



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT  
REMUNERATION PANEL APPOINTED TO  
REVIEW THE ALLOWANCES PAID TO  
COUNCILLORS OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH  
COUNCIL FOR 2014/15**

**FOR SUBMISSION TO THE COUNCIL ON  
18 SEPTEMBER 2014**

## **Introduction**

1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provide for the payment of Allowances to Members of the Council in connection with their work as Councillors. Before the Council can make or amend a scheme of allowances, it should consider the recommendations made in relation to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).
2. The Council appointed an Independent Remuneration Panel in 2003. In each of the following Municipal Years, the Panel has made recommendations on the levels of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances for consideration by the Council. An independent review of Members' Allowances has been carried out in 2014. Details of the Panel's remit are described below.

## **The Independent Remuneration Panel**

3. Following the annual review of Members' allowances in 2013, a report was presented to Council on 18 July 2013. The Council agreed all but one of the IRP's recommendations, which related to the payment of SRA's to the newly appointed Deputy Executive Members. As a result, the Panel resigned en mass.
4. Following an extensive and robust recruitment process, a new IRP was recruited. The new Panel comprised the following members:

**David Jones (Chairman)** has been a resident of Wokingham Borough for the past 9 years. He has worked for Waitrose for 31 years and has fulfilled a number of senior roles in retail, commercial and personnel sectors. He is currently the Supply Chain Director based at Waitrose's head office in Bracknell. He is an Independent Member and Deputy Chairman of the Bracknell Forest Council Standards Committee and previously was the Chairman of the Thames Valley Police Authority's Standards Committee.

**Malcolm Saffin (Vice Chairman)** has been a resident of Wokingham Borough for 20 years. He is an Actuary and has spent most of his career in the pensions and reward functions of very large UK companies; including being Group Head of Reward and Pensions at Standard Chartered Bank, Amersham and Cable & Wireless. Malcolm set up his own consulting business in 2010 and he is a Governor at St Paul's CE Junior School, Wokingham. Malcolm is married to Sarah, who has lived in Wokingham for most of her life, and they have two daughters aged 9 and 5.

**Barry Cochrane** has been a resident of Wokingham Borough for 23 years and has a 40+ year career in the design and implementation of information management solutions for both the public and private sector. Barry started his career within the Civil Service working with the RAF, Royal Navy and NHS. This was followed by a number of Europe Middle East Africa (EMEA) roles for companies delivering business efficiency through effective use of information. This included three startups taken through to Initial Public Offering (IPO). Barry is a member of ARMA International and promotes the adoption of robust records management policies and systems.

**Nikki Measures** has been a resident of Wokingham Borough for the last 12 years. She qualified as a Chartered Accountant at the National Audit Office before

moving into training and human resources. She is currently a senior HR Manager. Nikki has numerous links with the community through her children's schooling and extra-curricular activities.

**Brian Shearing** has been a resident of Wokingham Borough for more than 32 years. Brian is a graduate in Mathematics and Statistics and holds fellowships in the Chartered Insurance Institute, the Pensions Management Institute and the Institute of Directors. For 25 years he was employed by companies within the financial services sector – life assurance companies, fund management, pensions and banking. For the last 21 years he has run his own management consultancy specialising in the provision of services to financial institutions. He was a Governor of Waingels Copse School (now Waingels College) until 2000.

Susan Coulter, Senior Democratic Services Officer, provided guidance and administrative support to the Panel.

### **Background and National Context**

5. The Local Government (Local Authority Members in England) Regulations, which came into force into 2003, stated that Independent Remuneration Panels established by local authorities should make recommendations in respect of the following issues:

**Basic Allowance (BA)** – each local authority must make provision for a basic, flat rate payable to all Members.

**Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)** – each local authority may make provision for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances to those Councillors who have significant additional responsibilities. The Panel has to recommend the responsibilities that should be remunerated and the levels of each allowance.

**Childcare and Dependents' Carers' Allowance** – local authorities may make provision for the payment of an allowance to those Members who incur expenditure for the care of children or dependent relatives whilst undertaking particular duties.

