



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT  
REMUNERATION PANEL APPOINTED TO  
REVIEW THE ALLOWANCES PAID TO  
COUNCILLORS OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH  
COUNCIL FOR 2015/2016**

**FOR SUBMISSION TO THE COUNCIL ON  
17 SEPTEMBER 2015**

## **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 2015. Details of the Panel's remit are described in paragraph 4 below:

## **The Independent Remuneration Panel**

3. The Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel are:

**David Jones (Chairman)** has been a resident of Wokingham Borough for the past 11 years. He has worked for Waitrose for 33 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. Malcolm is married to Sarah, who has lived in Wokingham for most of her life, and they have two daughters aged 11 and 7.

**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 34 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 23 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.

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

#### **Background and National Context**

4. 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.

5. 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 2015/16 Review**

6. 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 and a comprehensive review undertaken as a result. For the 2015/2016 review the Panel's approach was to undertake the review from the position of a light touch review unless material concerns or significant new information came to light.

### **Work Programme for 2015 Review**

7. The Panel met on the following occasions:

- 7 April 2015
- 23 June 2015
- 29 June 2015
- 15 July 2015

The Chairman also met with the Principal Democratic Services Officer on 25 August 2015 to finalise the wording of this report and to clarify the Panel's recommendations.

8. 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 September 2014 and previous versions.
  - Copies of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003;
  - The summary of the South East Employers (SEEMP) Members' Allowances Survey 2014/2015.
9. The Panel has met with the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition and a number of present and former Deputy Executive Members.
10. 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 with the exception of the possible future role of the Panel in considering levels of allowances for Councillors undertaking the role of Non-Executive Director on the Council's Local Authority Trading Companies.
11. The Panel sent out a survey to all Members, attached at Appendix A to this report. 12 out of 54 surveys were returned, which equates to 22%.

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

12. 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.
13. The Panel was of the opinion that the Basic Allowance should still comprise three parts as standard. These are:

- Compensation for out of pocket incidental expenses related to their primary role as a Member, not separately reimbursed under the Scheme;
  - An allowance to recognise the responsibility and time involved in the role of a Member.
  - An allowance towards the cost of IT, communication and home office.
14. The Panel noted that as part of its August 2014 review it had undertaken a thorough review of the level of basic allowance and recommended a 2% increase in the time contributed component of the allowance, bringing that element of the allowance up to £6,487. A rationale for this recommendation was the implemented 1% increase in Officer salaries in 2013/2014 and the then expected 1% increase in Officer salaries in 2014/2015. An element of the recommended 2% increase in 2014 was therefore to mitigate against there being no increase to basic allowance during the 2013/2014 financial year.
  15. In considering the level of basic allowance as part of its current review, the Panel noted that the national Officer pay agreement implemented on 1 January 2015 covered both the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 financial years. Under this agreement Officer pay for the period up to April 2016 was increased by 2%. The Panel's view was that as a principle any increases in Officer pay should be mirrored by an increase of the same amount in the time contributed element of the Member basic allowance.
  16. As Officer pay had been increased by 1% in the 2015/2016 financial year the Panel decided that there should be a 1% increase in the time contributed element of the Member basic allowance. The Panel noted this would represent an increase of £65 per Member taking the time contributed element of the basic allowance from £6487 to £6552 this would be an increase in budget increase of £350,298 to £353,808.
  17. The Panel acknowledged representations made to it by a number of Members that it was felt that the level of basic allowance should not be increased this year and was at about the right level. This was also reflected in the survey responses the Panel received. However, the Panel also received representations from Members that they supported the principle of a linkage between percentage increases in rates of pay for Officers and Members. Therefore, if Officers pay increased by a rate of 1% there should be a commensurate increase of 1% in the time contributed element of the Members' basic allowance. Alternatively, if Officers pay was not increased there should not be any increase in the time contributed element of the Members' basic allowance.
  18. The Panel received some representations from Members as part of the surveys 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 and telephone costs. 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 was still sufficient to cover the cost of home office running costs.
  19. 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.

