

REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

Independent Remuneration Panel

HEATHER MORGAN
BRYONY HOULDEN
STEVE BARRIBALL

FEBRUARY 2024

Contents	<u>Page</u>
1.0 Background	3
2.0 Events / Activities since the Panel's Last Report	7
3.0 Meeting with Group Leaders (26 September 2023)	9
4.0 Annual Meeting of Chairs and Advisers	10
5.0 Feedback from Members of the Council (Survey)	11
6.0 Comparisons and Benchmarking	15
7.0 Audit Committee Benchmarking	18
8.0 Investment and Pension Fund Vice Chair Benchmarking	20
9.0 National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2022	22
10.0 Member Development	27
11.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations	28
Appendix 1 Table of Proposed Revised Allowances (May 2024)	30

1.0 **Background**

1.1 The Panel first reported in March 2000 and have reported every year since then, including large scale reviews in 2003, 2015 and 2018.

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, budgets, policy directions, consultations, the impact of COVID-19 on Councillor work and also the local landscape including allowances schemes and the actions of other Local Authorities. Current considerations also include the cost of living crisis, inflation and the SEND overspend which is impacting on Council Services.

1.3 The last report of the Panel (February 2023) commented on and recommended the following:

Taking into account the evidence available and for the reasons set out above, the Panel recommends that:

- i. The basic structure of the current scheme is endorsed and retained and the changes, as outlined at Appendix 1, to support clarity in submitted claims be agreed.*
- ii. The Panel feels it important not to depart from its established formula of calculating the basic allowance and therefore the basic allowance increases by 4.32% to £14,025 to take effect from May 2023 and the multipliers be recalculated accordingly; This is based on the Panel's standard formula, as outlined at paragraphs 6.4 and 6.5.*
- iii. Careful consideration should be given, in the future, to the levels of allowances to ensure they keep pace with the economy generally;*
- iv. In light of the concerns raised over workload, the Panel will conduct a thorough review in 2023/2024 which will particularly include hours/workload and will be inviting all Councillors to respond;*
- v. The overnight rate for London remain at £153.00, in line with the rates calculated by Price Waterhouse Cooper for the average daily rate (ADR) for London from 2019 (noting that the most recent figures for 2020 and 2021 are very much skewed due to the impact of the pandemic).*
- vi. The sustained reduction in the number of SRA's be welcomed and that the levels be kept below the 50% threshold, as is currently the case;*
- vii. That the Panel endorse the Council's wish to have only 1 SRA per Councillor and as such removed the SRA for Chair of the*

Procedures Committee from the Scheme (nothing that the individual holding the role of Chair already receives an SRA for that role);

- viii. That the Panel will undertake a review of the Audit Committee Chair SRA in 2023/24, including benchmarking and comparative analysis of roles across other Local Authorities;*
- ix. That Members of the Council be encouraged to claim those expenses that are due to them, noting the work of the Panel in widening those meetings and events that can be claimed for.*
- x. That the Panel reiterate their desire that Group Leaders take a robust approach to the performance management of their Members' and places on record their thanks for the levels of reassurance provided by Group Leaders for dealing with performance issues; and*
- xi. The Panel wish to place on record their appreciation to Councillors for their continued Leadership and tireless working in their communities, especially given concerns raised in paragraph 5.2.*

1.4 The Procedures Committee, on the 2 February 2023, welcomed the Report of the Independent Panel. The Chair of the Panel had presented the Report, highlighting specifically that the conclusions and recommendations made had been based on sound evidence and that they had given consideration to the issues asked of them. The Chair also expressed concern over the time commitment of the Councillor role, as reported to them throughout their enquiries, and would address this in the 2024 review as well as reviewing the role of the Chair of the Audit Committee.

1.5 The Panel had recommended for 2023 that allowances rise by 4.32% in line with their previously agreed formula. In past years, the staff pay award had been used as a benchmark, but given this had been a lump sum payment of £1,925 for 2022/2023, it was not felt appropriate.

1.6 The Procedures asked the County Council to accept the recommendations outlined below, as recommended by the Panel.

(a) that the Report of the Independent Panel be welcomed and its Members be thanked for their work;

(b) that the Committee notes the Report's conclusions and asks the County Council to accept the recommendations outlined below.

i. The basic structure of the current scheme is endorsed and retained and the changes, as outlined at Appendix 1, to support clarity in submitted claims be agreed.

ii. The Panel feels it important not to depart from its established formula of calculating the basic allowance and therefore the basic allowance increases by 4.32% to £14,025 to take effect from May 2023 and the

multipliers be recalculated accordingly; This is based on the Panel's standard formula, as outlined at paragraphs 6.4.

iii. Careful consideration should be given, in the future, to the levels of allowances to ensure they keep pace with the economy generally;

iv. In light of the concerns raised over workload, the Panel will conduct a thorough review in 2023/2024 which will particularly include hours/workload and will be inviting all Councillors to respond;

v. The overnight rate for London remain at £153.00, in line with the rates calculated by Price Waterhouse Cooper for the average daily rate (ADR) for London from 2019 (noting that the most recent figures for 2020 and 2021 are very much skewed due to the impact of the pandemic);

vi. The current position in the number of SRA's be welcomed and that the levels be kept below the 50% threshold;

vii. That the Panel endorse the Council's wish to have only 1 SRA per Councillor and as such removed the SRA for Chair of the Procedures Committee from the Scheme (nothing that the individual holding the role of Chair already receives an SRA for that role);

viii. That the Panel will undertake a review of the Audit Committee Chair SRA in 2023/24, including benchmarking and comparative analysis of roles across other Local Authorities;

ix. That Members of the Council be encouraged to claim those expenses that are due to them, noting the work of the Panel in widening those meetings and events that can be claimed for;

x. That the Panel reiterate their desire that Group Leaders take a robust approach to the performance management of their Members' and places on record their thanks for the levels of reassurance provided by Group Leaders for dealing with performance issues; and

xi. The Panel wish to place on record their appreciation to Councillors for their continued Leadership and tireless working in their communities, especially given concerns raised in paragraph 5.2 (of the 2023 Allowances Report).

1.7 The composition of the Panel is:

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

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

Steve Barriball – Former Chief Executive of Citizens Advice, Exeter (since 2017)

- 1.8 The Panel's appointments are until May 2025, having been re-appointed in 2021 through the Annual meeting of the Council.
- 1.9 The primary role of the Panel has been to assess the allowances for being an elected Councillor, representing the diverse communities that make up Devon now and into the future. The Panel's contribution has been to ensure that Councillors have the financial recognition to fulfil some of the most demanding roles that exist in public life.
- 1.10 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 12 September 2023) to obtain feedback on the 2023 Panel Report, kept abreast of events and changes affecting the Council such as the new leadership structure, a revised Cabinet Structure, the Council's budget position, workloads, elections in 2025 and any national policy changes that might impact. The Chair and another member of the Panel also attended the annual IRP Chairs and advisers meeting on 20 September 2023.
- 1.11 The Panel met on the 24 August, 26 September (meeting with Political Group Leaders on this day) and 14 December to consider events since the last Panel report, the national context (for example, budgetary issues and the post COVID world), the current scheme, comparisons with other authorities, benchmarking data (South West Council's and National Census data), Audit Committee Chair and Investment and Pension Fund Committee Vice Chair benchmarking, survey results and potential recommendations and content for the final report.
- 1.12 The Panel agreed their timetable for the review at their first meeting and this is outlined below.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
24 th August 2023 @ 2.00pm	Panel meeting
12 September @ 10.00am	Panel Chair to meet Leader of the Council
26 September @ 12.15pm	Panel meeting with Group Leaders followed by Panel Meeting
October / November	Survey to be conducted / benchmarking
November / December 2023	Start to draft final report

