



GUILDFORD  
B O R O U G H

**The report of the Independent Remuneration  
Panel appointed to review the allowances paid  
to Councillors of Guildford Borough Council**

**November 2023**

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## **1. Introduction and Background**

1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"), as amended, require all local authorities to

appoint an independent remuneration panel (IRP) to advise on the terms and conditions of their scheme of councillors' allowances.

- 1.2 Guildford Borough Council formally appointed the following persons to undertake this process and make recommendations on its future scheme:

Dennis Frost (Chair)  
Resident of Surrey and former Local Government Officer

Vivienne Cameron  
Local resident and retired Probation Officer

Gordon Manickam  
Assistant Director, Regulatory Policy Committee, Member of the Joint Audit Committee for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police and Crime Commissioner and Surrey resident

Paul Marcus  
Business professional and former Eagle Radio Managing Director

Rodney Bates  
Manager of Farnham charity, former GBC officer and former Surrey Heath borough councillor

- 1.3 Our terms of reference were in accordance with the requirements of the 2003 Regulations, together with "Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances" issued jointly by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inland Revenue (July 2003). Those requirements are to make recommendations to the Council as to:

- (a) the amount of basic allowance to be payable to all councillors;
- (b) whether allowances should be payable for:
  - (i) special responsibilities;
  - (ii) travelling and subsistence;
  - (iii) dependants' carers; and
  - (iv) co-optees';and the amount of such allowances;
- (c) whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and, if so, which index and how long that index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years before its application is reviewed;

- 1.4 In addition, we were again invited to review the allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to meet the expenses of their respective offices under Sections 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act 1972. Whilst the 2003 Regulations do not require councils to include such allowances in any formal review, the Council has agreed that it would be appropriate in terms of openness and transparency to ask the Panel to review these allowances as part of the general review of the scheme of councillors' allowances.
- 1.5 We have also made a recommendation in respect of parental leave for councillors.

## **2. Current Scheme**

- 2.1 The last full review of councillors' allowances was undertaken by Guildford's IRP in November 2019. The current scheme of allowances was brought into effect from April 2020.
- 2.2 The Scheme currently provides that all councillors are each entitled to a basic allowance of £8,348 per annum. In addition, some councillors receive special responsibility allowances for undertaking additional duties.
- 2.3 Councillors may also claim the cost of travel and subsistence expenses and for expenditure on the care of children or dependants whilst on approved duties.

## **3. Principles Underpinning Our Review**

### **The Public Service Principle**

- 3.1 This is the principle that an important part of being a councillor is the desire to serve the public and therefore, not all of what a councillor does should be remunerated. Part of a councillor's time should be given voluntarily. The consolidated guidance notes the importance of this principle when arriving at the recommended basic allowance.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, we found that a public service concept or ethos was articulated and supported by many of the councillors we interviewed and in the responses to the questionnaire completed by councillors as part of our review.

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<sup>1</sup> The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraph 68.

- 3.2 We noted that the principle of public service had been recognised in previous IRP reviews in Guildford and was quantified in 2019. To provide transparency and increase an understanding of the Panel’s work, we will continue to recommend the application of an explicit Public Service Discount (PSD). Such a PSD is applied to the time input necessary to fulfil the role of a councillor. Many recently elected councillors were not aware of the PSD’s formal status, although when interviewed, were generally supportive of its principles and application.
- 3.3 Further explanation of the PSD to be applied is given below in section 4.

### **The Fair Remuneration Principle**

- 3.4 Alongside the belief that the role of the elected Councillor should, in part, be viewed as unpaid voluntary service, we advocate a principle of fair remuneration. The Panel in 2023 continues to subscribe to the view promoted by the independent Councillors’ Commission:

*“Remuneration should not be an incentive for service as a councillor. Nor should lack of remuneration be a barrier. The basic allowance should encourage people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills to serve as local councillors. Those who participate in and contribute to the democratic process should not suffer unreasonable financial disadvantage as a result of doing so”.<sup>2</sup>*

- 3.5 We are keen to ensure that our recommended scheme of allowances provides reasonable financial compensation for councillors. Equally, the scheme should be fair, transparent, logical, simple, and seen as such.
- 3.6 Hence, we continue to acknowledge that:
- (i) allowances should apply to roles within the Council, not individual councillors;
  - (ii) allowances should represent reasonable *compensation* to councillors for expenses they incur and time they commit in relation to their role, not *payment* for their work; and

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<sup>2</sup> Rodney Brooke and Declan Hall, *Members’ Remuneration: Models, Issues, Incentives and Barriers*. London: Communities and Local Government, 2007, p.3.

- (iii) special responsibility allowances are used to recognise the significant additional responsibilities which attach to some roles, not merely the extra time required.

3.7 In making our recommendations, we have therefore sought to maintain a balance between:

- (i) the voluntary nature of a councillor's role;
- (ii) the need for appropriate financial recognition for the expenses incurred and time spent by councillors in fulfilling their roles; and
- (iii) the overall need to ensure that the scheme of allowances is neither an incentive nor a barrier to service as a councillor in Guildford.

3.8 The Panel, as in 2019, strives to ensure that the scheme of allowances is understandable in the way it is calculated, this includes ensuring the bandings and differentials of the allowances are as transparent as possible.

3.9 In making our recommendations, we wish to emphasise that any possible negative impact they may have is not intended and should not be interpreted as a reflection on any individual councillor's performance in the role. The Panel is assessing solely the role within the Council and what is reasonable to fulfil that role to a reasonable level.

#### **4. Considerations and Recommendations**

##### **Basic Allowance**

4.1 A Council's scheme of allowances must include provision for a basic allowance, payable at an equal flat rate to all councillors. The guidance on arriving at the basic allowance states, "Having established what local councillors do, and the hours which are devoted to these tasks the local authorities will need to take a view on the rate at which, and the number of hours for which, councillors ought to be remunerated."<sup>3</sup>

4.2 In addition to the regular cycles of Council and committee meetings, a number of boards/working groups involving councillors also operate. Many councillors are also appointed by the Council to a number of external organisations.

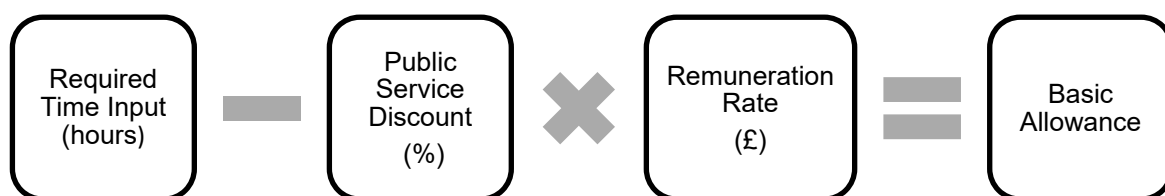
4.3 We recognise that councillors are responsible to their electorate as:

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<sup>3</sup> paragraph 67.

- Representatives of a particular ward;
- Community leaders;
- Decision makers for the whole Council area;
- Policy makers for future activities of the Council;
- Scrutineers and auditors of the work of the Council; and
- Regulators of planning, licensing and other matters required by Government.

4.4 The guidance identifies the issues and factors an IRP should have regard to when making a scheme of allowances.<sup>4</sup> For the basic allowance we considered three variables in our calculation: the time required to execute the role effectively; the public service discount; and the rate for remuneration. Each of the variables is explained below:



### Required Time Input

4.5 We ascertained the average number of hours necessary per week to undertake the role of a councillor (with no special responsibilities) from questionnaires and interviews with councillors and through reference to the relevant Councillor Role Profiles. In addition, we considered information about the number, range, and frequency of committee meetings.<sup>5</sup>

4.6 Discounting attendance at political meetings (which we judged to be centred upon internal political management), we found that the average time commitment required to execute the role of a councillor with no special responsibilities is 14 hours per week.