20. As a result, the Panel recommends that the Basic Allowance be increased to be set at £7552 per annum, backdated to 1 April 2015 and comprising the following components:

- £500 for out of pocket expenses;
- £6,552 for time contributed; and
- 500 for IT, communication and home office

21. **Special Responsibility Allowances**

As part of the 2014/2015 review benchmarking information was undertaken and this was taken into consideration by the Panel in coming to its recommendations. Representations received by the Panel as part of the current review did not highlight the level of Special Responsibility Allowance as an issue for Members and 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 37 Special Responsibility Allowances available to the 54 Members.

**Annual Adjustments**

22. The Panel received a number of representations that it consider the principle of introducing a mechanism for the annual adjustment of the basic allowance. The Panel noted that under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 it was permissible to make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances to be ascertained by reference to an index specified by the local authority and set out within the Members' Allowances scheme. Where the only change made to a scheme is an increase in allowances as a result of the application of an index, the scheme of allowances is not regarded as being amended and the local authority does not have to seek a recommendation from its Independent Remuneration Panel.
23. Where a Panel makes recommendation that allowances should be determined in accordance with an annual adjustments it must also make a recommendation as to how long they should be indexed although this cannot be for a period exceeding four years.
24. The Panel considered the application of an annual adjustment and the idea of a linkage with Officers very carefully. Whilst the Panel acknowledged the case for an annual adjustment in that it might help to make the issue of Members' Allowances less contentious, that it would be relatively straight forward and would not require an annual review of allowances, it decided not to recommend a formal annual adjustment mechanism at this time. It was felt by the Panel that for the time being it should continue to meet annually to allow for discussion on any material changes made during the year. However, it was considered that the issue should be revisited as part of the 2016/2017 review. The Panel was minded to consider the level of any percentage increase in the rate of pay of Officers as its starting point in determining future levels of basic allowance.

**Deputy Executive Members (DEMs):**

25. The Panel was made aware of the appointment of 7 Deputy Executive Members (DEMs) in 2015, one less than in 2014 and the SRA of £2,000 each. One current and one former Deputy Executive Member met with the Panel and explained their responsibilities, roles and their experiences of undertaking the role.
26. Whilst it was clear that the duties of DEMs did not include the taking of formal decisions or the exercise of delegated authority, (in fact, the Local Government Act 2000 prevents DEMs from having this decision making capability) it was also clear to the Panel from the representations made to it by the Leader of the Council, which were echoed by the Chief Executive, that DEMs had become established as a role and were felt to be working well and making an important contribution to the business of the Council in assisting their relevant Executive Members with their portfolios. Whilst the Panel acknowledged that there were still reservations amongst some Members regarding the payment of a SRA to the DEMs they felt that they should continue.
27. The Panel therefore recommends that the DEMs should continue to be paid an SRA of £2,000 each.

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

28. The level of travel and subsistence Allowance was not raised as a significant issue in the representations made to the Panel and therefore the Panel is not recommending any changes to the current levels of travel and subsistence allowance.
29. The Panel remains very 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, the media and members of the public. As has been previously emphasised, whilst respecting a Member's personal decision not to make a claim 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.

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

30. The Panel was not minded to change its recommendation made in the 2014/2015 review 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**

31. Only one Member felt that Members' Allowances should be pensionable, but the Panel noted the Government had removed the ability for Councillors to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, (LGPS) from 1 April 2014.

#### **Allowances for Councillors Appointed as Non-Executive Directors of Council Owned Companies**

32. The Panel was asked to look at the possibility of broadening its remit and Terms of Reference to include the offering of advice on the level of remuneration paid to

Members appointed to serve as Non-Executive Directors of companies wholly owned by the Council.

33. The Panel noted the Council had used its statutory powers to create a number of different companies, Wokingham Enterprises Ltd, WBC (Holdings) Ltd, Wokingham Housing Limited, Loddon Homes Limited, Optalis Holdings Limited, Optalis Wokingham Limited and Optalis Ltd. As a result of representations made to it by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and written information considered, the Panel noted in general terms, the different functions of the companies and that by creating the companies the Council was able to commission and deliver services to residents using alternative models which were not possible within a traditional local government model. The creation of the companies also allowed for services to be sold to other commissioners and revenue generated for the Council.