14 December 2023 @ 10.30am	Panel Meeting to consider draft of final recommendations / report.
Early January 2024	Finalise report based on Panel comments
23 rd January 2024	Final Report to be ready for dispatch with Procedures papers
1 st February 2024 @ 10.30am	Procedures Committee
15 th February 2024 @ 2.15pm	Council meeting

Events Since the Panel's Last Report

- 2.1 Devon County Council Elections were held in May 2021. These did not result in any change of political administration; however, there was a decrease in the Conservative majority (from 42 to 39), an increase in Liberal Democrat Members (7 to 9) and an additional Green Party Member. There were 21 new Councillors, 17 Members had stood down and 4 were not re-elected. There have been no changes to the Committee structure and therefore no impact on allowances. The number of Cabinet Members was reinstated to 9 after the Leader had previously taken the Finance Portfolio on a temporary basis after the Cabinet Member became Chairman of the Council last year. However, in September 2023, the Leader increased the size of the Cabinet to 10, with an additional post to focus on SEND improvement.
- 2.2 COVID-19 had a huge impact on the working practices for both the Council and of course Councillors. In the early days of the pandemic, a fast-moving and unprecedented situation, Councillors' had a significant role in supporting communities, as well as delivering normal services. Their role as civic and community leaders required visible, responsible leadership that linked community-led support with council structures to help build and sustain overall resilience. The post covid world seems to have created an ongoing increased workload for elected Members and also created a world where levels of unacceptable behaviour and harassment are more commonplace.
- 2.3 The Council has undertaken some work in this area, including adoption of the LGA's debate not hate campaign - [Debate Not Hate | Local Government Association](#). Whilst debating and disagreeing is a healthy part of democracy, abuse and intimidation crosses the line and the campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of Councillors in their communities, encourage healthy

debate and improve the responses and support for local politicians facing abuse and intimidation.

- 2.4 Further work was undertaken and reported to the Council's Standards Committee, including amendments to the Members Code of Conduct, LGA guidance had been published on the Members Sharepoint Site, a choice for Members of whether to publish their home addresses on their profile pages on the website and questions on personal safety be added to the next Wellbeing Survey shortly to be circulated to all Councillors. A further piece of work was a revised social media policy for Members to support them in some of the online / social media pressures that they face.
- 2.5 Within the Council, there are still significant budget pressures and the most recent budget monitoring reports (month 6) show this to be the case with a forecast overspend of £13.6 million, but excluding the dedicated schools grant deficit. However, work was underway to return all Directorate overspends to budget and significant action was being taken to ensure the emerging risks within Children and Young People's Futures were mitigated.
- 2.6 With the financial challenges in meeting the demand for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within the High Needs Block of the DSG, Government had launched the Safety Valve Intervention programme in 2021, which targeted support to LAs with the highest DSG deficits and required them to develop plans to reform their high needs systems and place them on a sustainable footing. A recent report to the Cabinet had highlighted the SEND funding available each year, the in-year pressures and the growth in accumulated deficit, showing a forecast accumulated deficit of £162m in 2023/2024, which demonstrates the significant risk and pressure to the Authority.
- 2.7 The rising cost-of-living and geopolitical situation has created huge financial pressures nationally and the County Council is not immune from that.
- 2.8 The Panel were also aware of the work programme of the Governance Working Group, the aim of which was to ensure effective scrutiny arrangements and have robust functions in place for Council decision-making, understand roles in Council business, have a culture where staff were empowered to constructively challenge, developing / deepening relationships with external partners, achieving best value, being responsive to needs, transparent channels for decision making and a focus on continuously improving in all areas. The review was multi-faceted, with the overarching ambition to deliver an effective and efficient governance infrastructure embedded across the whole organisation. The review would incorporate a development and engagement programme for officers and Elected Members.
- 2.9 The review programme had been divided into phases; with phase 1 focusing on the critical areas of the governance arrangements for the next 1-6 months which had been identified and Phase 2 on high priority matters for the next 6-12 months. A cross-party working group of 7 Members met every two weeks to progress the review and make recommendations to the decision making bodies.

- 2.10 In terms of workforce, any increases to staff head counts must now undergo a rigorous approval process and service areas are being asked to leave posts vacant for a period of time wherever possible. Services are also asked to consider whether the post needs replacing and are also contained to internal recruitment, only being able to recruit externally if an internal process is unsuccessful. Restructures were taking place and redundancies within the Council have not been ruled out.
- 2.11 In terms of pay award, 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 there was no pay award for Chief Officers. For 2014 – 2016 there was a 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 pay award for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 was a two-year deal at 2% per year for both the staff and Chief Officers. For 2020/21 the staff pay award was 2.75% with an extra days leave for those with less than 5 years service (from 20 to 21 days) and 1.75% in 2021/2022 (which wasn't agreed or paid until April 2022). The pay award position for 2022 was a one-year offer (covering 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023) of £1,925 on all NJC pay points and an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances. The Chief Executive and Chief Officers award was aligned with an increase of £1,925 on basic salary.
- 2.12 The pay award position for 2023 was a final one-year offer (covering 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024) with an increase of £1,925 on NJC pay points 2-43 and 3.8% on pay point 44 and an increase of 3.88% on all allowances. For Chief Executive and Chief Officers an award of 3.5% was made and accepted in May 2023.
- 2.13 The Panel also noted that on a national level, MP's received a 2.9% increase with effect from April 2023, taking their salary to £86,584 (from £84,144 in 2022). Annual changes in MPs' pay are linked to changes in average earnings in the public sector using Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures. This is in line with the decision by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) in 2015 to adjust MPs' pay at the same rate as changes in public sector earnings published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). This was confirmed in July 2018 following a further review of MPs' pay.
- 2.14 The Panel were previously concerned that the levels of allowances had become 'too far removed' from the figures originally proposed back in 2009 when allowances were frozen. The Panel kept a record of allowance rates and tracked what the allowances would have been if the mean wage increases (up to 2010) and staff increases (from 2010 to the current day) had been applied. The Panel were therefore pleased that the Council accepted their recommendations from the last four reviews.

- 2.15 The current figure in relation to the percentage of Members receiving an SRA payment had increased to 46% (up from 43% in the previous year and 41.5% the year before that). After the Elections in May 2021, the Leader reinstated the Finance Portfolio Cabinet Member, which he himself held on a temporary basis prior to the elections. In the 2023 Report, the Council endorsed the recommendation of the Panel to remove the Chair of Procedures SRA from the scheme. This was an additional SRA received by the Chair of the Council, but the Council agreed to reinforce the position of one SRA per Councillor and have no exceptions to that rule. Also, the additional Cabinet post was introduced with effect from September 2023 to take responsibility as Lead Member for Children's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Services.