**Travel and Subsistence Allowance** – local authorities may make provision for the payment of a travelling and subsistence allowance to its Member for undertaking a list of eligible duties as defined in the current scheme.

**Co-optees' Allowance** – local authorities may make provision for the payment of an allowance to co-optees for attending meetings, conferences and seminars.

6. The Regulations also provide for Panels to make recommendations in respect of the following issues:
  - The cessation of payments to Members who have been suspended or partially suspended from their duties, and the repayment of allowances;
  - The backdating of allowances to the beginning of the financial year in which they are set, and provision to recommend annual adjustments by means of an index; and

- Whether some or all Members should be eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

### **Terms of Reference for the 2014/15 Review**

7. In 2009, the Panel undertook a comprehensive review of the Members' Allowance scheme. As a result, the Panel made recommendations for significant changes to the Basic Allowance, the Special Responsibility Allowance, and other changes to the Members' Allowances scheme, all of which were agreed by the Council on 15 July 2009. This the last time that the basic allowance had been increased.
8. In 2010, the Panel agreed that it would take a 'light touch' approach; only reviewing the overall level of allowances and specific issues that had been brought to their attention. The Panel noted that the 2010 Panel Report had not been agreed by Council on 20 May 2010. The Council had noted the report, which meant that none of the IRP's recommendations had been implemented.
9. In 2011, the Panel agreed again that it would only look at issues that were brought to its attention and consider if the allowances levels needed to be adjusted. The Panel was mindful of the changes taking place at both the local and national level, such as Wokingham Borough Council's Transformation Programme, the introduction of the Localism Bill and the policy and funding changes emerging from central Government, as well as the current economic climate.
10. The last comprehensive review of the Members' Allowance Scheme was undertaken in 2012. In that report, a full survey of Members' hours and concerns allowed the allowances to be re-benchmarked.
11. In 2013, the Panel agreed that it would undertake a "light touch" approach: only reviewing the overall level of allowances and specific issues that had been brought to its attention.
12. In 2014, the Panel agreed that as it was a new Panel, an in depth review should be undertaken. A full survey of Members' hours and concerns allowed the allowances to be re-benchmarked.

### **Work Programme for 2014 Review**

13. The Panel met on the following occasions:
  - 13 March 2014;
  - 14 April 2014;
  - 24 April 2014;
  - 28 April 2014;
  - 12 May 2014; and
  - 19 June 2014.

The Chairman also met with the Senior Democratic Services Officer on 12 August to finalise the wording of this report and to clarify the Panel's recommendations.

14. The Panel made reference to the following information to provide background, context and assistance in reaching its conclusions:

- Copies of the current Members' Allowances Scheme agreed by the Council in July 2013 and previous versions.
  - Copies of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003;
  - Benchmarking information on Members' allowance levels paid by other local authorities for 2013/14;
  - Benchmarking information on IT and support provided and/or Members' Allowances paid by other local authorities for 2013/14;
  - The summary of the South East Employers (SEEMP) Members' Allowances Survey 2013.
15. All Members were invited to present their views at individual meetings with the Panel. Fourteen Members accepted and were interviewed, including the Leaders of the two main political groups. The Chief Executive's opinion and that of the Administrator for the Members' Allowances Scheme were also sought.
16. Some Members made suggestions which fell outside the scope of the current Members Allowances Scheme legislation and the remit of the Panel. Therefore, those suggestions have not been addressed in this report.
17. The Panel sent out a survey to all Members, attached at Appendix A to this report. 14 out of 54 surveys were returned, which equates to 26 %.

