in the system of remuneration. A view held by some Councillors was that remuneration should be kept to a level that didn’t recognise a Councillor as an occupation or profession:

Please resist the temptation to propose increases in Councillors’ pay and allowances as this will add to the risk that Councillors become political professionals. Councillors’ remuneration should not be a living wage. If Councillors are to be part of the towns or districts they represent, if they are to understand the lives of their electors, and even mix with them at work, far better that they should work in the same places as them and experience the real world of employment (Conservative Borough Councillor).

- 10.6 The two sets of competing views are difficult to reconcile, but the question of what is the most suitable form of Councillor remuneration has troubled previous inquiries and reports. The report recommended an investigation into the nature of the remuneration system appropriate for the demands made on Councillors, including increasing workloads and the professionalisation of the role.
- 10.7 The final report 'The Voice of the Councillor' was published in October 2017. This final report confirmed that, now more than ever, there needed to be support for Councillors in the work they undertake in representing and governing their communities and in engaging with the public.
- 10.8 The report felt that 'local democracy' being undertaken and received 'on the cheap' and even among many Councillors there was reluctance to spend public money on ensuring Councillors have the support and resources they need. The Councillor Commission findings tell us that it is time for local government to be bolder in standing up for, and supporting its Councillors.
- 10.9 There were three things that were needed:
- i. councils needed to recognise the legitimate role all Councillors have in governing their communities and provide the resources and support for them to carry that out. Support for Councillors must not be confined to the leader and cabinet, but available to all members, as all Councillors have a vital role in enabling, co-ordinating and bringing communities together around the issues that matter most to people;
 - ii. Westminster, Whitehall, Government and Civil Service needed to see Councillors as a vital part of the governing fabric of the country. Councillors are elected and therefore have a legitimacy and an immediacy to communities that MPs and MEPs can only 'dream about', rather than replicate. Devolution must recognise the democratic mandate of the localities and see governing power, not just more functions and tasks, passed to Councillors.
 - iii. the commission's research revealed that Councillors were spending more time interacting in complex, multi-layered networks of public and private agencies (with differing goals, different territorial areas etc). There is a myriad of organisations that spend public money, develop policy and impact on the wellbeing of communities but all of whom lack the unique feature of the Councillor (with an electoral mandate). Local government must organise itself to support its Councillors in these processes as it is through interactions with external agencies that local government can govern and achieve the best results for the communities they serve.
- 10.10 The author of the commission reported at the recent Association of Democratic Services Officers conference, outlining that more work needed to be done on remuneration issues as well as a more detailed study on time commitments to being a Councillor.

11.0 National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013

11.1 The above study was previously carried out every two years to provide a comprehensive snapshot of local government representation and analyses of trends over time. The census asks Councillors about their work as Councillors, their views on a range of issues and also their personal background. The last study was carried out in 2013 so an update on the current position is overdue. This was of course alluded to by the author of 'The Voice of the Councillor' as outlined at paragraph 10.10.

11.2 Whilst this was considered by the Panel in last years report, the survey results are the latest available nationally so it is appropriate to include the analysis as part of this years report also.

11.3 The key findings from the 2013 Census of Local Authority Councillors (undertaken in autumn 2013) by the National Foundation for Educational Research were presented in three sections, work as a Councillor, issues and views of Councillors and personal background of Councillors. Just for clarity, the figures outlined in the remainder of paragraph 11 are national averages and taken from the actual report.