3.0 Meeting with Group Leaders (26 September 2023)

- 3.1 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 26 September 2023.
- 3.2 The Panel highlighted last year's recommendations and Group Leaders had nothing further to add about these.
- 3.3 There was general debate on issues including Member workloads, twin or triple hatted Councillors, remote working and the ability for Members to join virtually for meetings when they do not sit on that committee which was helpful to cut down travel times.
- 3.4 The Panel explained there had been requests to carry out research relating to allowances for two particular roles – the Chair of Audit and also the Vice Chair of Investment and Pensions Committee.
- 3.5 A survey would also be sent out to all Members shortly seeking views on the current scheme. Group leaders were content with the suggested questions posed.
- 3.6 With regard to possible increases in allowances, it was felt it was important to keep these in line with officers pay. It was also further suggested that the Panel examine further amending the subsistence claims rates for accommodation where overnight absences were required. In particular, to look at the claimable rates for London as it was felt that these were too low and needed to be updated.

4.0 Annual Meeting of Panel Chairs and Advisers (20 September 2023)

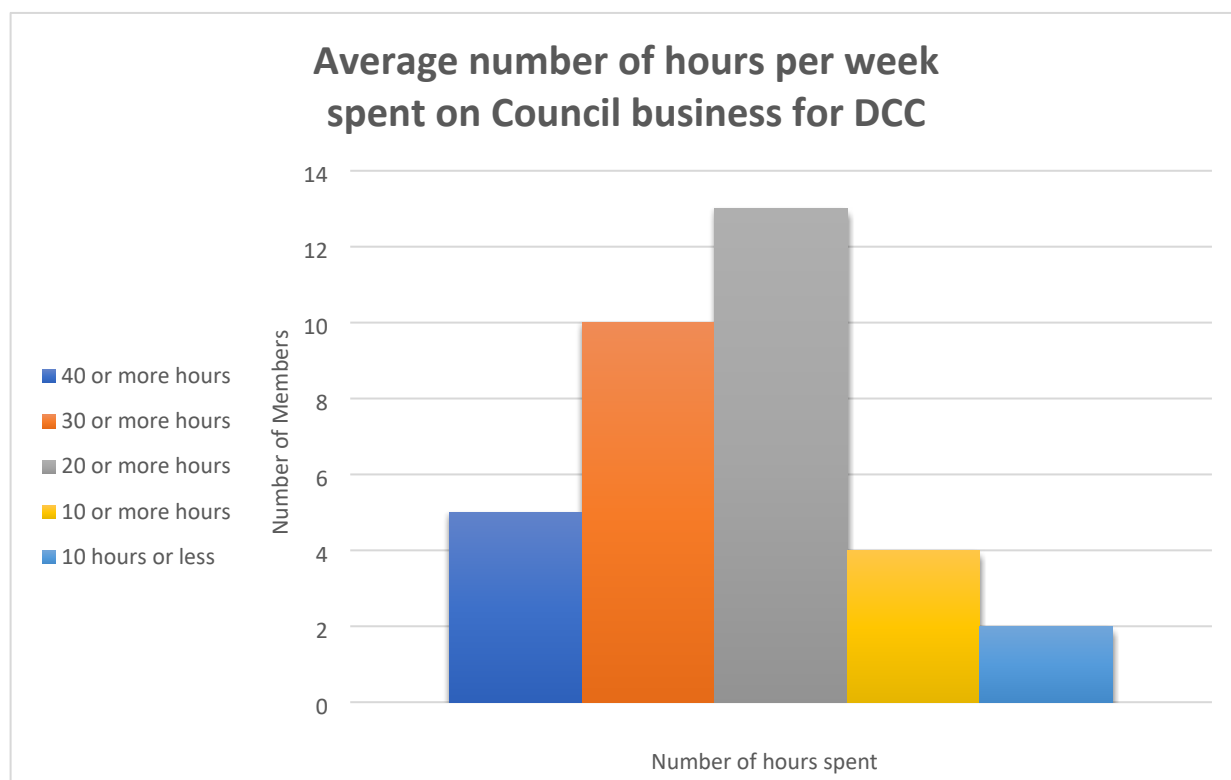
- 4.1 During the meeting on 20 September 2023, attended by the Chair, a Member of the Panel and Advisors, a number of allowances related issues were discussed, for example, the Members Allowance Survey Results 2023/24 and Discussion on 2024/25 Survey, including the disappointing response rate. A Round Table Update from each Panel Chair was given and issues raised such

as the role of cabinet assistants and cabinet project leads, issues around the staff pay award being a flat rate, increased abuse of Elected Members, a large scale review in Somerset due to Local Government Reorganisation. A common theme had been the challenge of the lump sum pay award, with several opting to link to the increase in officer allowances of 4.04%, others looking at the average or median of the increase for staff.

- 4.2 The Chair of the Devon Panel reported they had been asked to review the SRA for the Chair of Audit Committee, so benchmarking would be undertaken but also it was agreed that the Chair of Investment and Pensions will be included on the survey next year.
- 4.3 The meeting also discussed Dependent Care Expenses and barriers to claiming. Attendees commented that many Councillors were not aware of the schemes or that because the figures were published as part of the outturn, it could attract negative press.
- 4.4 Advice was sought on appointment to outside bodies, in particular, LGA Groups, where the LGA expects the Councillor to claim expenses from their home authority. This was raised in Devon approximately three years ago and there is now provision in the scheme.
- 4.5 A discussion was also held on the optimum number of IRP Panel members, noting that the Regulations specified at least three members.

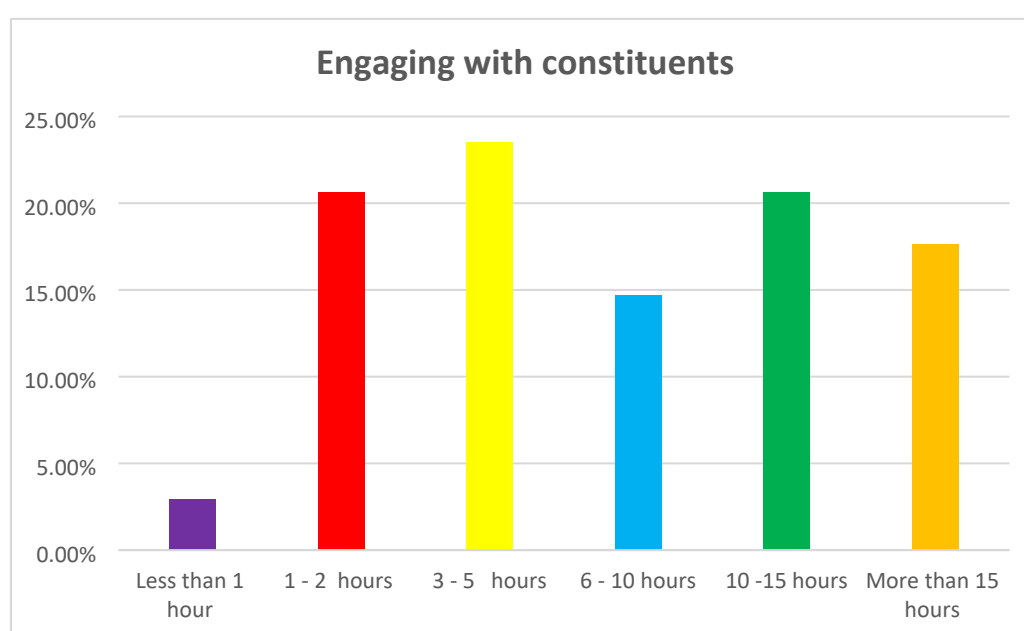
5.0 Feedback from Members of the Council / Survey

- 5.1 It was agreed to send out a survey to all Members this year in order to encourage more feedback on their views around allowances.
- 5.2 Members were given 3 weeks to fill in the questionnaire via Microsoft Forms comprising 22 questions and covering a variety of topics including the number of hours spent on council business or where they hold a special responsibility, activities in their role, views on current allowances for basic and special responsibilities, whether the allowances scheme was sufficient to attract new candidates and positive and negative experiences of being a Councillor.
- 5.3 A total of 34 responses from Members had been received, which was pleasing. Previous surveys had a response rate of less than 50% (40% in 2014 and 33% in 2009). The national census survey also broke results down to LA responses, so later survey data was available via that forum. Of particular note was the number of hours that Members in different roles estimated they were spending on county council business per week with more than half of respondents stating this was in the region of 30 or more hours with one Member estimated they could spend up to 60 hours per week. This is an increase on the previous estimated average of 28 hours by respondents in the last survey (2014).