#### **Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances**

18. Five years ago, the Panel re-calculated and benchmarked the Basic Allowance and these were re-verified last year. Since then, average LGA rates on which it is based have not substantially moved and Wokingham Borough Council employees' salaries had been frozen for some years, although they did receive a 1% rise in 2013.
19. Just over half of the representations to the Panel suggested that the Basic Allowance should be increased because of the slight recovery in the economic situation, although it was suggested that a rise of 1% would be in line with the pay rise for 2013/14 made to officers. However, it also noted that all benchmarked Local Authorities had not increased the Basic Allowance in the last year, nor were intending to do so in the coming year.
20. The Panel noted that an increase of 1% would raise the basic allowance from £7,360 to £7,433, which would increase the budget from £397,440 to £401,382. The Panel was aware that officers had received a 1% increase in their salaries in 2013 and that there was also a pay offer of 1% pending for 2014.
21. The Panel considered that if officers received an increase of 1% this year, they would have received a 2% increase over two years. Therefore a 2% increase for Members should be considered to bring Members in line with officers. With average earnings increasing by approximately 1% over the last year, an adjustment of the basic allowance was justified as it reflected the growth in the economy and movement of pay in the employment market. The Panel also noted that an increase of 2% would raise the time contributed component of the basic allowance from £6,360 to £6,487, which would increase the budget from £343,440 to £350,298. The Panel therefore, recommends that the time contributed

component of the Basic Allowance be increased by 2% this year and that the increase be backdated to 5 April 2014.

22. The Panel continued to use the premise that 50% of a Members' time is pro bono as the role is that of a volunteer. Whilst an allowance is appropriate, it is not a salary.
23. The Panel was of the opinion that the Basic Allowance should still comprise two parts as standard. These are:
  - An allowance to recognise the responsibility and time involved in the role of a Member. Using the assumption in paragraph 22 above and the LGA average hourly rate, leads to an amount of £6,360 per annum for the Basic Allowance;
  - Compensation for out of pocket incidental expenses related to their primary role as a Member, not separately reimbursed under the Scheme, for which the Panel considered £500 per annum is appropriate.
24. The Panel had some representations from Members for better support and facilities, to cover home office running costs, IT equipment and consumables not provided by the Council but necessary for them to perform their role. Members particularly made reference to the costs of paper and ink cartridges. The Panel considered this matter and felt that the £500 paid, in addition to the two standard elements of the Basic Allowance, for IT provision more than covered the cost of home office running costs.
25. The Panel continues to recommend that Members not providing proper home office facilities, including those which allow constituents to communicate with them by e-mail, should not be allowed to claim the £500 component of the Basic Allowance. It recommends that the Council continues with a self-certification process to reinforce this.
26. As a result, the Panel recommends that the Basic Allowance be set at £7,487 per annum comprising the following components:
  - £500 for out of pocket expenses;
  - £6,487 for time contributed; and
  - £500 for IT, communication and home office.
27. In 2009, when the Basic Allowance was re-calculated, the Special Responsibility Allowance was benchmarked against comparable authorities. Further benchmarking information was received in 2014 and this was taken into consideration in the 2014/15 review. As a result, the Panel does not see the need to adjust the Special Responsibility Allowance. The Panel therefore recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance remains at the current level of multiples of £5,000 per annum. The Panel notes that currently there are a total of 38 Special Responsibility Allowances available to the 54 Members.
28. The Panel was advised that on a very small number of occasions, Members had not been allowed to claim mileage for attending some meetings. This was due to the fact that there was no evidence to support their attendance and there were no

formal notes or minutes of these meetings as they are not serviced by Democratic Services Officers. Therefore, no accurate record of attendees was available. The Panel recommends that the Council establishes a mechanism for recording Members' participation in such meetings to enable them to claim mileage.

#### **Deputy Executive Members (DEMs):**

29. The Panel was made aware of the appointment of six Deputy Executive Members (DEMs) in 2013 and the SRA of £2,000 each. Four Deputy Executive Members met with the Panel and explained their responsibilities and roles. Two Deputy Executive Members submitted written information. The Panel understands that this decision was made last year to reflect the significant increase in the projected workloads associated with the duties of the Executive Members.
30. While it was clear that the duties of the DEMs did not include the taking of formal decisions or the exercise of any delegated authority (in fact, the Local Government Act 2000 prevents DEMs from having this decision making capability), the Panel noted that a new Leader of the Council had been appointed. Councillor Keith Baker was invited to discuss his proposals for DEMs with the Panel. As a result, the Panel was clear that the Leader's proposals to reduce the number of Executive members from 10 to 8 and to appoint a DEM for each Executive Member to assist with their portfolio work and to remove the SRA for the position of Deputy Leader of the Council would result in savings of around £18,500.
31. The Panel therefore recommends that the DEMs should be paid an SRA of £2,000 each.