11.4 In relation to work as a Councillor.....

- the average length of service of Councillors in their current council was 9.5 years, similar to that seen in 2010 (9.4 years). This was approximately one year longer than the average service length reported between 2004 and 2008 (8.3 years), showing a small but sustained increase in the average length of service;
- just over half of Councillors (53%) held at least one position in the authority;
- on average, Councillors were members of 3.3 committees or sub-committees, again showing a slight decrease in the proportion seen since 2001 (ranging from 3.8 to 3.6);
- around a third of Councillors (35.9%) were members of local partnership groups or boards, most commonly a Health and Wellbeing Board (9.3%);
- Councillors reported spending an average of 25.1 hours per week on council and group/ party business (compared to between 22.0 hours and 22.7 hours in 2004–2010). When broken down, it could be seen that Councillors spent the majority of this time on council business (20.8 hours on average) and a much smaller proportion of time on group/party business (4.3 hours on average);
- over a third of Councillors (39.4%) were members of other public bodies such as parish or town councils;
- the proportion of Councillors that received one or more training opportunities peaked in 2008 at 93.7% but has since fallen to 85.0%; and
- the majority of Councillors had access to resources such as a council email address, a PC, laptop or tablet, and a tool to enable remote log-in or access to their council's computer system. Fewer Councillors had access to a Smartphone or mobile phone, access to telephone conferencing, a

Blog, a Twitter account, Facebook page or YouTube. Councillors rated a PC, laptop or tablet, a council email address and a Smartphone as the most useful resources.

11.5 In relation to the issues and views of Councillors

- between 2004 and 2013, Councillors responded very similarly in terms of their reasons for seeking this role. In 2013, 90% became councillors in order to 'serve the community', 58.7% did so 'to change things' and 54.4% were motivated by their 'political beliefs';
- overall 69.8% of Councillors believed the most important thing they did was listening to the views of local people. A similar proportion (64.8%) believed that representing local residents' views to the council was the most important thing;
- most Councillors (81.5%) anticipated they would be able to continue their role to some extent without their current benefits package, although 18.9% would only be able to do so to a small extent and 14.8% would not at all;
- overall, 41.4% of Councillors thought they had more influence to change their local area than they expected prior to being elected, while 35.7% had about as much influence as they expected;
- four-fifths of Councillors (82.4%) would recommend the role of Councillor to others if asked; and
- Councillors' intention to stand for re-election has strengthened. In previous censuses, around half stated that they would stand for re-election, whereas around two-thirds did so in 2008 and 2013.

11.6 In relation to the personal background of Councillors

- Councillors' gender profile, ethnic origin, disability status and caring responsibilities have changed very little between 2001 and 2013. In 2013, 67.3% of Councillors were male (70.7% in 2001), 96% were of white ethnic origin (97.3% in 2001), 13.2% had a long-term health problem or disability and 27.9% had one or more caring responsibilities;
- Councillors had an average age of 60.2 in 2013, similar to 59.7 recorded in 2010, and up a little from 57.8 in 2004. Around one in eight (12%) were aged under-45, a proportion which has changed little since 2004. The proportion aged 70 or over has increased from 13.8% to 22.2% over this period;
- the proportions of retired Councillors have increased slightly year-on-year from 36.8% in 2001 to 46.6% in 2013. At the same time, the proportion of Councillors in full-time employment has decreased steadily from 27.2% in 2001 to 19.2% this year, whereas there has been very little variation in the proportions of Councillors who are self-employed or work part-time between 2001 and 2013;
- two-thirds of Councillors (66.6%) held other voluntary or unpaid positions such as school governorships (37.2%); and
- the proportion of Councillors whose highest qualification is degree level or equivalent rose from 50.2% in 2004 to 58.8% in 2013. Conversely, the

proportion of Councillors with no qualifications has steadily fallen since 2004 (from 14% to 5.2%).

11.7 Devon has many of the same issues as other Authorities in terms of attracting younger members. Whilst Devon has some younger Councillors, (some in Cabinet positions), the majority are over retirement age.

11.8 The age / gender profile of Devon's Councillors was gathered after the 2017 elections and is highlighted below.

Councillor Gender/Age Profile of Devon County Council - 2017			
Age Group	Male	Female	Totals
Under 30	0	0	0
30-39	2 (3%)	1 (2%)	3 (5%)
40-49	3 (5%)	2 (3%)	5 (8%)
50-59	9 (15%)	5 (8%)	14 (23%)
60-69	16 (27%)	7 (12%)	23 (38%)
70 and over	12 (20%)	3 (5%)	15 (25%)
Totals	42 (70%)	18 (30%)	60 (100%)

11.9 The Panel were concerned over the gender / age split, demonstrating the need to consider a scheme of allowances to attract a more diverse Council for the future.