4.7 The Panel fully recognises that many councillors will spend much more time than 14 hours depending on the meetings they attend and the amount of casework they undertake within their community. Although, several councillors suggested that some wards and councillors are busier than others. It is the role and not the individuals conducting the role that

<sup>4</sup> paragraphs 66-81.

<sup>5</sup> The Councillor Role Profiles and summary responses to the questionnaires are available on request.

we are appraising, and it is our view that, the actual amount will vary week by week, but we believe that this is a fair average and supported by both the questionnaire responses and the wide-ranging experience of the Panel members.

- 4.8 The Panel did not consider the following activities within the calculations.
- Attending committee meetings, boards, and working groups when not a voting member (this is the personal choice of the councillor).
  - Meeting preparation beyond what is reasonably necessary for the role.
  - Political group meetings and discussions (it is not a requirement of a councillor to be a member of a political group and is not recognised as an approved duty).
  - All party or group political activity such as meetings with or update to party members, all political campaigning including attempts to get re-elected and all social activities within a political party or group.
  - Attending external meetings or bodies outside the ward when not acting as the Council's official representative.
  - Social media activity other than simple non-political information (i.e. this includes engaging in prolonged debate or expressing political opinions outside of meetings).
  - Attending civic or other functions when not invited in capacity of a councillor.
  - Taking on casework in another councillor's ward.
- 4.9 During our research, some councillors expressed the view that members of the Planning Committee should receive an additional supplement. Whilst recognising that the regularity and length of the Planning Committee is currently more than other committees, the Panel did not consider this to be appropriate. It is a matter for Group Leaders to allocate their Group's committee allocations as they see fit which does not necessarily mean equitably. Therefore, it is inevitable that some councillors will have more meetings to attend than others, but the Panel has assumed an average.

### **Public Service Discount (PSD)**

- 4.10 From the information analysed, we found councillors espoused a high sense of public duty. Given the weight of evidence presented to us



concerning, among other factors, the levels of responsibility, the varied nature of the role, the need for learning and development, and the increasing accessibility and expectations of the public, those councillors who expressed a view, felt that a 35% PSD was reasonable.

4.11 Across Surrey just one council has a lower PSD than Guildford. The average PSD across the county is 44%. The current PSD at Waverley is 50%. We recommend to Guildford a Public Service Discount of 40% in respect of the calculation of the basic allowance. This percentage sits within the range of PSDs applied to basic allowances by councils in the south-east.

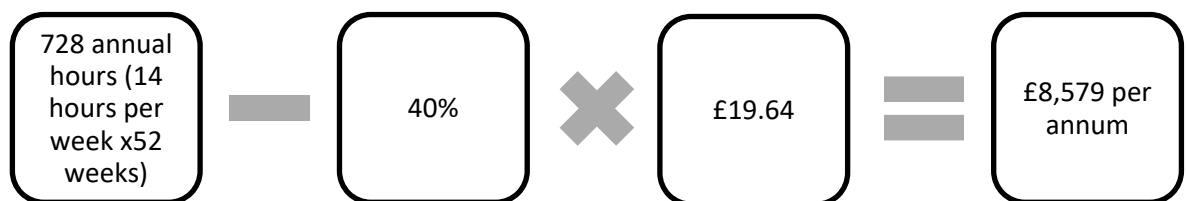
### Remuneration Rate

4.12 After establishing the expected time input to be remunerated, we considered a remuneration rate and came to a judgement about the rate at which the councillors ought to be remunerated for the work they do.

4.13 To help identify an hourly rate for calculating allowances, we utilised relevant statistics about the local labour market published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2023. We selected the average (median), hourly pay for all employee jobs in the UK based on the location of the workplace. The latest available figure for Guildford is £19.64.

### Calculating the basic allowance

4.14 After determining the amount of time required each week to fulfil the role (14 hours), the level of PSD to be applied (40%) and the hourly rate to be used (£19.64), we calculated the basic allowance as follows:



4.15 This amount is intended to recognise the overall contribution made by councillors, including their work on council bodies, and ward work and attendance on external bodies to which they have been appointed by the Council.

4.16 We also noted the levels of basic allowance currently allocated by other Surrey borough and district councils, which are set out in descending order in the table below.

<b>Council</b>	<b>Basic Allowance 2023/24<sup>6</sup> (£)</b>	<b>Public Service Discount (PSD)</b>
<b>Guildford Borough Council</b>	<b>8,348</b>	<b>35%</b>
Woking Borough Council	7,380	n/a
Spelthorne Borough Council	6,531	33%
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	5,956	40%
Surrey Heath Borough Council	5,711	50%
Waverley Borough Council	5,609	50%
Elmbridge Borough Council	5,512	50%
Runnymede Borough Council	5,500	50%
Mole Valley District Council	4,793	n/a
Tandridge District Council	4,446	n/a
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	4,032	n/a
<b>Average</b>	<b>5,801</b>	<b>44%</b>

4.17 The Panel recognises that the basic allowance for councillors would therefore remain the highest in Surrey. However, there are two reasons that justify this. The first reason is that the average hourly rate of pay in Guildford is generally higher than other authorities as set out in the ASHE 2023 data. The second reason is that Guildford councillors tend to spend more average hours on their work on approved duties than other local authorities.

4.18 The Panel wished to ensure the level of basic allowance does not constitute a barrier to candidates from all sections of the community standing, or re-standing, for election as councillors. The Panel was of the view that the 2015 review had begun to make recommendations to ensure that the current basic was in accordance with the principle of fair remuneration and the 2019 review had consolidated this approach.

**WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Basic Allowance payable to all members of Guildford Borough Council be £8,579 per annum (an increase of 2.77%).**

### **Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)**

4.19 Special Responsibility Allowances are awarded to councillors who perform significant additional responsibilities over and above the roles and

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<sup>6</sup> Figures drawn from the Southeast Employers, Members' Allowances Survey 2023 (October 2023).

expenses covered by the basic allowance. These special responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the council's functions.

4.20 The 2003 Regulations do not limit the number of SRAs which may be paid, nor do they prohibit the payment of more than one SRA to any one councillor. As the guidance suggests, if the majority of councillors receive an SRA the local electorate may rightly question the justification for this.<sup>7</sup> It is also worth noting that the Regulations require that, where a council is divided into at least two political groups and a majority of members of the council belong to the same political group ("the controlling group"), a special responsibility allowance shall be paid to at least one person who is not a member of the controlling group and has special responsibility either for acting as leader or deputy leader of a political group or acting as the spokesman of a political group on a committee or sub-committee of the authority.

4.21 We conclude from the evidence we have considered that the following offices bear *significant* additional responsibilities:

- Leader of the Council
- Deputy Leader of the Council
- Members of the Executive
- The Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee
- Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Chairman of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee
- Chairmen of the Executive Advisory Boards
- Chairman of the Licensing Committee
- Designated Licensing Sub-Committee chairmen (payable on a per meeting basis)
- Political Group Leaders

### **One SRA Only Rule**

4.22 While our discussions with councillors identified a range of views, to improve the transparency of the scheme of allowances, we feel that no councillor should be entitled to receive at any time more than **one SRA**.