#### **Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

32. The Panel received representations about Members travelling from the furthest parts of the Borough being at a disadvantage in terms of travel expenses that could not be claimed as some of duties were not on the approved duties list. The Panel considered the issue and decided that there should not be any specific payment in terms of distance from Shute End. It recommends that the list of approved duties remains as in the current scheme of Members' Allowances.
33. The Panel is concerned that some Members are not claiming all of their expenses and allowances because of worries about how this will be perceived by their peers and members of the public. As has been previously emphasised, this compensation is a right to which they are entitled. Where expenses have been incurred in line with the Council's operating procedure, these can be claimed without fear or prejudice.

#### **Councillors' Parking**

34. The Panel was asked to address parking expenses for visits to the Council offices on approved duties. The Panel took the view that logically, if officers have to pay for parking during the working day, then Members should too. The Panel noted that Shute End car parking charges are not applicable after 5:00pm.

#### **Training**

35. The Panel asked Members whether they had received any training in relation to allowances and expenses. Some Members stated that they had not received any training in relation to remuneration or how the Members' allowances scheme

worked. The Panel recommends that, as part of their induction, Members receive training in relation to remuneration and how the Members' allowances scheme and expenses work. Refresher training for existing Members should also be provided.

### **Childcare and Dependants Carers Allowance**

36. The Panel was asked to look at the Childcare Allowance, as some Members felt that this did not cover the incurred costs and could act as a disincentive to young parents becoming Councillors. The Panel carried out research on the rate and concluded that the actual hourly rate used and the flexibility in claiming the hours over a month was sufficient for this expense. However, the Panel recommends that this allowance be set at the National Minimum wage, whatever that may be in the future and that where there are exceptional circumstances, any increase in this allowance be approved by the Council's Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Panel.

### **Pensionability and Indexation**

37. Only one Member felt that Members' Allowances should be pensionable, but the Panel felt that this was inappropriate.
38. The Panel was asked to consider index lining Members' Allowances. The Panel felt that any increase in the allowances should mirror that given to Council employees. The Panel noted that Council employees had received a 1% increase in their salaries in 2013 and discussions were being held between the employers and the Unions regarding this year's pay award for officers. The original offer to officers had been 1% but this had been rejected.
39. The Panel felt that it should continue to meet annually to allow discussion on indexation and review any material changes made during the year, including inflation, rather than index linking allowances without a review.

The Panel recommended that, taking all the relevant factors into account, no Members are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme and that the allowances should not be index-linked.

### **Hotel Expenses for Conferences and Training Courses**

40. The Panel was asked to consider the amount that Councillors Council claim when for hotel accommodation overnight when attending training courses and conferences. Currently, Members are allowed to claim £91.04 for an overnight stay in an inner London hotel. Elsewhere the rate was £79.82. Officers are currently allowed to claim for an overnight stay in a hotel but in the Wokingham Borough Council Staff Travel and expenses Policy and guidance, there are no amounts specified for officers in terms of hotel stays or subsistence allowances. The policy merely states that:

“if a course is held at a venue beyond reasonable daily travelling distance, the reasonable cost of overnight accommodation (e.g. 3\* star hotel) may be claimed subject to agreement with the Budget Manager prior to booking”.