The Panel received representations from the Leader of Council, Leader of the Opposition and Chief Executive that it was recognised that there were possible improvements that could be made to the process by which the level of remuneration paid to Members appointed as Non-Executive Directors to the companies were determined in order to make the settings of the allowance more transparent to Members and residents. It was suggested to the Panel that given its existing role as an independent body in advising upon the level of Members Allowances for Council posts it was well suited to also consider the issue of advising on the level of allowances for Member Non-Executive Directors. It was noted that when the issue of payments to Members on Council companies had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in August 2012, one of the Committee's recommendations to the Executive had been that the Independent Remuneration Panel be asked to regularly review the level of allowance for Member Non-Executive Directors.

34. The Panel gave these representations careful consideration noting that the consideration of allowances to Member Non-Executive Directors did not form part of its statutory role as set out in Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, but that there was not on the information available to it, any regulatory or statutory prohibition to Independent Remuneration Panels undertaking the function. It noted that the creation of wholly owned companies by local authorities was becoming more common across the country although the numbers were still relatively low. Within Wokingham Borough, the companies whilst separate legal entities were now delivering and commissioning a number of key public services such as social housing and social care services in pursuance of the Council's objectives. The representations the Panel received were such it would be in the general public interest for the Independent Remuneration Panel to offer advice to the companies on the level of remuneration and that the Panel would be well placed to do so as it had the status of being independent from the Council. It would also have the experience and skill set to be able to undertake the task given its experience of its statutory role in advising on the Members' Allowance Scheme.
35. The Panel decided that it was minded in principle to support the extension of its terms of reference to include offering advice to the Council's companies on the level of allowances for the Council's Non-Executive Directors. This would be a separate piece of work outside of the consideration of Members' Allowances under

the 2003 Regulations. The Panel therefore recommends that the Council consider extending the Terms of Reference of the Panel to include the authority to respond to any request from the companies that they consider the level of allowances for Member Non-Executive Directors.

## MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2015/16

### 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 1% to reflect the increase in Officer pay;*
- (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 continue to be paid an SRA of £2,000 each as set out in the current Members' Allowances Scheme;*
- (4) That there be no change in the rate payable for the Childcare and Dependent's Carers' Allowance as set out the current Members Allowances Scheme in that it 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) As part of their induction, Members continue to receive training in relation to remuneration and how the Members' allowances scheme and expenses works;*
- (8) It be noted that Members are no longer eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.*
- (9) Members' Allowances should not be index-linked.*
- (10) That the Terms of Reference of the Panel be amended to include having the authority to consider any request from a Local Authority Trading Company owned by Wokingham Borough Council for the Panel to advise them on the level of remuneration payable by that company to its Member Non-Executive Directors.*

### Summary of Members Allowances Survey 2015

In June 2015 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 and in 2014. Of 54 Councillors, 12 replied and percentages quoted in this summary are of the respondents. The Panel felt that, with a 12 Member response to the survey, these results were not representative of the Council and therefore should be treated with significant caution.

#### Hours worked

On average 73.21 hours per month were spent on Councillor duties, a decrease of 10.61% from 2014. (*This compares with the national average for all Councillors in England of 25 hours per week (approximately 103 per month)\*1*). The time is split into 40.06% on ward work, 40.99% on Council and committee meetings and 20.93% on other meetings and activities. However, for only Executive Members, the average rises to 137.5 hours per month with 35.14% spent on ward work, 37.94% on Council and other meetings and 26.90% on other meetings and activities.

None of the Councillors who responded considered the time spent on Council work to be excessive.

#### Expenses and Allowances

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

- 66.67% of Members who responded stated that the current scheme covered their expenses adequately however, 58% felt that they had incurred losses for which they had not been recompensed;
- Not all members claimed all their expenses or allowances either on principle or, more concerning, because they felt 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, fixed line rental, mobile phones etc.) and whether this was adequately reflected in the Basic Allowance.