12.0 Member Development Charter Status Plus

12.1 As part of the Panel's interest in Member training and development and performance management issues, the Panel have always been supportive of the Councils initiatives such as competency frameworks, appraisals and personal assessments of Members Learning and Development needs and had congratulated the Council on its re-accreditation of Charter status at Charter-Plus level for Member Development in 2016.

12.2 The feedback from South West Councils in that assessment had said there were a number of areas of excellent practice in Devon and that.....

.....'it was great to see the continuous improvement in the way that Members are supported and the strong working relationship between Members and Officers'.

- 12.3 The assessment found an ethos of continuous professional development inherent throughout the Council and a willingness by the Councillors to ensure their skills, knowledge and understanding are up-to-date so that they can fulfil their role successfully. There was strong evidence that Member Development had become part of the fabric of the way the Council works.
- 12.4 The Assessors were also impressed by the progress in making Scrutiny a positive and constructive process which was helping the Cabinet and Council to develop more effective policy making. In addition, the cultural shift that had taken place as the Council had to look to others to deliver services, requiring Councillors to be supported to increase their community engagement skills.
- 12.5 Whilst the Panel feel the County and its members embraced the ethos of training and development and that the training processes also seemed excellent for individuals, they still continue to feel that improvements could be made, especially around the appraisal of Members by Group Leaders and performance management tools.
- 12.6 In relation to induction processes for the new Council from May 2017 onwards, the Panel noted that the first induction day had taken place on 12 May 2017 and had included welcomes and introductions, a session from an outgoing Councillor and a strategic overview from the Chief Executive and an understanding of the services provided by the Council and of the challenges faced.
- 12.7 A second induction day took place on 25th May 2017 and covered the Constitution, Procedures, the Council's Ethical Framework and three workshops covering locality budgets, Member development and support for Members. A meet and greet with Chief Officers and Heads of Service also took place on those dates.
- 12.8 A detailed programme of post induction training (including committee specific training) was also undertaken.
- 12.9 Feedback was sought on the induction programme from Members (at the Member Development Steering Group in September 2017) and positive feedback had been received from Members in relation to the two induction days. Attendance had been good at those two dates.
- 12.10 The Panel noted that attendance at the Committee specific training had been lower. There was a need for training sessions to be focussed and succinct and for questions to be managed.
- 12.11 The Panel were also supportive of 'exit interviews' which took place as part of the learning and development evaluation procedure, usually just before elections, referred to earlier, as they provided important information and

feedback on issues such as allowances and whether the allowances had any bearing on a Members decision not to stand again, see section 5.

13.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

- 13.1 The Panel has concluded that the structure of the Allowance Scheme for Devon is fit for purpose and based on sound principles, and that the Basic Allowance should be increased. We have also made recommendations with regard to other details of the scheme.
- 13.2 The Panel has conducted a wide-ranging review, taking into account the usual benchmarking data, organisational structures, Elections outcomes, the impact of Devolution, Cabinet Member Remits, the Councillors' Commission report, the views of Members and other relevant factors.
- 13.3 The Panel has noted that several years ago, the Basic Allowance paid in Devon was at the higher end of the scale when compared with similar local authorities. This is appropriate not least because the population of Devon is significantly higher than other Shire Counties. The Basic Allowance currently paid in Devon has fallen to the middle of the range.
- 13.4 The Panel wishes to thank Members for the copious evidence submitted in terms of workload and duties, which far exceeded the response to previous requests for such feedback. This was very welcome and it provided very helpful evidence. We noted in particular the views expressed by Councillors, especially newly elected Councillors, that the workload since they came to office was far in excess of what was anticipated. We are also mindful of the difficulties of attracting and retaining younger Councillors to the role.
- 13.5 In recent years, the Panel has consistently recommended increases in the Basic Allowance, with corresponding increases in the level of SRAs. These recommendations have not been implemented and as a result the level of allowances in Devon has fallen behind. Taking into account all the evidence available on this occasion, including benchmarking, recruitment, the need to promote diversity, and workload, we have concluded that there are strong reasons to increase the Basic Allowance.
- 13.6 In considering the Carer's Allowance, the Panel has taken into account issues raised by the Procedures Committee, the Impact Assessment, the Fawcett Report, representations made to the Panel, and our own deliberations. The Panel recognises the difficulty in attracting and retaining younger Councillors, and the need to increase the number of women, people with family responsibilities, and people in full-time employment. We received first hand evidence of the practical difficulties of the disparity between the actual payments now required for child care, and the amount that can be claimed under the regulations. We have considerable sympathy with the difficulties experienced by Members in this area, but it must be recognised that the Allowances Scheme must operate within the law, and in particular the requirement that payment can be made only for "approved duties" for expenses "necessarily incurred". Insofar as it is possible, we have