41. The Panel recommended that the above should also be applied to Members wherever possible.

## MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2014/15

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

*The Panel recommends to the Council that:*

- (1) The time contributed component of the Basic Allowance be increased by 2% to reflect the growth in the economy and movement of pay in the employment market.*
- (2) There be no change made to the multiples of the Special Responsibility Allowances paid to those roles as set out in the current Members' Allowances Scheme.*
- (3) The Deputy Executive Members be paid an SRA of £2,000 each.*
- (4) The Panel recommends that the childcare and Dependents' Carers' Allowance be set at the National Minimum wage, whatever that may be in the future, and that where there are exceptional circumstances, any increase in this allowance be approved by the Council's Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Panel.*
- (5) The £500 component of the Basic Allowance for the provision of IT, communication and home office should continue to be claimed only by those Members who provide facilities which allow constituents and Officers to communicate with them by e-mail and the self-certification process be continued.*
- (6) The £500 component of the Basic Allowance for out of pocket expenses should continue.*
- (7) The Council establishes a mechanism for recording Members' attendances at Working Group meetings etc to enable them to claim mileage and Democratic Services be advised of attendees accordingly, following the meetings.*
- (8) As part of their induction, Members receive training in relation to remuneration and how the Members' allowances scheme and expenses works. Refresher training for existing Members should also be provided.*
- (9) The allowance to co-optees for attending meetings, conferences and seminars remain the same.*
- (10) If Members attend a training course or conference which is held at a venue beyond reasonable daily travelling distance, the reasonable cost of overnight accommodation (e.g. 3\* star hotel) may be claimed subject to agreement with the Budget Manager prior to booking.*
- (11) Taking all the relevant factors into account, no Members are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.*
- (12) Members' Allowances should not be index-linked.*

## Appendix A

### Summary of Members Allowances Survey 2012

In March 2014, the Independent Remuneration panel undertook a survey of Members' hours and comments on their allowances to inform their annual report on Members' Allowances. This was to update the work carried out in the original survey of 2009. Of 54 Councillors, 14 replied and percentages quoted in this summary are of the respondents.

The Panel felt that, with a 26% response to the survey, these results were not representative of the Council Members and it expressed its disappointment that 74% of the Members did not respond.

#### Hours worked

On average 81.90 hours per month were spent as a Councillor, an increase of 1.27% from 2012. (*This compares with the national average for all Councillors in England of 25 hours per week (approximately 103 per month)\**). The time splits into 27.35% on ward work, 19.67% on Council and committee meetings and 50.28% on other meetings and activities. However, for only Executive Members, the average rises to 91.80 hours per month with 11.11% spent on Council meetings and 27.32% on other meetings and activities.

Around a quarter of Councillors who responded considered the time spent on Council work to be excessive. The variation in workload and the amount of reading required gave some concerns; as did the difficulty of combining the role of a Councillor with a full daytime job.

#### Expenses and Allowances

There was a wide range of comments on allowances and expenses (Appendix B) which is difficult to summarise but which the Panel read and found useful when interviewing Councillors and writing their report.

- Only 42.86% of Members who responded stated that the current scheme covered their expenses adequately and 50% felt that they had incurred losses for which they had not been recompensed. However the basic allowance is based on a 50% pro bono element from Councillors. These comments have prompted the Panel to more fully explain how the allowances have been arrived at in the main report.
- Not all members claim all their expenses or allowances either on principle or, more concerning, because they feel it leaves them open to criticism (*see main report*).
- There were a number of comments about increasing expenditure on the home office now needed for the role (printer cartridges, mobile phones etc.) and whether this was adequately reflected in the Basic Allowance.
- The rising cost of fuel and parking not being matched by claimable expenses was also commented on.

#### Other points

- 50% of Members who responded now feel that allowances are a real factor in people deciding to stand for Councillor jobs both in dissuading applicants or even persuading them on the basis of remuneration.

- A more important criterion is time available. \* Today, the proportion of Councillors in full-time employment has decreased steadily from 27.2 per cent in 2001 to 19.2 per cent in 2013, whereas there has been very little variation in the proportions of Councillors who are self-employed or work part-time between 2001 and 2013.

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The Panel would like to thank those Members who responded to the survey with their statistics and comments.