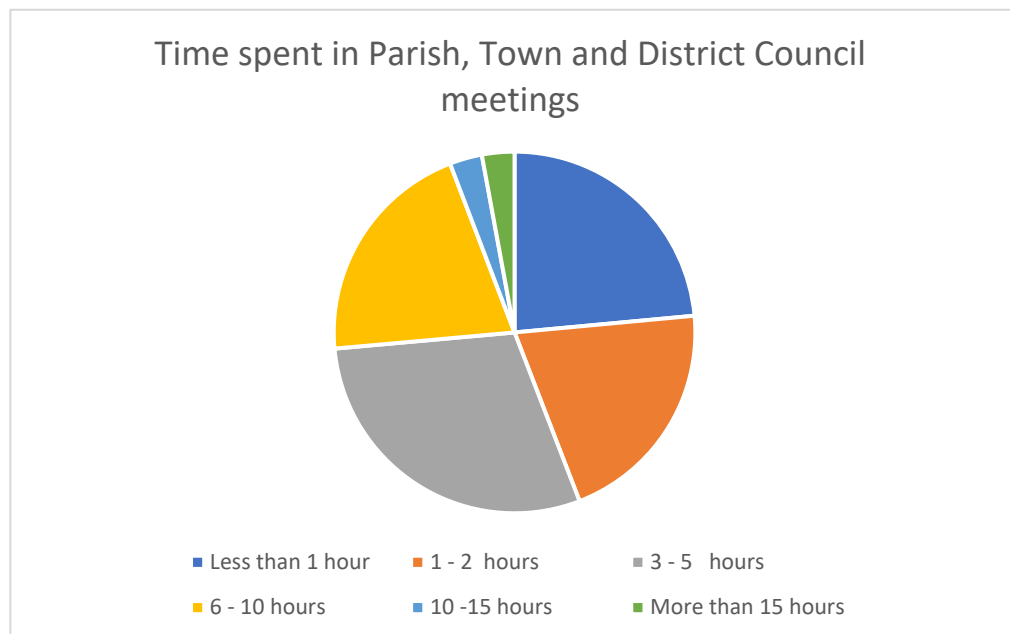


5.4 For those with special responsibilities who answered the question, there were 5 respondents who felt that they were spending in excess of 10 hours on this element of the role alone. When asked about the level of the special responsibility allowance, 15 felt that it was about right with 6 stating that it was too low.

5.5 Members were also asked about the time they spent on various activities in their role as Councillors. Perhaps, unsurprisingly a large percentage of this time was allocated to engaging with constituents and dealing with their enquiries, with 52.9% spending more than 6 hours a week on this.



- 5.6 Attending County Council meetings including committee meetings and other Council meetings was estimated by 50% of survey respondents to take more than 6 hours a week. The least amount of time was allocated to training or learning or development opportunities with 47.1% stating they spend less than an hour a week and 44.1% stating it was approximately 1 to 2 hours a week on this activity.
- 5.7 There is a mixed picture when it comes to the amount of time spent on Parish, Town and District Council meetings (shown in the pie chart below). It can often be difficult to accurately reflect this especially when there are a number of twin or triple hatters and there can be some blurring of whether Members are attending as a County, District or Town Councillor. However, it should be acknowledged that many County Councillors have a number of parish and town council meetings to attend with a few representing in excess of 20 different parishes.



- 5.8 When asked about other activities that Members were spending time on other than those listed there were a number of comments covering large amounts of emails and phone calls to reading policy papers, dealing with highway matters, liaising with partner organisations, writing reports and parish newsletters, research, diary management, speaking to officers, and travelling to meetings.
- 5.9 In discussions with Members there was some debate about whether there was a difference in hours spent between Councillors who were in urban areas compared to those in rural areas. However, there is no evidence from the research and information gathered that this factor has any direct correlation to the number of hours performed overall in particularly in light of the number of activities that are carried out in the role.

- 5.10 Some Councillors highlighted the problem of covering travelling expenses as a number had quite long commutes to meetings in County Hall and asked if mileage rates could be reviewed. Unfortunately, although it is recognised that rates have been static for many years, they are set by HMRC and there is no ability to be able to change these without creating a tax implication.
- 5.11 The Panel were keen to ascertain Members views on whether the scheme of allowances affected their decision to stand as a Councillor. Whilst 27 responded that it did not affect their decision to stand, only 9 Members felt that it currently enabled people to stand for election. Comments included that it was not enough to compensate working age people and many felt that it was therefore more attractive to the retired or more wealthy individuals and may not appeal to younger people.
- 5.12 Members were asked to choose three words to sum up their positive and negative experiences of being a Councillor which are depicted below in the format of word clouds.

Positive

4 respondents (12%) answered **helping people** for this question. ...

Transformation/Fulfillment
 Interesting- rewarding- hardwork
 Influence
 Rewarding
 hard work
 enlightening
 people & communities
 people's lives
 local residents
 Broadens the mind
 local
helping people
 things
 Privilege & Responsibility
 Insight
Interesting
 local voice
Making a difference
 worthwhile

Negative

2 respondents (6%) answered **Social Media** for this question. ...

public apathy
 Government & Austerity
 media negativity
 thankless intermediary
 Frequently very frustrating
Time
Government
Social Media
abuse
 abuse-potholes
lonely
 Abuse/Ignorance
 kicking post
impotent
 cumbersome processes
 Councillor behaviour
frustrating
 frustration at limitations
 Enjoy the challenge

- 5.13 Members had highlighted that, once elected, it wasn't clear on eligibility to receive a pension. The Panel had considered this matter back in 2013. Back in 2001, the then Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions announced plans to give taxpayer-funded pensions to Councillors, through access to the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Government in 2013 took a very different view, highlighting that Councillors were volunteers undertaking public service (not employees of the Council dependent on the municipal payroll), therefore taxpayer-funded pensions were not justified and were an inappropriate vehicle for Councillors.
- 5.14 From 2014, there was no access for Councillors to the Local Government Pension Scheme in England. The Panel felt it important that Elections literature should make this clear, and also that it should be emphasised that payments made to Councillors are in the form of an allowance and / or expenses, with a public sector discount built in and not a salary.

6.0 Comparisons and Benchmarking

- 6.1 The Panel considered the recent (2023) SW Councils survey on allowances. The rate of basic allowance paid in Devon was £14,025 compared to the only other Shire County in the South West of Gloucestershire County Council which was £11,395. Other councils in the South West which paid a similar amount to Members were Dorset Council at £14,140 and Wiltshire Council at £15,004, both of which were unitary councils. The only other two councils in the SW Council survey shown as paying higher sums for the basic allowance were Cornwall Council and Bristol City Council which are also unitary authorities and have a greater number of Councillors.
- 6.2 However, a survey of schemes showed that for 2023/24, Kent County Council topped the list with a basic allowance of £16,401. Many others were mid-range such as East Sussex County Council at £13,780, West Sussex at £14,098 and Hampshire County Council at £13,523. Oxfordshire County Council were one of the lowest at £12,636.
- 6.3 The Panel also took the South East allowances data and assessed the allowance per head of population.