recommended amendments to the scheme to reflect the charging practices of many nurseries and child-care providers. We urge that the scheme is operated as flexibly as possible for all carers.

- 13.7 With regard to Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA), the Panel took careful note of the increased responsibility, time, experience and travel now imposed on the Chair of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee by the Brunel Pooling Partnership. We also noted that the reduction in the number of SRAs following the redistribution of duties.
- 13.8 We make recommendations to increase overnight allowances to a reasonable figure. In the absence of any reasonable benchmarking data, the Panel have used the UK hotels daily rate data provided by Price Waterhouse Cooper.
- 13.9 Taking into account the evidence available and for the reasons set out above, the panel recommends that:
- (a) The basic structure of the current scheme is endorsed and retained, subject to the change recommended at (c) below;
 - (b) From May 2018, the Basic Allowance is increased to £12,607 (which includes the 2% pay award for 2018/2019) and the multipliers be recalculated accordingly. (See Appendix 2 for revised figures);
 - (c) The SRA payment for the Chair of the Investment & Pension Fund Committee be increased by a multiplier of 0.25 to 0.50;
 - (d) The overnight allowance for Members for outside London, increase in line with the staff allowance from £79.82 to £81.06;
 - (e) The overnight allowances for London increase from £90 to “up to a maximum of £143”;
 - (f) The Guidance for Dependant Carer’s Allowance be amended as set out in Appendix 3’;
 - (g) Careful consideration should be given, in the future, to the levels of allowances to ensure they keep pace with the economy generally;
 - (h) The sustained reduction, including a reduction in the current year, in the number of SRA's be welcomed and that the levels be kept below the 50% threshold, as it currently the case;
 - (i) The Panel keep a watching brief on the Devolution / Combined Authority Agenda to assess any impact on allowances;
 - (j) Current procedures for performance management could be strengthened and that Group Leaders take a robust approach to the performance management of their Members.

- 13.10. The panel would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this review, and Karen Strahan (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager), who has provided administrative support.

HM/BH/SB
February 2018

Panels Recommended Allowances from May 2017
(Previous Report)

(2017 Recommendations)

<u>Role</u>	<u>Multiplier</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Basic	N/A	£12,360
Leader	2.5	£30,900
Deputy	2.0	£24,720
Cabinet	1.5	£18,540
Chair Scrutiny	0.73 0.75	£9,270
Vice Chair Scrutiny	0.365	£4,511
Chairman of Council	0.8	£9,888
Vice-Chair of Council	0.2785	£3,442
Chairman – Development	0.5	£6,180
Vice Chairman – Development	0.25	£3,090
Chairman, Appeals	0.25	£3,090
Chairman, Investment / Pension	0.25	£3,090
Chairman, Farms Estate	0.25	£3,090
Chairman, Public Rights of Way	0.25	£3,090
Chairman, Procedures	0.25	£3,090
Chairman , Standards	0.25	£3,090
Chairman, Audit	0.25	£3,090
*Leader, LD (10)	0.5	£6,180
*Leader, Labour (7)	0.5	£6,180
*Leader, Independent (3)	0.25	£3,090
*Leader UKIP (4)	0.25	£3,090