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<sup>7</sup> paragraph 72

4.23 The 'One SRA Only Rule' avoids the possible anomaly of the Leader receiving a lower allowance than another councillor. It also recognises that the role of the councillor undertaking a role with an SRA is not intended as a salary and that there is often significant crossover between SRA roles (for example where an opposition group leader also chairs the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or an Executive Advisory Board). If two or more allowances are applicable to a councillor, then the higher-valued allowance would be received. The One SRA Only Rule is common and good practice for many councils, including Surrey County Council. Our calculations for the SRAs are based on this principle, which should be highlighted:

**WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that:**

- (i) no councillor should be entitled to receive at any time more than one Special Responsibility Allowance,**
- (ii) where a councillor would otherwise be entitled to two or more Special Responsibility Allowances, then only the higher-valued allowance should be received, and**
- (iii) this 'One SRA Only Rule' be adopted into the Scheme of Allowances.**

**The Maximum Number of recipients of SRAs Payable**

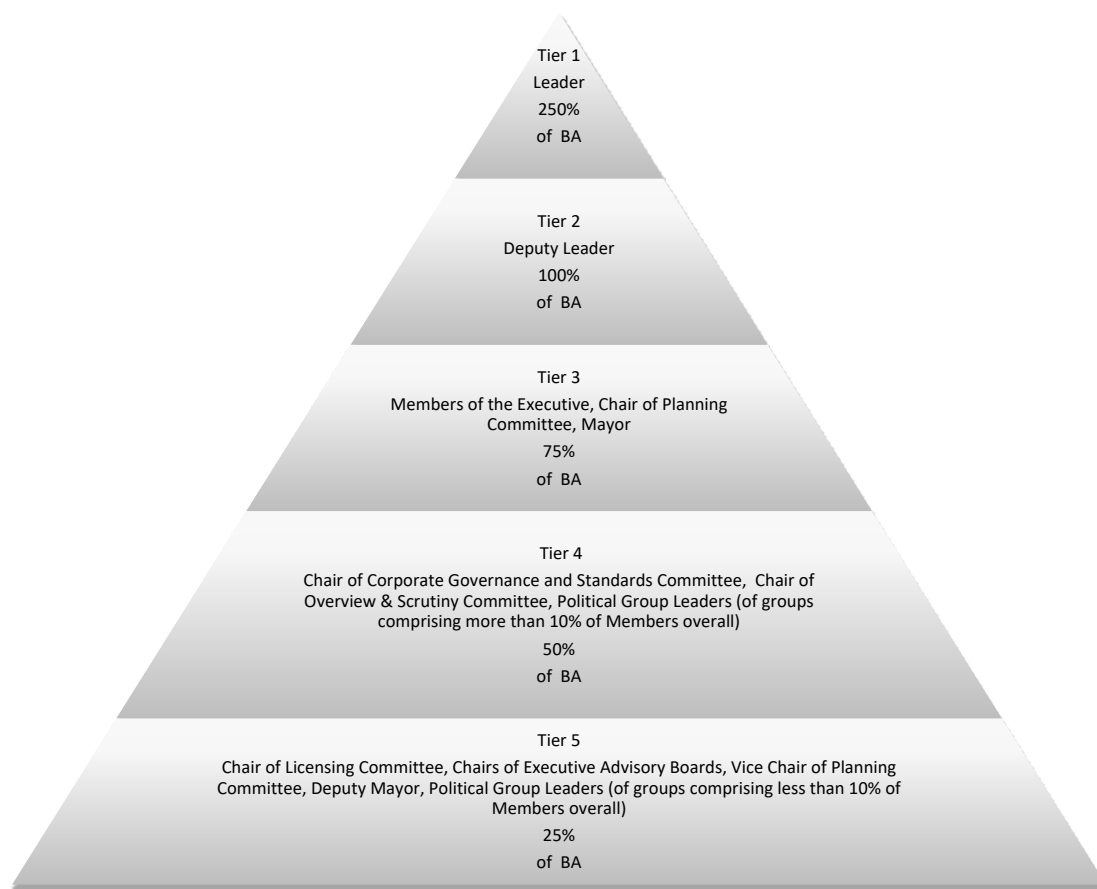
4.24 In accordance with the 2003 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 72) the Panel is of the view that no more than 50% of Council Members (24 Members) should receive an SRA at any one time.

**WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the maximum number of recipients of SRAs at any one time does not exceed 50% of Council Members (24 Members).**

**Calculating SRAs**

4.25 In a change to previous reviews, the Panel proposes that SRAs should be a calculation based upon a percentage of the Basic Allowance. We applied a multiplier of the basic allowance to establish the Leader's SRA. The Leader of the Council's SRA should be 250% of the Basic Allowance as this role carries the most significant additional responsibilities and is the most time consuming. Other SRAs are then valued downwards as a percentage of the Basic Allowance. We also noted the levels of equivalent SRAs currently allocated by other Surrey borough and district councils (see **Appendix 3**).

4.26 We grouped together in Tiers those roles that we judged to have a similar level of responsibility. The outline result of this approach is illustrated in a pyramid of responsibility:



4.27 The rationale for these five tiers of responsibility is discussed below.

#### Leader of the Council (TIER ONE)

4.28 The Council elects for a four-year term of office a Leader who is ultimately responsible for the discharge of all executive functions of the Council. The Leader is the principal policy maker and has personal authority to determine delegated powers to the rest of the Executive. The Leader is also responsible for the appointment (and dismissal) of members of the Executive and their respective areas of responsibility. Those areas of responsibility are set out in the Council's Constitution.

4.29 The multiplier we applied to calculate the Leader's SRA is 250%, or two and a half times, the basic allowance. If the recommended option of a basic allowance with a PSD of 40% is adopted, this results in a Leader's SRA of £21,448.

- 4.30 Currently, the Leader of the Council is entitled to an SRA of £16,692 per annum; and to an additional SRA of £2,087 as a Political Group Leader (£83.48 per group member). The allowance for Political Group Leader is currently based on the number of councillors within the group.
- 4.31 Should the 'One SRA Only Rule' be adopted by the Council as recommended the actual level of Special Responsibility Allowance made to the Leader of the Council will be £21,448.

**WE RECOMMEND that the Leader of the Council should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 250% of the basic allowance, £21,448 per annum (an increase of 28.5%).**

Deputy Leader of the Council (TIER TWO)

- 4.32 The Deputy Leader acts on the Leader's behalf in their absence. From the information we gathered, we continue to consider this additional responsibility should be reflected in the level of allowance. Therefore, we recommend the Deputy Leader's SRA be set at 100% of the Basic Allowance. If our recommendations concerning the basic allowance are adopted, this results in an allowance of £8,579.

**WE RECOMMEND that the Deputy Leader should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 100% of the Basic Allowance, £8,579 per annum (an increase of 2.77%).**

Members of the Executive, Chairman of the Planning Committee, and The Mayor (TIER THREE)

- 4.33 From the evidence gathered, including questionnaire responses, face to face interviews and the Council's Role Profiles, we consider the members of the Executive, the Chairman of the Planning Committee, and the Mayor should each receive an SRA of £6,434 per annum, 75% of the Basic Allowance.
- 4.34 Evidence from the interviews we undertook with councillors underlines the responsibility of the members of the Executive for many of the Council's functions. Members of the Executive hold considerable responsibility for their respective portfolios. In addition, we found the time commitment for the role to be significant and growing.
- 4.35 We heard substantial evidence about the Planning Committee which meets monthly as does the Executive. We acknowledge the significant responsibility that the Chairman of the Planning Committee has, given the

contentiousness of decision-making by that Committee and recognise that the SRA should reflect that responsibility.