Council Name (Shire Counties)	Population	Current Basic Allowance (Members)	Per Head of Population*
Devon County Council	814,000	£14,025 (60)	£1.03
Gloucestershire County Council	652,409	£11,395 (53)	£0.93

Council Name	Population	Current Basic Allowance	Per Head of Population*
East Sussex	550,720	£13,780 (50)	£1.25
Hampshire County Council	1,416,808	£13,523 (78)	£0.74
Kent County Council	1,593,191	£16,401 (81)	£0.83
Oxfordshire County Council	738,276	£12,636 (63)	£1.07
West Sussex County Council	892,336	£14,098 (70)	£1.11

* Basic Allowance x Number of Councillors / Population

6.4 The Panel previously 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)).

6.5 The Panel applied this Surrey methodology to Devon but using the resident analysis annual survey of hours and earnings for full-time employees in Devon as at April 2023.

$$1 \text{ £31,706 less } 233\% (\text{£10,463}) = \text{£21,243} \dots \times 3 \text{ } 0.71 = \text{£15,082}$$

1 resident analysis annual survey of hours and earnings for full-time employees in Devon as at April 2023. Office for National Statistics (ONS)

2 public service discount

3 adjustment for full-time equivalent – using figures from National Census for Devon of 29 hours

6.6 The allowance for Devon (if calculated in this manner) would increase the basic allowance to £15,082 (an increase of £1,057 or 7.54% from the current rate of £14,025). This figure reflects the increases in salary levels across all sectors and this remains the Panel's benchmark. However, it is recognised that in the current public sector financial climate, such a percentage increase might be regarded as too high. For this reason, the Panel looked at other comparators, in particular, the figures in paragraph 6.8.1 and 6.8.4 below as possible alternatives, as well as the increase to officer allowances (3.88%) and Chief Officer pay award of 3.5%. Taking into account the figures this represents, and the Panel's desire that the allowance should not fall behind the current rate, and the evidence received from Councillors on the subject of the allowance, the Panel concluded that its recommendation should remain in accordance with the benchmark i.e. 7.54%. The Panel note that the increase this represents is still significantly lower than the flat rate increases awarded to staff in the NJC settlement over the last two years.

6.7 When the staff pay award has been given as a lump sum, a comparison is not possible. In last year's report the Panel considered basing recommendations on other options such as the average FTE salary, a 'notional' NJC salary point

and / or the average earnings calculator. These all came at between circa 5% and 6%.

- 6.8 Further assessment was undertaken to see how this might manifest itself into percentage rises, as opposed to the flat rise that had been given to staff.
1. average FTE salary at DCC– the mean hourly salary is £16.57 per hour (based on March 2023 data from gender pay gap report) so annually £31,881, therefore equated to 6%.
 2. a 'notional' NJC salary point – Salary scales were available at <https://inside.devon.gov.uk/task/salary-rates-and-scales/njc-payscale/>. The Panel's formula using the average weekly earnings for Devon, therefore it was felt there was no value in using a notional point. However, if SCP 25 was used (exactly halfway up the scales), then this gives a salary of £33,945. This gave a figure of 5.6%.
 3. Taking the lowest NJC salary point of £ £22,366 and the highest at £52,566 gives a mean of £37,466, so the flat rate applied to this figure gives a percentage of 5%.
 4. average earnings calculator – Devon average weekly earnings are £31,706 (based on 2023), therefore this equates to 6.1%.
- 6.9 In addition, the 22/23 pay award incorporated an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances and a number of Authorities used this at the time. However, the Panel recognised that this referred to other staff allowances such as subsistence etc, rather than Members allowances.
- 6.10 The Panel also felt it prudent to use the most recent data available, so utilised the National Census Data from 2022 (the latest available), extracting the figures submitted by Members of Devon County Council.
- 6.11 The Panel previously had raised concern over the number of 'twin trackers' (where a Councillor is a Member of more than one Authority), in view of the implications for workload. With Elections in May 2013, the figure was 39 Councillors out of the 60 who were on District Council as well as the County Council (65%). After the 2017 Elections, the number was 41 out of 62, (66%) Following recent Elections in May 2021, the number had reduced to 38 (63%) and after the District Elections in 2023, the number significantly reduced to 24, taking the percentage to 40%. With rising workloads post covid and the pressures on elected Members, the Panel were pleased to see this reduction.
- 6.12 The Panel also wanted to keep a watching brief on expenses rates for overnight stays in London. Members had previously felt the rate was still not fit for purpose. Members considered a number of other benchmarks, for example the London rate for judiciary, which was currently lower than the County Councils and also the average daily rate for London as calculated by Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC). This revised figure for 2020 was £153.00, a rise of £2.10 since 2019 (or 1.4%). Due to the impact of the pandemic, the current rates (2021 and 2022) were lower, but given these are unusual times, it appears reasonable to not adjust the figures, until such time when there is more stability in the hospitality sector. However, PWC do not seem to have published actual figures and instead only forecast with the forecast for 2024

being large rises of up to over £200 as an average. Savills also confirm that ADR figures for 2023 had increased by also 30% since 2019. The ADR confirmed by Frank Knight was £204 as at March 2023. The Panel feel a pragmatic approach is required and as such recommend a figure in the mid-range between the current agreed figure of £153 and the ADR of £204 and suggest £180.

- 6.13 The Panel will continue to seek to find a more suitable benchmark but also recognise that in some instances the Council might need to take a flexible approach to accommodation, with wording in the scheme that ensures the Council secures best value for money whilst taking into account all relevant factors (e.g. safety, location, convenience, availability and proximity to the venue etc) and the Head of Democratic Services being asked to authorise any expenditure over that amount. This was previously accepted by the Council.

7 Audit Committee Benchmarking

- 7.1 The Panel had also been asked to conduct research this year on the allowance for the role of the Chair of Audit and in addition there had been a further few more recent requests by existing Members to examine this matter.
- 7.2 In the table below there is a list of 32 authorities, including Devon, showing the current basic allowance, special responsibility allowance for the Chair of Audit (where there is one given) and what this works out as a multiplier of the basic allowance.