David Jones  
Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel  
Wokingham Borough Council

\* National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010

## Statistics

**Hours worked on Council business**

Average Hours /month (2012 numbers in italics)	<i>All Members (inc Exec Members)</i>	<i>Executive Members</i>
Ward	20.36 (25.07)	19.00 (13.1)
Full Council	6.14 (6.40)	3.21 (8.8)
Committee	8.50 (9.70)	5.71 (13.2)
Other Meetings	26.14 (8.6)	6.00 (15.1)
Other Activities	11.28 (14.6)	7.07 (42.1)
Total	74.42 (64.40)	40.99 (92.3)

**Employment Status**

Employed: 3  
 Not employed: 0  
 Self-employed: 2  
 Retired: 9  
 Dual:  
 No Answer:

**Some of the Comments from the survey replies**

NB some of the comments have been edited so that they are more concise and non attributable.

**Question 3: Do you consider the time you spend on Council work to be excessive/about right/minimal?**

Yes – 3  
No – 0  
About Right – 11  
No Answer – 0

Comments:

- Very high. Full time job. Work evenings. Management of 100 e-mails a day is an issue.
- More means I get in the way of officers at WBC. Less means I am not doing my role well.
- To do the job properly, but it tends to be full time!
- The workload is driven by changes required to meet cost saving targets and legislation changes.
- I consider the time I spend on the Council to be excessive as much of what I do is extremely inefficient. As a Councillor, I have no administrative or secretarial support; all of which I have to do myself; yet I am responsible for a huge amount within the Council. It is not the best use of my time and would be impossible for anyone who has not independent means.
- The time needed to do the job effectively.
- As expected. Volunteered.

**Question 4: Do you feel the current allowances scheme fairly meets the expenses you incur in performing your duties and responsibilities as a Councillor?**

Yes – 6  
No – 8  
Unsure/No answer – 0

Comments:

- Not considering the hours worked!
- But in climate, no change proposed.
- But politically, you cannot ask for more!
- I see my role as my contribution to society. The payment (allowances) received no way removes the hours required to carry out the role.
- Reasonably, though telephone and broadband costs can be steep to get the best internet broadband links and postage has increased again recently.. Equally we are expected to buy our printer cartridges and paper out of our allowances which can be excessive if you have lots of papers to print out.
- The current allowances scheme is based on meetings which are incurred with officers. Much of what Members do is with other Members and residents.

Councillors are there to serve the residents and yet the allowances scheme prejudices this. I would like to see allowances paid to be LGA school governors and for attendance at Parish Council meetings.

- More than covers the cost.
- The hourly rate is very low for the work completed.
- Needs to keep up with comparable jobs and inflation.
- The allowances have been fixed for five years and the time is approaching when they should be increased, for example – our electorate is increasing.

**Question 5: In your time as a Councillor, have you incurred losses for which you have not been recompensed?**

Yes – 7

No – 6

No answer – 1

Comments:

- Yes, many.
- Do not understand the question.
- Again, politics prohibit full claims for expenses. If you do, then you end up on the front page of the Chronicle!
- I have not submitted any expenses since becoming a Councillor. This will have to change as the cost of travel and car parking has increased considerably.
- I live furthest from Wokingham with a round trip of 25 miles. Whilst the Council pays my travel for approved duties, all the remainder I have to pay myself, which can cost between £5,000 and £10,000 per year. To get around my ward, I spend a similar amount. In addition, there are a number of other expenses, including postage, stationary, refreshments for others etc.
- Travelling backwards and forwards from Earley to WBC, site visits etc are not the subject of expense claims.
- But my choice.

**Question 6: Was the Members Allowances Scheme a relevant consideration in deciding whether to stand for election as a Borough Councillor?**

Yes – 1

No – 13

No answer – 0

Comments:

- Did not know it existed before election.
- No but without it I would not be able to fully participate as a Borough Councillor as I already fund my work as a Town Councillor.
- Not at all.
- I was already an unpaid Town Councillor with a consultancy business. I gave up my consultancy when elected to the Borough which would not have been possible without an allowance.
- I have to admit that I had only the haziest idea of just what Borough Councillors received.