- 4.36 The Panel was of the view that the role of Mayor continues to have a high impact and profile across the Borough and has a very high number of engagements and commitments. It is acknowledged that Guildford's Mayor is, by far, the busiest of Surrey's mayors. The Mayor is currently in receipt of an SRA of £6,677 (at Tier Three), which covers their role only in respect of being the chairman of the full Council, in the same way that other councillors receive an SRA for being a committee chairman. For the purposes of this section of the report, we recommend that the role continues to be recognised at Tier Three, subject to our further comments below.
- 4.37 During the review, and taking into account the Panel's discussions with both the current Mayor and Deputy Mayor, we felt, notwithstanding the SRAs and expenses allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, (please see paragraphs 4.49 to 4.55 below) that the considerable amount of time to which the Mayor has to commit in terms of attendance at community engagements is not fully recognised. A significant proportion of that time commitment is expected to be given voluntarily. We think that, over the next 12 months, the Council should reflect on the Mayoral role and determine what it thinks the time commitment should be and the extent to which the Mayor should be remunerated for that commitment in terms of their SRA. We will be very happy to review this again in 12 months' time.

**WE RECOMMEND:**

- (a) that the Members of the Executive (excluding the Leader and Deputy Leader), and the Chairman of the Planning Committee, should each receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 75% of the Basic Allowance, £6,434 per annum (a reduction of 3.8%); and**
- (b) that the level of the Mayor's Special Responsibility Allowance should also be at Tier Three (75% of the Basic Allowance, £6,434 per annum) for 2024-25 and that this allowance be reviewed**

**again by the Independent Remuneration Panel in 12 months' time.**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Chairman of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, and Political Group Leaders (of groups comprising more than 10% of members overall) (TIER FOUR)

- 4.38 The Panel notes that the SRA for the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee is currently fixed at Tier Three. However, Overview & Scrutiny Committee meets every other month, or so (similar to Corporate Governance and Standards Committee). Whilst the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is important and is a statutory function of the Council, we feel that the amount of work and responsibility of the chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is not as onerous as Executive members or the Chairman of the Planning Committee. Therefore, the SRA for the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee should be at Tier Four, rather than Tier Three.
- 4.39 From the information gathered, including the complexity of the remit, the Panel considers the role of the chairman of Corporate Governance and Standards Committee continues to warrant a Tier Four SRA.
- 4.40 The Panel noted that the recent history of Guildford has involved both majority and minority administrations being formed with subsequent discussion about the entitlement of an SRA for the role of Leader of the Opposition. In accordance with many other councils, we do not consider that a specific SRA in respect of the Leader of the Opposition role to be appropriate. Instead, it is important to recognise that political group leaders have a key role in scrutinising the Council and offering alternative positions and ideas.
- 4.41 We noted from our discussions with councillors that the role of group leader was similar regardless of the number of councillors due to attending the same group leader meetings and officer briefings. However, there would be a small difference in larger groups (more than 10%) in terms of additional liaison with Councillors in areas such as mentoring and sharing information. We therefore recommend that the Group Leader's SRA based on a specified sum per group member is removed and instead political group leaders of groups comprising more than 10% of members overall are recognised as being entitled to a Tier 4 SRA, and those leaders of groups comprising less than 10% of members overall being entitled to a Tier Five SRA. This would bring Guildford in line with other authorities.



**WE RECOMMEND that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, and Political Group Leaders (of groups comprising more than 10% of members overall) should each receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the Basic Allowance, £4,290 per annum.**

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Chairmen of Executive Advisory Boards, Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, the Deputy Mayor, and Political Group Leaders (of groups comprising less than 10% of members overall)  
(TIER FIVE)

- 4.42 From the evidence gathered in respect of the Council's licensing function we noted that most of the work undertaken by councillors was done by the Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Regulatory Sub-Committee, and that the business dealt with by the parent committee was generally very light and uncontentious. Whilst the Licensing Committee is important and performs a statutory regulatory function, we feel that the amount of work and responsibility of the chairman of the Licensing Committee is not as onerous as the Chairmen of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or Corporate Governance & Standards Committee. Therefore, the SRA for the Chairman of Licensing Committee should be at Tier Five, rather than Tier Four. Please see our separate comments and recommendation in respect the SRA for Designated Licensing Sub-Committee chairmen in paragraphs 4.46 to 4.48 below.
- 4.43 During the course of our discussions, it became clear that Executive Advisory Boards have rarely met in recent months and therefore the Chairmen have had limited duties. The Panel have therefore considered their findings based on the current situation namely a small number of meetings each year. For that reason, we have moved the role to Tier 5, or 25% of the Basic Allowance, £2,145. In the event the number of meetings increase then this may be an area to review further in 12 months.
- 4.44 Following discussion and from an analysis of the role the Panel is of the view that the SRA for Deputy Mayor should appropriately be set at Tier Five.
- 4.45 The Panel recommends the introduction of a new SRA, for the Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee as we felt that with a very high-profile Committee meeting so frequently, and the support given by the Vice-Chairman to the Chairman, an SRA at Tier Five was appropriate.

**WE RECOMMEND that the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Chairmen of the Executive Advisory Boards, the Deputy Mayor, the Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, and Political Group Leaders (of groups comprising less than 10% of members overall) should each receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 25% of the Basic Allowance, £2,145 per annum.**

#### **SRA for Designated Licensing Sub-Committee Chairmen**

- 4.46 The Panel noted that the current scheme of allowances provides an SRA for designated Licensing Sub-Committee chairmen (of which there are currently seven) who are eligible to chair meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Regulatory Sub-Committee. The current rate is £316 per meeting. The Panel noted that nowhere else in Surrey had such an arrangement.
- 4.47 The Panel felt strongly that the current rate for the SRA for designated Licensing Sub-Committee chairmen was overly generous for the level of responsibility and queried the basis upon which the amount allocated to this SRA was currently fixed. The Panel suggest that a more equitable and transparent rationale for setting this SRA should be based on our recommended formula for calculating the Basic Allowance.
- 4.48 We think that a designated Licensing Sub-Committee chairmen will spend an average of six hours in dealing with each meeting. This would include preparation/reading time and the time allocated for the meeting itself. The hourly remuneration rate should be the same as the Basic Allowance (i.e. £19.64). Taking into account the 40% PSD, the SRA per meeting would be:

$$6 \times £19.64 = £117.84$$

Less 40% (£47.14)

Designated chairman's SRA per Sub-Committee meeting: £70.70

We suggest this is rounded up to **£71 per meeting**.

**WE RECOMMEND that the current SRA for Designated Licensing Sub-Committee Chairmen in respect of chairing Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Regulatory Sub-Committee meetings be set at £71 per meeting.**

## **Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Allowances**

- 4.49 In addition to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's SRAs, there are also separate allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor from which they may claim expenses necessary to cover the costs of their respective offices. As mentioned in paragraph 1.4 above, the legal basis for establishing such allowances (Sections 3 and 5 respectively of the Local Government Act 1972) is different to the allowances covered by the 2003 Regulations. Although they technically fall outside of the remit of the general review of councillors' allowances, the Panel has been asked to review them and to make a recommendation to the Council.
- 4.50 The current levels of Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Allowances are £8,000 and £2,000 p.a. respectively.
- 4.51 Examples of expenses could include the following:
- a) clothing, including dry cleaning,
  - b) contributions made at events, including purchasing raffle tickets etc.
  - c) any expenses incurred in relation to hosting mayoral events, in connection with the mayoral theme or charity,
  - d) the cost of tickets for fund raising events in aid of local charities, or the chosen charity of another Mayor/Chairman.
- 4.52 We were informed that in 2020-21 when the Mayor's Chauffeur retired and the lease on the mayoral car expired, it was agreed that the Council should no longer provide the Mayor with a car and chauffeur. During Covid, of course, the Mayor had no public engagements and so there was no cost incurred until around August 2021. The presumption was that the Mayor would drive themselves to and from engagements, for which they would be entitled to claim motor mileage allowance. However, where they had been invited to evening functions where they may have a drink, they would take a taxi or, depending on the nature of the function, hire a car and driver. The cost was not taken from the Mayor's Allowance at the time as the Council wished to gauge the average annual cost before asking the Panel to review the level of allowance.
- 4.53 The table below sets out the cost of taxis and hiring a car and driver since 2021-22.