Council	Type of Council	Basic allowance	Chair Audit Committee	Basic Allowance Multiplier
Devon County Council	County	£14,025	£3,506	0.25
Gloucestershire County Council	County	£11,390.60	£6,740	0.59
Cambridgeshire County Council	County	£10,725.94	£8,371.16	0.78
Derbyshire County Council	County	£11,414	£3,768	0.33
East Sussex County Council	County	£13,780	£7,033	0.51
Essex County Council	County	£12,941	£0	0
Hampshire County Council	County	£13,523	£6,528	0.48
Hertfordshire County Council	County	£11,751	£11,751	1

Leicestershire County Council	County	£12,081	£0.00	0
Nottinghamshire County Council	County	£16,512	£0	0
Kent County Council	County	£9,567.46	£5,505.92	0.58
Lancashire County Council	County	£13,777	£10,333	0.75
Lincolnshire County Council	County	£11,248.74	£13,498.40	0.83
Norfolk County Council	County	£12,010	£7,206	0.6
Oxfordshire County Council	County	£12,636.00	£7,584	0.6
Staffordshire County Council	County	£10,305.13	£7,603.97	0.74
Suffolk County Council	County	£11,778.38	£5,899	0.5
Surrey County Council	County	£13,520	£10,890	0.81
Warwickshire County Council	County	£10,075	£4,699	0.47
West Sussex County Council	County	£14,098	£10,297	0.73
Worcestershire County Council	County	£10,512	£12,075	0.87
Bath & North East Somerset	Unitary	£10,225	£0	0
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council	Unitary	£13,543	£10,834	0.8
Bristol City Council	Unitary	£15,169	£6,465	0.43

Cornwall Council	Unitary	£17,681.79	£6,542.26	0.37
Dorset Council	Unitary	£14,140.41	£10,454.81	0.74
North Somerset Council	Unitary	£10,388	£4,575.04	0.44
Plymouth City Council	Unitary	£11,969	£11,969	1
Somerset Council	Unitary	£15,500	£7,750.00	0.5
South Gloucestershire Council	Unitary	£13,138	£3,941	0.3
Torbay Council	Unitary	£9,062	£3,891	0.43
Wiltshire Council	Unitary	£15,004	£3,751	0.25

- 7.3 Twenty-five authorities pay the Chair of Audit more than Devon, with 1 paying the same and 4 making no payment at all for the role. The average multiplier of the Basic Allowance of these 26 authorities that pay an allowance for this role works out at 0.63. Eleven of these authorities pay 0.5 or below x BA with 15 paying more than 0.5 of the BA.
- 7.4 Although the role of Chair of Audit could be more onerous in some authorities than others, it has been recognised the role here in Devon has changed in recent times. There is now closer synergy with the Scrutiny committees, and more involvement in cross-committee internal meetings, and a greater level of responsibility in reviewing and scrutinising the authority's financial affairs which contributes to the effective performance of the authority.
- 7.5 Based on the evidence and research carried out, the Panel recommends that the Council considers raising the allowance for the role of the Chair of Audit to a multiplier of 0.5 from its current rate of 0.25.

8. Investment and Pension Fund Vice Chair Benchmarking

- 8.1 Fifteen other Authorities pay no SRA to the Vice-Chair of the Pensions Committee (known as Investment and Pensions in Devon), which is in line with the Devon Scheme of allowances. The other County authorities that do not pay an SRA are Gloucestershire, Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, East Sussex, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire,

Kent, Lancashire, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Warwickshire, West Sussex County and Worcestershire.

- 8.2 Three County Council's pay an SRA for the role ranging from £2,527.41 - £4,499.55. Lincolnshire County Council pay £4499.55, Hampshire County Council pay £3,272 and Staffordshire County Council are the lowest at £2,527.41.
- 8.3 In terms of the Unitary Councils (Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole, Bristol City Council, Cornwall Council, Dorset Council, North Somerset Council, Plymouth City Council, Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Torbay Council and Wiltshire Council, not one paid an SRA for the role.
- 8.4 The only unitary authority to pay an SRA was Bath & North East Somerset, but this was not specifically for the Vice Chair but for all Pension Committee members, with a sum of £4079.
- 8.5 The Panel have carefully considered the benchmarking evidence as reflected above and have studied the survey data as submitted and as such are not minded at this stage, based on current evidence, to recommend an SRA payment for the role of Vice Chair of Investment and Pension Fund Committee.

9.0 National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2022 (latest data available)

- 9.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) has carried out the ninth Census of Local Authority Councillors in England. This census provides the most comprehensive, timely overview of local government representation and, with previous years' data, how that has changed over time. The results will help to inform central and local government and political groups in the development of strategies and policies for local government.
- 9.2 The 2022 Census was conducted in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effect on local communities, and recent prominent issues of personal safety.
- 9.3 The 2022 Census collected data between January and February 2022 and updates previous censuses conducted between 1997 and 2018. The 2022 Census was the second to be conducted entirely online. All 16,9301 Councillors in England were emailed a unique link to the questionnaire. A total of 5,055 Councillors responded, a response rate of 30 per cent. This is markedly higher than in 2018 (15 per cent), but lower than those in 2013 (38 per cent) and earlier.
- 9.4 The key findings were presented in three sections, work as a Councillor, issues and views of Councillors and personal characteristics of Councillors. It should be noted that the figures in this section apply nationally and to all types of Council's (Counties, Shire Districts, Unitary Councils, Metropolitan Districts and London Boroughs).
- 9.5 The main findings of the 2022 Census were as follows:

6.5.1 Councillors' views

- 85 per cent of councillors became councillors in order to serve their community;
- 63 per cent thought that listening to the views of local people was among the most important role of councillors, 60 per cent thought the same of representing local residents, and 58 per cent supporting local communities;
- 32 per cent of councillors thought they were very effective in their role, and 60 per cent fairly effective;
- 79 per cent would recommend the role of councillor to others;
- 65 per cent intended to stand for re-election;
- 70 per cent thought that the council had effective arrangements for dealing with inappropriate behaviour by council officers, 57 per cent by councillors and 55 per cent by members of the public;
- 28 per cent had either frequently or occasionally felt at risk personally in their role as a councillor, while 72 per cent had rarely or never felt at risk;
- 65 per cent thought that council arrangements for protecting councillors personally were either very or fairly effective;

- 10 per cent of councillors had experienced abuse or intimidation frequently over the last twelve months. 29 per cent occasionally, 33 per cent rarely, and 27 per cent had never had any such experiences.

9.5.2 Councillors' work

- On average, councillors had served for 9.1 years in their current authority; 48 per cent had served for up to 5 years while 12 per cent had done so for more than 20 years;
- 54 per cent of councillors held a position of responsibility, most commonly as chair or vice-chair of a committee;
- Councillors spent, on average, 22 hours per week on council business, the largest chunk of which was on council meetings (8 hours)

9.5.3 Councillors' personal characteristics

- 40 per cent of councillors were retired, and 32 per cent were in full- or part-time employment;
- 61 per cent of councillors held other voluntary or unpaid positions, such as school governorships;
- 64 per cent of councillors held a degree or equivalent or higher qualification; only 4 per cent did not hold any qualification;
- 59 per cent of councillors were male, and 41 per cent female (but see page 13);
- The average age of councillors in 2022 was 60 years; 16 per cent were aged under-45 and 42 per cent were aged 65 or over.
- 92 per cent described their ethnic background as white;
- 84 per cent described their sexual orientation as heterosexual or straight;
- 16 per cent had a long-term physical or mental health problem which reduced their daily activities;
- 46 per cent of councillors had a responsibility as a carer, most commonly looking after a child

9.6 In Devon, 32 Elected Members responded to the survey. The response rate in total for the survey was 30% so the rate from Devon at over 50% was excellent.

- average length of service - the average length of service was 9.7 years, with 9% of respondents doing in excess of 25 years. However, 50% were between 2 and 5 years service.
- position of responsibility – all the respondents had a position of authority, with the majority holding chair or vice chair of a committee role.
- Time spent on council business – this averaged 29.5 hours per week, with approximately 10.9 hours at Council meetings, 8.1 engaging with constituents and 5.1 hours with community groups. The table below shows the national picture with comparisons to

2013 and 2018. As can be seen nationally, the average number of hours per week spent on council business has increased from 20.8 in 2013 22.4 in 2022. This is highlighting that Councillors in Devon are reporting spending an additional 7.1 hours per week on council business than the national average.