**Question 7: Are you aware of any instances where the Scheme has influenced prospective Councillors in their decision to stand for election as a Borough Councillor?**

Yes – 7

No – 7

Don't know – 0

No answer – 0

Comments:

- Myself for one until I retire with additional income I could not afford to commit to the hours required. No doubt it is a bar to younger people who have commitments.
- No but I know where some hardship has resulted when stepping down from some additional roles.
- Yes, some.
- As a top up to their pension!
- I am aware that the allowance is an important part of a Members' income and is a factor in being elected.
- One of my predecessors, by then only on the Earley Town Council, said he stood down because he was not paid enough.

**Question 8: What one thing would you like to change about the Members' Allowances Scheme?**

Comments:

- Clearly, we do not pursue them for financial advantage and thus accepted but it needs to reflect the level of responsibility and decision making which it clearly does not!
- All Councillors to declare time put to tasks.
- None.
- The cap on allowances. I also sit on the Planning Committee but receive no allowance due to my Executive allowance. If I was a member of an outside committee, (such as the Fire Service), there is no limits which seems unfair.
- I would provide printing paper to all Councillors.
- The definition of approved duties.
- Perhaps linked to how WBC officers are paid. If no increase to officers, no increase to Members. 1% increase to officers, 1% increase to Members?
- Reduce the allowance to those who do the minimum of work and contribute little!
- If Chairmen don't attend a meeting, the allowance, or at least a proportion, should go to the Vice-Chairman who takes the meeting. If you miss a meeting, no additional allowance.
- Compensate Members for time spent.
- It should be "expenses" and not treated as a salary and taxable. However, I suspect this is outside your remit.
- Nothing given the present cabinet system. I strongly prefer a committee system with attendance allowances.
- Should be pensionable.
- No, it is basically a fair scheme.

**Question 9: Do you have any other comments you would like the Independent Remuneration Panel to take into consideration about this Council's current Members' Allowances Scheme?**

Comments:

- Consider the hours of the Executive in particular, the level of accountability and reflect if it would attract young people – which it often fails to do. I could not do this unless I was retired.
- Part of the role of an Executive Member means you are involved with other Members' ward issues, hence the high number of hours. As Member for General Planning and Affordable Housing, I tend to be involved in a high number of cases.
- I believe that Wokingham are out of step with other authorities and whatever is agreed next time should be future proofed by it being index linked to the cost of living increase.
- The Council has changed materially in recent years. In the New Labour years, Councillors were an irrelevancy at worst and at best a non-executive board. The main drive was the Local Area Agreement, which defined most of what Councils were required to do and compensated them in accordance with their ability to achieve targets. Money was relatively easy with budgets going up every year. Civil servants were in charge. Since the recession, there has been a material change. Councillors are responsible and have to devise strategies and tactics to maintain services with reducing resources. Civil servants need to be more efficient and responsive to Members' requirements. Leading Members have to devote some forty – eighty hours per week to their tasks. It is also true that inactive backbenchers can live with devoting very little time. The danger is that the Council is mainly old men with independent means. The Executive has to be Members with independent means, as those Members of the Executive who are in full time employment are very ineffective. The Wokingham allowances are now some of the very lowest and are unlikely to attract anyone who needs these sums. The consolidated expense allowance is risible. It is time the allowances and the expenses were all reviewed and materially increased to ensure that sufficient talent was attracted to face up to the challenges of the future which will need greater expertise and devotion. I would like to see the basic allowance go up to £10,000 (from £7,360) and the Special Responsibility Allowance rise to £6,000 (from £5,000). The Deputy Leader of the Council from 2.5 times SRA to three times SRA. I would like to see approved duties include being an LGA Governor, attending Parish Council meetings and attending to local ward and residents' issues.
- Do not consider any increases.
- Members' allowances are, unfortunately, a political football, which is somewhat negative. I am not a Councillor for the money but it would be nice not to feel out of pocket sometimes. I am booked to speak to you and will discuss "Chairman's" role then.
- Should be index-linked.
- As the ward work to an extent is dependent on the size of our electorate and that is increasing provides some justification for considering an uplift in allowances.