Financial Year	£
2021-22	1,365
2022-23	2,148
Average yearly cost:	<b>1,757</b>

4.54 We were also provided with information on the extent to which the Mayor's Allowance and Deputy Mayor's Allowance had been spent each year for the past five years (noting of course the lack of spend during the pandemic).

Mayor/Deputy Mayor's Allowance – total spend at end of term (2018 - 2023)		
Mayoral Year	Mayor £	Deputy £
2018-19	7,999.41	1,743.22
2019-20	5,054.32	336.00
2020-21	938.98	393.58
2021-22	6,631.35	788.25
2022-23	6,473.01	1,210.48

4.55 As the purpose of the Mayor's Allowance is to enable the Mayor to meet the expenses of their office, we think it is legitimate for the cost of the Mayor's travel arrangements to be met in full from that allowance with immediate effect. However, we feel that the opportunity should be taken to also review the Mayor's Allowance, alongside the proposed review of the Mayor's SRA, in 12 months' time to ensure that it remains sufficient in terms of covering all the expenses of the Mayor's office, including the cost of travel arrangements.

**WE RECOMMEND:**

- (a) that the level of the Mayor's and the Deputy Mayor's allowances payable under Sections 3 and 5 respectively of the Local Government Act 1972 to meet the expenses of their offices should remain unchanged at £8,000 and £2,000 per annum respectively; and**
- (b) that the Mayor's Allowance be reviewed again by the Independent Remuneration Panel in 12 months' time; and**
- (c) that, with immediate effect, the cost of the Mayor's travel arrangements for attending certain functions where it is**

**inadvisable for them to drive themselves should be met from the Mayor's Allowance.**

### **Co-optees' Allowance**

- 4.56 An IRP may recommend payment, and the level of an allowance for those who serve on the committees or sub-committees of a Council but are not members of the Council. We recognise that in so doing, an element of the contribution made by the co-optees should be voluntary.
- 4.57 Currently, there are six co-optees, all of whom are co-opted to the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee, three co-opted independent members and three co-opted parish council representatives. The current level of this allowance is £419 per annum.

**WE RECOMMEND that co-optees receive an allowance of 5% of the Basic Allowance, £429 per annum.**

### **Travelling and Subsistence Allowance**

- 4.58 A scheme of allowances may provide for any councillor to be paid for travelling and subsistence undertaken in connection with any of the duties specified in Regulation 8 of the 2003 Regulations including any other duties approved by the Council. Similarly, such an allowance may also be paid to co-opted members of a committee or sub-committee of the Council in connection with any of those duties, provided that their expenses are not also being met by a third party.
- 4.59 The current scheme of councillors' allowances provides for the following levels of travelling and subsistence allowance:

#### Motor Mileage Allowance:

Cars                    45p per mile

Motorcycles:    24p per mile

Cycle Allowance: 20p per mile

#### Day Subsistence Allowance

Breakfast:            £6.88

Lunch:                £9.50

Tea:                    £3.76

Evening Meal:    £11.76

### Overnight Subsistence Allowance

In London: £102

Elsewhere: £89

- 4.60 In respect of any approved duties, Councillors and co-opted members are currently reimbursed the cost of:
- (a) second class or any available cheap rate travel using public transport on production of proof of purchase of a valid ticket;
  - (b) travel by taxi or private hire vehicle where no public transport is reasonably available or for reasons of health/disability/safety; and
  - (c) any reasonable parking charges incurred.

The Panel think that these arrangements, together with the current motor mileage and cycle allowances, are reasonable and should continue.

- 4.61 During our discussions with councillors, there was some concern that councillors were unaware of the existence of the travelling and subsistence allowance, and that there was little guidance as to when the subsistence element of the allowance could legitimately be claimed. The current scheme of allowances does not provide any such guidance.
- 4.62 The Panel was informed that, in relation to the subsistence element of the travelling and subsistence allowance, there are no longer specified rates for day or overnight subsistence allowances (including rates for breakfast, lunch, tea, and dinner). The accepted approach now is to reimburse “reasonable” subsistence allowances for approved duties upon submission by the claimant of valid receipts.

#### **WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that:**

- (a) the amounts currently payable to councillors and co-opted members whilst on approved duties in respect of motor mileage and cycle allowances should continue;**
- (b) Councillors and co-opted members, whilst on approved duties, should continue to be reimbursed the cost of:**
  - second class or any available cheap rate travel using public transport on production of proof of purchase of a valid ticket;**

- travel by taxi or private hire vehicle where no public transport is reasonably available or for reasons of health/disability/safety; and
  - any reasonable parking charges incurred.
- (c) The Day Subsistence and Overnight Subsistence Allowances be withdrawn and that the following be included in the new scheme of allowances:

**“Subsistence Allowance:**

***Reasonable subsistence allowances will be paid for the “Approved Duties” within the Scheme (these are set out in Appendix 2 to this report), provided that:***

- (a) subsistence allowances are only payable for attending approved duties outside of the Borough;***
- (b) refreshments are not provided as part of the meeting/function attended;***
- (c) meal allowances will be paid only where a member is undertaking an approved duty which involves their absence from home for a period exceeding four hours; and***
- (d) all claims are accompanied by valid receipts.***

**Overnight Accommodation:**

***There is no set allowance for overnight accommodation. However, councillors should endeavour to stay in accommodation which provides good value for money but, if the reason for requiring overnight accommodation is to attend a training event, conference, or similar event, councillors may stay overnight at the venue being used for that event. Receipts must be provided with all claims for reimbursement of accommodation costs.***

***Reimbursement of reasonable overnight accommodation costs will also only be payable for attending approved duties outside of the Borough.***

***By way of guidance, it is considered that overnight accommodation costs ranging from £100 to £150 are deemed to be “reasonable”, dependent on the location. All overnight accommodation should be pre-booked by officers wherever possible. No claims for alcoholic drinks will be reimbursed.”***

## **Dependants' Carers' Allowance**

4.63 The scheme of allowances currently provides for payment of a Dependants' Carers' Allowance to those councillors who necessarily incur expense in arranging for the care of their children or other dependants to enable them to undertake any of the approved duties, subject to the following conditions:

- The Dependants' Carers' Allowance is based on two rates:
  - Rate one for general care for children aged 15 or under shall be at a rate of £11.92 per hour, with no monthly maximum claim.
  - Rate two shall be for specialist care based at cost upon production of receipts and requiring medical evidence that this type of care is required.
- the allowance shall be paid as a re-imbusement of incurred expenditure against receipts;
- the allowance shall not be payable to a member of the claimant's own household.

4.64 The dependants' carers' allowance should ensure that potential candidates are not deterred from standing for election and should enable current councillors to continue despite any change in their personal circumstances.

4.65 The Panel heard from several respondents about the significant barriers to councillors with children or looking after dependant adults. It was noted that such commitments were particularly challenging and regularly involved a mix of formal and informal arrangements in order to juggle both their family responsibilities and Council duties. This often involved significant sacrifice and time not only by the councillor but also from any wider network of family, friends or professional support that they may access often at short notice.

4.66 The Panel gave this issue considerable thought in trying to ensure that the balance highlighted above was appropriately addressed. It was considered that the current system did not appropriately recognise informal care



arrangements and that it was reasonable for councillors to arrange that their young children were looked after by known family members or friends rather than by a professional agency. In addition, the Panel were concerned that the time and resource of Councillors submitting and officers processing such forms was not justified. Furthermore, it was noted that whilst older children could be reasonably left alone at home, this was not recommended for children aged 12 or younger. However, it was also recognised that there was a need to retain the option of professional or specialist care services where this was required due to specific need.