Table 13: Number of hours/week spent on council business (2013-2022)						
	2013		2018		2022	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
5 hours or less	916	5.2	755	4.3	643	3.8
6–10 hours	3,542	20.1	3,155	17.8	2,792	16.5
11–15 hours	2,823	16.0	3,072	17.3	2,813	16.6
16–20 hours	3,795	21.5	3,543	19.9	3,475	20.5
21–25 hours	1,886	10.7	1,875	10.6	1,903	11.2
26–30 hours	1,974	11.2	2,032	11.4	2,174	12.8
31–35 hours	600	3.4	820	4.6	840	5.0
36–40 hours	975	5.5	1,185	6.7	1,117	6.6
41–45 hours	247	1.4	412	2.3	281	1.7
46–50 hours	413	2.3	386	2.2	394	2.3
More than 50 hours	442	2.5	535	3.0	498	2.9
Average no. of hours	20.8		22.0		22.4	
Base (respondents)	17,613	100.0	17,770	100.0	16,930	100.0

- Time spent on group/party business – this was reported as approximately 3.1 hours per week.
- Political party or group of the respondents 21 were Conservative, 1 Green, 3 Labour, 5 Liberal Democrat and 1 Other.
- Reasons for becoming a councillor – the largest response was to serve the community with 94%, 13% was to resolve a specific issue 4, but a further 53% was for political beliefs and values and 50% to change things. 44% became a Councillor because they were asked to.
- Most important things for councillors (up to 3 items)
 - Listen to the views of local people - 66%
 - Support the local community - 66%
 - Represent local residents' views to the council - 53%
 - Address issues concerning the whole area - 34%
 - Attend council meetings - 34%
 - Deal with complaints - 16%
 - Keep the public informed about council activities - 13%
 - Plan local services - 9%
 - Hold surgeries for constituents - 3%
- Influence as a councillor 41% felt they had more influence to change things than expected before being elected, with 25% feeling it was less than expected. 34% was as expected.
- Effectiveness as a councillor – 97% felt they were very or fairly effective with only 3% (1 respondent) saying it was too early to tell.
- Recommend becoming a councillor if asked – 91% would recommend the role, with 3% (1 respondent) saying no.
- Intention to stand for re-election – 66% were intending to stand and 16% saying no. A further 19% were unsure.

- Authority has appropriate arrangements in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour – by the public – Only 66% thought yes to this question with 28% stating 'no'. 19% were not sure.
- Authority has appropriate arrangements in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour - by officers – 78% said yes and 13% felt 'no'. A further 9% wasn't sure.
- Authority has appropriate arrangements in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour - by councillors – 72% felt there were appropriate procedures in place, 25% said no and 1 respondent (3%) wasn't sure.
- How often feel at risk when fulfilling councillor role – no Members felt frequently at risk, with 22% saying they felt occasionally threatened. 78% said it was rarely or never.
- Effectiveness of authority's arrangements for protecting you personally – 72% felt they arrangements were very or fairly effective, with 19% feeling not very effective or not effective at all.
- How often experienced abuse or intimidation over last 12 months – 22% had never experienced abuse or intimidation and 41% was rarely. 31% had occasionally experienced this with 6% (2 respondents) saying abuse was frequent.
- Employment status – only 26% of Members were in full or part time work with 42% being retired. 6% looked after the home and a further 26% were self employed or freelance. 75% of those in an occupation were managerial or executive positions. 13% were in the public sector, 69% in the private sector and 10% charity / community / voluntary sector.
- Extent to which employer supports work as a councillor (employed only) Only 1 respondent stated not at all, with 88% stating their employer supported to a great or some extent.
- Additional voluntary/unpaid positions 34% had no other role, but 78% had a role in another capacity or as a school governor.

9.7 Devon has many of the same issues as other Authorities in terms of attracting younger Members. Whilst Devon has some younger Councillors, (and a small number have been in Cabinet positions), the majority are over retirement age.

9.8 The age and gender profile of Devon's Councillors was gathered after the 2021 elections, and is highlighted overleaf.

Councillor Gender/Age Profile - Devon County Council - 2021			
Age Group	Male	Female	Totals
Under 30	1 (1.6%)	0	1 (1.6%)
30-39	2 (3.3%)	1 (1.6%)	3 (5%)
40-49	7 (11.6%)	4 (6.6%)	11 (18.3%)
50-59	12 (20%)	3 (5%)	15 (25%)
60-69	10 (16.6%)	8 (13.3%)	18 (30%)
70 and over	10 (16.6%)	2 (3.3%)	12 (20%)
Totals	42 (70%)	18 (30%)	60 (100%)

- 9.9 In terms of a national comparison, the table below shows the position with regard to gender. The position at a national level in terms of female representation is higher than the case in Devon at 39.1% as opposed to 30%.

Table 25: Sex (2006–2022)												
	2006		2008		2010		2013		2018		2022	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	13,645	69.3	13,417	68.4	12,411	68.5	12,192	67.3	11,248	63.3	9,573	56.5
Female	5,774	29.3	6,038	30.8	5,545	30.6	5,748	31.7	6,344	35.7	6,622	39.1
Prefer to self-describe	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18	0.1	n/a	n/a
Prefer not to say	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	160	0.9	n/a	n/a
Not stated	271	1.4	162	0.8	173	1.0	171	0.9	n/a	n/a	735	4.3
Base (population)	19,689	100.0	19,617	100.0	18,129	100.1	18,111	99.9	17,770	100.0	16,930	100.0
Note: the classification was changed in 2018 and in 2022 so comparisons with other years must be treated with caution.												

Note: the classification was changed in 2018 and in 2022 so comparisons with other years must be treated with caution.

- 9.10 In terms of a further national comparison, the table below shows the position with regard to age. The position at a national level doesn't show significant change in the average age profile of the Elected Member.

Table 27: Age (2006–2022)												
	2006		2008		2010		2013		2018		2022	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 25	58	0.3	110	0.6	124	0.8	106	0.6	107	0.6	202	1.2
25–29	273	1.5	308	1.6	221	1.4	298	1.7	444	2.5	340	2.0
30–34	430	2.4	403	2.1	378	2.4	471	2.7	657	3.7	502	3.0
35–39	656	3.6	643	3.4	454	2.9	493	2.8	657	3.7	726	4.3
40–44	1,036	5.7	1,022	5.4	662	4.2	738	4.2	764	4.3	883	5.2
45–49	1,368	7.5	1,378	7.3	1,068	6.8	1,094	6.3	1,120	6.3	1,093	6.5
50–54	1,877	10.3	1,746	9.3	1,494	9.5	1,515	8.7	1,635	9.2	1,495	8.8
55–59	2,992	16.4	2,638	14.0	1,944	12.4	2,131	12.2	2,257	12.7	2,021	11.9
60–64	3,730	20.5	4,119	21.9	3,086	19.7	2,970	17.0	2,523	14.2	2,527	14.9
65–69	3,009	16.5	3,275	17.4	3,232	20.6	3,779	21.6	3,021	17.0	2,602	15.4
70+	2,778	15.3	3,175	16.9	2,997	19.1	3,875	22.2	4,602	25.9	4,540	26.8
Base (respondents)	18,207	100.0	18,819	99.9	15,660	99.8	17,471	100.0	17,770	100.1	16,930	100.0
Average age in years	58.3		58.8		59.7		60.2		59.4		59.5	
Proportion under 45	2,453	13.5	2,486	13.1	1,839	11.7	2,106	12.0	2,630	14.8	2,652	15.7

- 9.11 The Panel have previously been concerned over the gender / age split, demonstrating the need to consider a scheme of allowances to attract a more diverse Council for the future. Whilst the allowances were raised in 2018, and subsequently, the Panel do not wish to see a return to the position where they have been allowed to become 'out of kilter' once again.