#### Other points

- 27.27% of Members who responded now feel that allowances are a real factor in people deciding to stand as a Councillor 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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<sup>1</sup> \* National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010

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

## Statistics

### Hours worked on Council business

Average Hours /month	<i>All Members (inc Exec Members)</i>	<i>Executive Members</i>
Ward	29.33	48.33
Full Council	6.42	12.00
Committee	22.13	40.17
Other Meetings	15.33	37.00
Other Activities		
Total	73.21	137.50

### Employment Status

Employed: 5  
 Not employed: 1  
 Self-employed: 2  
 Retired: 4  
 Dual: 0  
 No Answer: 0

### 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?**

Excessive - 0  
About Right – 12  
Minimal - 0

##### Comments:

- The workload varies depending on the whether there is a major issue to be dealt with.
- Time varies with the complexity of the situation as it arises.
- It is tough for Councillors who are employed full time to be able to undertake a full time role and can involve professional sacrifices. It is important for employed people of working age to be encouraged to be Councillors.
- Executive Portfolios are wide ranging with many different strands of work to progress policy, make improvements, monitor issues and respond to concerns, complaints, ideas etc.
- Being a Councillor takes up a significant amount of my time, but I knew it was a commitment and it is a priority for me.
- About right for an active backbencher

#### **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 – 8  
No – 4

##### Comments:

- On the basis on an hourly rate comparison the scheme is very poor. The majority of work is ward based for which there is no recompense. Association fees are not covered in the scheme.
- It covers all my monthly expenses.
- The members' allowances scheme is not a 'salary', but does offer some financial compensation for the time spent undertaking Councillor duties. It is about right.
- The scheme does not recompense me on the basis of my normal hourly rate but is fair.
- The scheme is a fair balance between public duty and reasonable compensation for time and costs. Some mileage cannot be claimed.
- The existing scheme is reasonable, but does not fully cover all the time spent as a Councillor. Some increase in Basic Allowance would assist.

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

Yes – 5

No – 7

Comments:

- Expenses not claimed because of pressure around expenses from the media.
- It was my own choice not to claim.
- Like most Councillors I do not generally claim expenses although I know I am entitled to.
- Use of personal car whilst Mayor saved the Council a significant amount of car hire fees
- I have not claimed any travelling expenses as a Councillor. This partly because I regard the role of as a civic duty and partly because of the media and political attention
- My choice not to claim. This has been commented on favourably by some residents

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

Yes – 0

No – 12

Don't know – 0

No answer - 0

Comments:

- Not an issue when I was elected although I can see how the scheme covers some of the costs and it is useful income now I am retired.
- Remuneration is only part of the motivation in any employment. At WBC there are issues which are more important: public service and Member and Officer relationships.
- I do not do the role for the money it is a public service.
- When I first became a councillor I was unaware that allowances could be claimed.
- I would have stood for election even if no allowance had been available. However, I recognised the importance of the allowances scheme in enabling all people from the community to serve as a councillor, for example to help towards the funding of car running costs required in order to undertake Ward work.
- Without the allowances I receive I would not have stood for election as I could not have afforded the various costs I incur.

**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 – 3

No – 9

Don't know – 0

No answer – 0

Comments:

- A number of retired colleagues find an allowance very helpful
- Possibly with those Councillors who do not have day jobs.
- Not aware of any instances, but it might influence some.

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

Comments:

- Increase Office expenses which are not enough.
- Link any increases in Officer salaries to Member Allowances
- Index link increases in allowance to the cost of living to take the issue out of the political arena.
- Any scheme has its strengths and weaknesses. I think it is about right
- Link increases to those of Officers. If they do not receive an increase Members Allowances should not be increased, but if they receive an increase Members should get the same percentage increase.
- There should be a more uniform and more joined up approach across the country to setting Councillor Allowances perhaps on the basis of a small, medium and large authority pay band.
- Make allowances pensionable.
- The introduction of a minimum number of meetings attended in order to qualify for an allowance
- Vice-Chairman should receive some remuneration if acting as the Chairman at a meeting;
- The introduction of an allowance for Deputy Leader of a political group would assist

**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:

- Backbench Councillors are underpaid for the role that they perform, given the hours that are expected, being on call for residents etc. If Councillors are self-employed and have to take 'time off' to undertake their duties there is a financial impact and this may lead them to be forced to miss day-time meetings they would otherwise wish to attend.

- I think the scheme is generous enough and should be frozen to save taxpayers money.
- The basic allowance needs a significant increase. Many Councillors are retired, but it is important for Councils to have more younger people to provide a range of views.

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