**Therefore, the Panel recommend a new Dependants' Carers' Allowance for inclusion in the scheme of allowances as follows:**

- 1. Level 1 (a) – A £500 annual allowance for Councillors where there is one or more children aged 12 or younger that normally reside in their household and for whom they are caring. This allowance would only be payable until the child's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. This allowance would be taxable.**
- 2. Level 1 (b) – A £500 annual allowance for Councillors where there is one or more persons that normally reside in their household and for whom they are a registered carer. This allowance would be taxable.**
- 3. Level 2 – This shall be for specialist care based at cost upon production of receipts and requiring medical evidence that this type of care is required. This allowance would not be taxable and shall apply for councillors with caring responsibility for persons of any age. There shall be no limit to these claims, provided that they are made in respect of approved duties.**

**Councillors shall only be entitled to claim one dependants' carers' allowance (at either Level 1 (a) or (b), or Level 2) regardless of circumstances. Councillors wishing to claim for this allowance will be required to submit proof on an annual basis such as a child's birth certificate and/or official confirmation that they live at their address, being formally registered as a carer with a GP, or professional medical evidence before the Allowance will be payable.**

## Approved Councillor Duties

- 4.67 The Panel reviewed the recommended duties for which Dependants' Carers' Allowance and Travelling and Subsistence Allowance should be payable (see Appendix 2) and have recommended no changes.

**WE RECOMMEND that no changes be made to the Approved Duties for which Dependants' Carers' Allowance and Travelling and Subsistence Allowance should be payable.**

## Parental Leave

- 4.68 There is no uniform/ national policy to support councillors who require parental leave for maternity, paternity or adoption leave. According to the Fawcett Society (Does Local Government Work for Women, 2018) a *'lack of maternity, paternity provision or support' is a real barrier for women aged 18-44 to fulfil their role as a councillor'*.
- 4.69 We are of the view that support should be provided for parental leave although we do not wish to stipulate an exact policy/procedure of another Council, the Panel is aware that the Local Government Association (LGA) has developed a model policy that has been adopted by some councils across the south-east region.
- 4.70 There is no legal right to parental leave of any kind for people in elected public office. However, as a way of improving the diversity of Councillors the Panel would recommend that the Members' Allowance Scheme should be amended to include provisions that clarify that:
- (a) All Councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full for a period up to six months in the case of absence from their councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption shared parental leave or sickness absence.
  - (b) Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full for a period of six months, in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence.

- (c) Where for reasons connected with sickness, maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave or shared parental leave a councillor is unable to attend a meeting of the Council for a period of six months, a dispensation by Council can be sought before the expiry of that six-month period in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- (d) If a replacement to cover the period of absence under these provisions is appointed by Council or the Leader (or in the case of a party group position the party group) the replacement shall be entitled to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance pro rata for the period over which the cover is provided.

4.71 The Panel is conscious that these provisions do not replicate the LGA policy but that policy introduces elements that are more akin to employees which in terms of employment legislation does not include Councillors. We feel that our recommendations more simply and adequately reflect the situation relating to Councillors and clarify for them what they can expect. The Council may, however, wish to further develop the above recommendations so that they reflect the LGA policy.

**WE RECOMMEND that the approach outlined above to support parental leave for councillors is adopted and incorporated into the scheme of allowances.**

#### **Indexing of Allowances**

4.72 A scheme of allowances may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances in line with a specified index. The present scheme makes provision for the basic allowance, the special responsibility allowances, the co-optees' allowance and the dependants' carers' allowance to be adjusted annually in line with increases in staff salaries at Guildford Borough Council. We think this continues to be a fair and appropriate basis for annual uplifts in allowances.

**WE RECOMMEND that the basic allowance, each of the SRAs, the Co-Optees' Allowance and the Dependants' Carers' Allowance be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries until 2027, at which time the Scheme shall be reviewed again by an independent remuneration panel. Where staff salaries are increased by way of a**

**lump sum payment, the Allowances referred to above shall be adjusted by applying an average percentage increase.**

### **Revocation of current Scheme of Allowances/Implementation of new Scheme**

- 4.73 The 2003 Regulations provide that a scheme of allowances may only be revoked with effect from the beginning of a financial year, and that this may only take effect on the basis that the authority makes a further scheme of allowances for the period beginning with the date of revocation.

**WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the new scheme of allowances to be agreed by the Council be implemented with effect from the beginning of the 2024-25 financial year, at which time the current scheme of allowances will be revoked.**

## **5. OUR INVESTIGATION**

### **Background**

- 5.1 As part of this review, a questionnaire was issued to all councillors to support and inform the review. Responses were received from 25 councillors, which represent just over 52% of the Council. The information obtained was helpful in informing our deliberations.
- 5.2 We interviewed 14 current councillors. We also met the Council's Chief Executive, Tom Horwood, and Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Victoria Worsfold, who expanded on some of the key financial and other issues that were likely to affect the Council in the future. We were asked to take into account the financial situation of the Council within our deliberations but without any further details being specified. As a Panel we have done this, taking into account the information given to us until the end of September 2023 (when our final Councillor interviews took place). We are grateful to all our interviewees for their assistance.

### **Councillors' views on the level of allowances**

- 5.3 A summary of the councillors' responses to the questionnaire is attached as Appendix 5.

### **Summary of overall Financial Impact**

- 5.4 The recommendations contained within our report can be summarised as follows:

- Increase in Basic Allowance to all Councillors (£11,088)
- Increase in Co-optees' Allowance (£60)
- Increase in Special Responsibility Allowances (£5,018)
- Removal of Double SRA (-£6,435)

TOTAL: £9,731 (net budget increase of 1.8%)

**Dennis Frost (Chair)**

**Rodney Bates**

**Vivienne Cameron**

**Gordon Manickam**

**Paul Marcus**

November 2023

## Appendix 1: Summary of Panel's Recommendations

Allowance	Current Amount (2023-24)	Number	Recommended Allowance (40% PSD)	Recommended Allowance Calculation
Basic (BA)				
<b>Total Basic:</b>	<b>£8,348</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>£8,579</b>	

Special Responsibility:				
Tier One				
Leader of the Council	£16,692	1	£21,448	250% of BA
Tier Two				
Deputy Leader	£8,348	1	£8,579	100% of BA
Tier Three				
Members of the Executive	£6,677	8 <sup>1</sup>	£6,434	75% of BA
Chair: Planning Committee	£6,677	1	£6,434	75% of BA
Mayor	£6,677	1	£6,434	75% of BA
Tier Four				
Chair: Overview & Scrutiny Committee	£6,677	1	£4,290	50% of BA
Chair: Corporate Governance & Standards	£4,174	1	£4,290	50% of BA
Group Leaders (of groups comprising more than 10% of members overall)	£83.48 per Group member	3	£4,290	50% of BA
Tier Five				
Chair: Licensing Committee	£4,174	1	£2,145	25% of BA
Chair: Executive Advisory Board	£4,174	2	£2,145	25% of BA
Deputy Mayor	£4,174	1	£2,145	50% of BA
Vice-Chair: Planning Committee	-	1	£2,145	25% of BA

<sup>1</sup> Excludes the Leader and Deputy Leader, i.e., the Executive has a maximum of 10 members.