10.0 Member Development, Charter Status and Induction

- 10.1 The Panel have always been interested in Member training and development and therefore supportive of the Council's initiatives such as competency frameworks, appraisals and personal assessments of Members Learning and Development needs.
- 10.2 The Council has a focus on continuous professional development and a willingness by Councillors to ensure their skills, knowledge and understanding are up-to-date, so that they can fulfil their role successfully. Member Development is part of the fabric of the way the Council works and this is an ongoing process, with regular masterclasses, strategic sessions for all Members and a Member Development Steering Group to lead on what Members need. Members continue to be supported to work in a more efficient way, with a focus on ICT skills to fully participate in remote and hybrid meetings where possible.
- 10.3 Members continue to be offered different forms of training, briefings and development opportunities throughout the year. There are also able to take advantage of online courses through the Devon Learning platform (DEL) as well as external opportunities offered from the Local Government Association and South West Councils.
- 10.4 Where feasible training sessions such as the Code of Conduct session, held earlier in the new council year are recorded and uploaded to the Members Sharepoint site so they can also be viewed at a later date. The Members Sharepoint site continues to be developed to be the 'go to' place for a variety of useful information as well offering training and development guidance.
- 10.5 The Member Development Strategy 2021-25 is currently being reviewed as part of the Member Development stream of the Governance Review. It was recently discussed at the Member Development Steering Group and Members gave their thoughts on training which would be useful for them. In particular dealing with challenging conversations and social media, safeguarding and basic IT training was highlighted. The County Council is no longer Charter Plus accredited, however, still follows the same Charter principles in its work.
- 10.6 Other possible developments discussed were working more closely with other councils in Devon to pool resources, developments to improve dealing with residents especially around complaints, and efforts to improve communication with Members. Further clarification was also required on what was mandatory and optional. Plans were in place as part of the Governance Review work to develop the induction programme and Member development strategy for 2025

following the next elections. It had already been identified that training sessions should be in person, online and in hybrid format and if possible, in different locations to meet Members needs. Flexible training times was also requested to help those who work. More detailed discussions around this are scheduled to take place in the spring.

11.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

- 11.1 The Panel has concluded that the structure of the Allowance Scheme for Devon is fit for purpose and based on sound principles.
- 11.2 The Panel has conducted a wide-ranging review, taking into account the usual benchmarking data, organisational structures, view of other Authorities, workloads of Councillors and the most recently conducted census survey, the views of Members and other relevant factors.
- 11.3 Up until 2017, the Panel had consistently recommended increases in the Basic Allowance, with corresponding increases in the level of SRAs and the recommendations had not been implemented, hence the level of allowances in Devon had fallen behind. The Panel were pleased that in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2023, the Council listened to their recommendations and their strong evidence base to increase the Basic Allowance. The Council also agreed with the Panel in 2021 to freeze allowances.
- 11.4 Taking into account the evidence available and for the reasons set out above, the Panel recommends that:
- i. The basic structure of the current scheme is endorsed and retained.
 - ii. The Panel feels it important not to depart from its established formula of calculating the basic allowance and therefore the basic allowance increases by 7.54% to £15,082 to take effect from May 2024 and the multipliers be recalculated accordingly; This is based on the Panel's standard formula and other benchmarking, as outlined at paragraphs 6.6 and 6.8.
 - iii. Careful consideration should be given, in the future, to the levels of allowances to ensure they keep pace with the economy generally.
 - iv. That based on the benchmarking and the evidence obtained, the Audit Committee Chair SRA be increased to a multiplier of 0.5 from its current rate of 0.25;
 - v. The overnight rate for London be increased to £180.00, in line with the methodology and reasoning outlined in paragraphs 6.12 and 6.13 and that a more suitable benchmark will be researched.
 - vi. The sustained reduction in the number of SRA's be welcomed and that the levels be kept below the 50% threshold, as is currently the case;

- vii. That the information in Elections literature should be made clearer, especially with regard to the payment of allowances, the public sector discount and the status of access to the LGPS. These are matters that Group Leaders may wish to ensure are brought to the attention of prospective candidates;
- viii. That the work being undertaken to support the LGA's debate not hate campaign be supported and welcomed;
- ix. That the Panel reiterate their desire that Group Leaders continue to take a robust approach to the performance management of their Members' and places on record their thanks for the levels of reassurance provided by Group Leaders for dealing with performance issues; and
- x. The Panel place on record their appreciation to Councillors for their continued Leadership and tireless working in their communities, especially given concerns raised throughout the Report, in terms of workload and added pressures of increased abuse and intimidation.

11.5 The Panel would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this review. The Panel's particular thanks go to the officers supporting the review: Karen Strahan (Head of Democratic Services) and Julia Jones (Deputy Head of Democratic Services) who provided advice, guidance and administrative support.

HM/BH/SB
February 2024

Appendix 1

Allowances Calculations from May 2024 - Based on 2%, 3%, 4% and 5% and Panel Recommendation of 7.54%)

<u>Role</u>	<u>Multiplier</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>(wef May</u> <u>2024)</u> 2%	<u>Amount</u> <u>(wef May</u> <u>2024)</u> 3%	<u>Amount</u> <u>(wef May</u> <u>2024)</u> 4%	<u>Amount</u> <u>(wef May</u> <u>2024)</u> 5%	<u>Amount</u> <u>(wef May</u> <u>2024)</u> 7.54%
Basic (currently £14,025)	N/A	14,306	14,446	14,586	14,726	15,082
Leader	2.5	35,765	36,115	36,465	36,815	37,705
Deputy	2.0	28,612	28,892	29,172	29,452	30,164
Cabinet	1.5	21,459	21,669	21,879	22,089	22,623
Chair Scrutiny	0.73	10,443	10,546	10,648	10,750	11,010
Vice Chair Scrutiny	0.365	5,222	5,273	5,324	5,375	5,505
Chair of Council	0.8	11,445	11,557	11,669	11,781	12,066
Vice-Chair of Council	0.2785	3,984	4,023	4,062	4,101	4,200
Chair – Development	0.5	7,153	7,223	7,293	7,363	7,541
Vice Chair – Development	0.25	3,577	3,612	3,647	3,682	3,771
Chair, Investment / Pension	0.5	7,153	7,223	7,293	7,363	7,541
Chair, Appeals	0.25	3,577	3,612	3,647	3,682	3,771
Chair, Farms Estate	0.25	3,577	3,612	3,647	3,682	3,771
Chair, Public Rights of Way	0.25	3,577	3,612	3,647	3,682	3,771
Chair, Audit	0.25 0.5	3,577 7,153	3,612 7,223	3,647 7,293	3,682 7,363	3,771 7,541
*Leader, LD (9)	0.5	7,153	7,223	7,293	7,363	7,541
*Leader, Labour (7)	0.5	7,153	7,223	7,293	7,363	7,541
*Leader, Independent (5)	0.25	3,577	3,612	3,647	3,682	3,771

* 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)