* A multiplier of 1.0 for Groups more than 20% of the Councils size (therefore 12 or more members);

* A multiplier of 0.50 for groups between 10% and 20% (therefore 6 or more Members (up to 11 Members));

* A multiplier of 0.25 for groups of less than 10% (2-5 Members)

Panels Recommended Allowances from May 2018

<u>Role</u>	<u>Multiplier</u>	<u>Amount (from May 2018)</u>
Basic	N/A	£12,607
Leader	2.5	£31,518
Deputy	2.0	£25,214
Cabinet	1.5	£18,911
Chair Scrutiny	0.73	£ 9,203
Vice Chair Scrutiny	0.365	£ 4,602
Chairman of Council	0.8	£10,086
Vice-Chair of Council	0.2785	£3,511
Chairman – Development	0.5	£ 6,304
Vice Chairman – Development	0.25	£ 3,152
Chairman, Appeals	0.25	£ 3,152
Chairman, Investment / Pension	0.5	£ 6,304
Chairman, Farms Estate	0.25	£ 3,152
Chairman, Public Rights of Way	0.25	£ 3,152
Chairman, Procedures	0.25	£ 3,152
Chairman , Standards	0.25	£ 3,152
Chairman, Audit	0.25	£ 3,152
*Leader, LD (7)	0.5	£ 6,304
*Leader, Labour (7)	0.5	£ 6,304
*Leader, Independent (4)	0.25	£ 3,152

- * A multiplier of 1.0 for Groups more than 20% of the Councils size (therefore 12 or more members);
- * A multiplier of 0.50 for groups between 10% and 20% (therefore 6 or more Members (up to 11 Members));
- * A multiplier of 0.25 for groups of less than 10% (2-5 Members)

Dependant Carers Allowance – Revised Proposals

Current Guidance

6. Carer's Allowance

(a) An allowance of up to £7.78 per hour (equivalent to the Council's Salary Scale Column Point 6 (starting level) may be claimed, for each dependent, when a carer has been engaged to enable a member to carry out an approved duty listed in Schedule 1 or those bodies listed in Schedule 3 where such bodies are unable to pay Carer's Allowance;

(b) A carer will be any responsible adult who does not normally live with the member as part of his/her family;

(c) An allowance will be payable if the dependent being cared for:

(i) is a child under the age of 14; or

(ii) is an elderly person; or

(iii) has a recognised physical or mental disability who normally lives with the member as part of that member's family and should not be left unsupervised.

(d) The Council will also reimburse reasonable childcare costs at an accredited Nursery.

Proposed Guidance

6. Carer's Allowance

(a) When a carer has been engaged to enable a Member to carry out an approved duty listed in Schedule 1 or those bodies listed in Schedule 3 where such bodies are unable to pay Carer's Allowance:

(i) where charges are levied on an hourly basis, Members may claim actual and necessary costs incurred for the period of the approved duty (including time traveling time taken by a Member to 'drop-off' or 'pick-up' a dependent or by a carer engaged by a member to look after a dependant in the member's home) up to the maximum of the UK Living Wage rate currently £8.75 per hour (as may be amended from time to time) for each dependent;

or

(ii) where charges are levied by a provider for a fixed period or session, Members may claim the cost of any such fixed period/session or periods/sessions incurred for the period of the approved duty (including time traveling time taken by a Member to 'drop-off' or 'pick-up' a dependent) up to the maximum of the UK Living Wage rate currently £8.75 per hour (as may be amended from time to time), for each dependent;

(b) A carer will be any responsible adult who does not normally live with the member as part of his/her family;

(c) An allowance will be payable if the dependent being cared for:

(i) is a child under the age of 14; or

(ii) is an elderly person; or

(iii) has a recognised physical or mental disability who normally lives with the member as part of that member's family and should not be left unsupervised.