Group Leaders (of groups comprising less than 10% of members overall)	£83.48 per Group member	2	£2,145	25% of BA
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Designated Licensing Sub Committee Chairs	£316 per meeting	7	£71 per meeting	-
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<b>Dependants' Carers' Allowance</b>	£11.92 per hour		See page 23 above	
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<b>Co-Optees' Allowance</b>	£419	6 <sup>2</sup>	£429	5% of BA
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<b>Travelling &amp; Subsistence Allowances</b>				
<u>Motor Mileage Allowance</u>				
Cars	45p per mile		45p per mile	
Motorcycles	24p per mile		24p per mile	
<u>Cycle Mileage Allowance:</u>	20p per mile		20p per mile	
<u>Day Subsistence Allowance:</u>			See page 21 above	
Breakfast	£6.88			
Lunch	£9.50			
Tea	£3.76			
Evening Meal	£11.76			
<u>Overnight Subsistence Allowance:</u>				
London	£102			
Elsewhere	£89			

<sup>2</sup> The Corporate Governance and Standards Committee has provision for up to six co-opted members.

### Dependants' Carers' and Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

The approved duties for which these allowances are payable include:

- (i) attending a meeting:
  - of the Council, the Executive, a committee of the Executive, an Executive Advisory Board, or a committee or sub-committee of the Council including any agenda briefing in connection with any such meeting
  - of some other body (including a committee, sub-committee or working group of such body) to which the Council makes appointments or nominations including any agenda briefing in connection with any such meeting
  - which has **both** been authorised by the Council, a committee, or sub-committee of the Council or a joint committee of the Council and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of a joint committee **and** to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited
  - of a local authority association of which the Council is a member
- (ii) formal site visits and other meetings authorised in advance by a committee or sub-committee
- (iii) Attendance at:
  - meetings convened by, or on behalf of, the Joint Chief Executive, a Strategic Director, or an Executive Head of Service
  - training courses, seminars or presentations held for councillors by the Council or approved third parties
  - Overview and Scrutiny work programme meetings
  - Executive Advisory Board work programme meetings



- a meeting of any task group, working group, board, or panel of councillors established by the Council, the Executive, a lead councillor, a committee, or an Executive Advisory Board
- any task and finish group established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- meetings of a local parish council, parish meeting, residents' association, local amenity group or neighbourhood meetings with police in a local ward councillor capacity
- councillor ward and constituency activities including attendance at ward surgeries.

**Appendix 3: Comparative data of special responsibility allowances (£) paid to councillors of the other Surrey borough and district councils (South-East Employers, Members Allowances Survey October 2023)**

Council	Population	Leader	Deputy Leader	Executive Member	Chair: Planning	Vice-Chair: Planning	Chair: Licensing	Vice-Chair: Licensing	Chair: O&S	Chair: Audit	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Group Leader	1 SRA Only Rule
Elmbridge	138,800	13,781	n/a	6,891	6,891	1,550	2,067	517	6,891	4,135	n/a	n/a	n/a	YES
Epsom & Ewell	81,000	4,032	n/a	n/a	4,032	2,016	2,822	1,411	n/a	2,822	n/a	n/a	250	NO
<b>Guildford</b>	<b>143,900</b>	<b>16,692</b>	<b>8,348</b>	<b>6,677</b>	<b>6,677</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>4,174</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>6,677</b>	<b>4,174</b>	<b>6,677</b>	<b>4,174</b>	<b>*83.48</b>	<b>NO</b>
Mole Valley	87,600	8,226	4,661	3,510	2,808	384	587	n/a	2,342	2,342	2,808	1,053	587	NO
Reigate & Banstead	151,000	14,151	11,557	9,434	5,442	n/a	441	n/a	3,162	3,162	5,700	n/a	**	NO
Runnymede	81,000	11,000	5,500	n/a	9,048	6,024	5,184	2,592	5,184	5,184	5,184	1,396	***425	NO
Spelthorne	103,000	11,000	5,500	n/a	6,600	3,300	5,500	2,750	n/a	4,400	14,800	4,000	n/a	YES
Surrey Heath	89,000	14,849	8,909	5,939	5,197	2,599	4,009	n/a	4,009	4,009	5,939	1,782	****	YES
Tandridge	88,000	6,307	1,577	n/a	3,154	1,052	n/a	n/a	3,154	3,154	3,154	1,052	n/a	NO
Waverley	130,000	16,476	11,406	7,604	3,802	1,903	3,802	1,903	3,802	3,802	665	n/a	n/a	YES
Woking	103,900	12,000	3,600	2,400	2,400	n/a	600	n/a	1,200	n/a	6,000	1,458	600	YES

\* per group member

\*\* £147 + £58 per group member

\*\*\* per group member but SRA only paid to opposition group leaders

\*\*\*\* Political Group Leader with 10% or more of the Council's membership: £5,197

Political Group Leader with up to 10% or more of the Council's membership: £4,009

## Appendix 4 – Financial implications

Allowance	Current Allowance (2023-24) £	Number	Current total per annum £	Recommended Allowance £	Recommended Allowance Calculation	Recommended Allowance total per annum £
<b>Basic (BA)</b>						
<b>Total Basic:</b>	<b>8,348</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>£400,704</b>	<b>8,579</b>	40% PSD	<b>411,792</b>
<b>Increase</b>						<b>11,088</b>

<b>Special Responsibility:</b>						
Leader of the Council	16,692	1	16,692	21,448	250% of BA	21,448
Deputy Leader	8,348	1	8,348	8,579	100% of BA	8,579
Members of the Executive	6,677	8 <sup>1</sup>	£53,416	6,434	75% of BA	51,472
Chair: Planning Committee	6,677	1	6,677	6,434	75% of BA	6,434
Mayor	6,677	1	6,677	6,434	75% of BA	6,434
Chair: Overview & Scrutiny Cttee	6,677	1	6,677	4,290	50% of BA	4,290
Chair: Corp Gov & Standards Cttee	4,174	1	4,174	4,290	50% of BA	4,290
Chair: Licensing Committee	4,174	1	4,174	2,145	25% of BA	2,145
Deputy Mayor	4,174	1	4,174	2,145	25% of BA	2,145
Chair: Executive Advisory Board	4,174	2	8,348	2,145	25% of BA	4,290
Vice-Chair: Planning	-		-	2,145	25% of BA	2,145
Designated Licensing Sub Cttee Chairs	316 per meeting	7	3,160*	71 per meeting	-	710
Group Leaders	83.48 per group member	5	4,007	4,290 (Leaders of groups of more than 10% of members overall)	50% of BA	12,870
				2,145 (Leaders of groups of less than 10% of members overall)	25% of BA	4,290
<b>Total SRAs</b>			<b>126,524</b>			<b>131,542**</b>
<b>Increase</b>						<b>5,018</b>
<b>Co-Optees' Allowance</b>	419	6	2,514	429	5% of BA	2,574
<b>BA + SRAs + Co-Optees</b>			<b>529,742</b>			<b>545,908</b>

<sup>1</sup> Excludes the Leader and Deputy Leader, i.e., the Executive has a maximum of 10 members

<b>Increase</b>						<b>16,166</b>
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\*Based on 10 meetings per annum

\*\* This figure would be £6,435 lower if the Council adopted the 1 SRA Only Rule (based on current recipients of SRAs)

<b>Dependants' Carers' Allowance</b>	11.92 per hour			See page 23 above		
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<b>Travelling &amp; Subsistence Allowances</b>						
<u>Motor Mileage Allowance</u>						
Cars	45p per mile			45p per mile		
Motorcycles	24p per mile			24p per mile		
<u>Cycle Mileage Allowance:</u>	20p per mile			20p per mile		
<u>Day Subsistence Allowance:</u>						
Breakfast	£6.88					
Lunch	£9.50					
Tea	£3.76					
Evening Meal	£11.76			See page 21 above		
<u>Overnight Subsistence Allowance:</u>						
London	£102					
Elsewhere	£89					

## Review of Councillors Allowances 2023

### Summary of Councillor Questionnaire Responses

25 councillors completed the questionnaire (52%).

**Q2. Select the option that applies to you. I am:**

Employed: 13

Self-employed: 4

Retired: 8

**Q3. Tell us how long you have been a councillor for. I have been a councillor since:**

2016: 1

2019: 7

2021: 1

2023: 14

Not stated: 2

**Q4. What is the number of hours you spend on Ward work (including phone calls, letters, visiting constituents etc.**

Average: 5 hours per week

**Q5. What is the number of hours you spend attending political group meetings?**

Average: 1.5 hours per week

**Q6. How many hours do you spend on preparation for Council/Executive/Committee/Working Group meetings?**

Average: 3.5 hours per week

**Q7. How many hours do you spend attending those meetings?**

Average: 3 hours per week

**Q8. How many hours do you spend attending external meetings, as part of your role as a councillor?**

Average: 1.5 hours per week

**Q9. How many hours do you spend on activities, as a result of your holding a Special Responsibility?**

Average: 1.5 hours per week

**Q10. Specify any other activity you spend time on each month. Give the number of hours for this.**

- “No other activity, but please note that special responsibility activities include formal meetings themselves, plus working group meetings, meeting prep, one to ones with officers and informal”.
- “Meetings/discussions with other special responsibility holders about issues relating to our roles.”
- “Emails are by far the most time-consuming part of being a Councillor. Keeping up with emails takes me around half an hour every night at least.”
- “Case work, street surgeries, reading and answering emails.”
- “I have recently undertaken training as a new councillor and have not yet started my role as an NHS governor yet my hours may therefore not entirely accurate.”
- “Site visits as vice chair planning committee - variable. in the last month I spent at least 5 hours on site visits.”
- “Chairman's briefings every month, one hour per briefing”
- “Application briefings up to two hours per briefing”
- “Developer information events, two hours.”
- “Community events, such as wellbeing team networking, surrey university showcase. each of these was 4-5 hours. Launch of Surrey Maths School 2 hours.”
- “Not sure if parish councils fall in this section - have put the hours in above at 10 hours attending external meetings - I have 3 parish councils in my constituency which meet most months for about 2-3 hours each time.”
- “We also have regular training sessions which generally last about 2 hours. There have been a lot of these since the elections in May.”
- “Reading and filing emails takes at least one hour per day. We are all overwhelmed with emails.”
- “Organising, promoting and then holding ward drop-in surgery - 3 hours every two months.”
- “Attending or watching briefings - 8-15 hours per month dependent on what each month throws up.”

- “Training - has been around 8 hours per week in first three months of term. Hopefully less than that going forward, but already 2 hours in September (excluding travel).”
- “Am also undertaking an LGA leadership course funded by GBC - three full weekends away from home over three months.”
- “I am sure I have underestimated the amount of time I spend on my lead and ward member councillor role. I feel it could be a full time job.
- I spend an average of 8 hours per month as Historic Environment and Design champion.”
- “Lead Exec for Finance & Assets. This squeezes most other stuff out.”
- “I am a trustee for a local charity. I have not yet attended their meetings but I would estimate that they would be 2-3 hour every quarter year.”
- “Mentoring work 4 hrs (1 hour per week).”
- Youth club work 4 hrs per month.”
- “Social Media - 12 hrs/month.”
- “Press - 2hrs/month.”

**Q11. What would you say would be the right amount of time for a councillor to spend on council work?**

Average: 10 hours per week

**Q12. Do you feel the current allowances scheme adequately meets the expenses you incur in performing your duties and responsibilities as a councillor?**

Yes: 13

No: 12

If you answered 'No' explain why:

**Response 1**

"The primary issue is not so much the expenses directly incurred from performing duties and responsibilities (e.g., travel, printing costs, time spent, etc) but rather the opportunity costs caused by the responsibilities of being a councillor. These are not a problem if you are retired but are a significant problem if you need to earn a living.

For instance, if you are a planning committee member and have a day job (which is the case for myself), then you might not finish work until 5.30pm and will then immediately need to spend up to half an hour travelling to the council offices for a briefing for committee members on planning appeals at 6pm, followed by a planning committee at 7pm which might not finish until 10pm or 10.30pm, meaning it might not be 11pm until you get home. This leaves you no

time to cook, meaning that you will undoubtedly end up needing to spend additional money on a purchased meal. However, because you have not been away from home on council duties for half a day, you cannot claim for such a meal via the allowances system, and in any event the bureaucratic hassle of doing so means it's very rarely worth the effort to claim even when you are eligible to do so.

On top of that, the time commitment of that planning committee meeting means you will have effectively worked a 14 hour day (assuming you started work at 9am) but will still have to be up in time to start work at 9am the following day. Whilst this is theoretically possible, the reality is that the toll of all of these additional hours spent on council duties makes it impossible to work a full time job \*and\* perform your council duties diligently \*and\* also have any time for rest or a family life. The only way to solve this conundrum and avoid burnout (which is an issue which seems to routinely affect all councillors with day jobs) is to reduce your working hours (if your job will permit that), but this is likely to entail a significant reduction in your earned income (and career progression) which is beyond proportion to the amount of time being directly spent on being a councillor. The 40 hour working week was created for a reason, but the difficulty of being a councillor whilst needing to also earn a living result in councillors either working considerably longer hours than is healthy or in needing to spend money on things like cleaning and taxis and buying meals to make up for the lack of time they have left for cooking, housework and family time.

Additionally, while the time commitments of being a backbench councillor might theoretically be something which one can fit around a full-time day job (which is necessary given that being a councillor does not, and is not supposed to, yield an income one can live on), it is impossible to fit the responsibilities of being a portfolio holder (or equivalent committee chair) around a day job. When you factor in meetings with council officers, working group meetings and briefings (all of which need to happen during the working day for the benefit of council officers) it is simply impossible to combine these responsibilities with a day job without working a 60 to 80 hour week across one's councillor duties and one's day job. However, because SRAs plus the basic allowance are not remotely sufficient to live on in Guildford, and because it is very difficult to find a part time day job with the flexibility needed to fit in daytime council duties (which are very unpredictable and subject to change at short notice), most SRA holders seem to exist in a state of perpetual exhaustion/sacrifice of any personal or family life, which is detrimental to both the performance of council duties and to the wellbeing of councillors.

As such it is entirely unsurprising that councillors, as a whole, are so grossly unrepresentative of the general population in terms of demographics. As a well-paid professional, with a very flexible and low-stress job, without a family or



partner and who is willing to essentially sacrifice my entire personal life, I am able to balance things financially at the cost of recurring burnout, depression and harm to my wellbeing. But I cannot imagine how anyone on the average wage in Guildford, let alone someone earning below average wage or with significant caring responsibilities, could possibly afford to be anything other than a backbench councillor."

### **Response 2**

"This is tricky as I feel I will have spent more time on training which is hopefully reducing, I do expect my caseload to pick up but at this point I do not have any oversight to the level. At this point I feel I probably spend more time and it does not compensate for the income lost due to me reducing my hours."

### **Response 3**

"The fluctuation in hours required, coupled with the anti-social hours to complete casework."

### **Response 4**

"do not get any fuel allowance for travelling around the ward meeting constituents, handling planning queries etc involves site visits - do not get any allowance for meeting with Watts Gallery [the external organisation I was elected to represent] plus other groups that are part of the community like Guildford Shakespeare Company who do a lot of outreach work - 17000 engagements last year of which 13000 were not paid for - I would like to support these groups and visit them and/or the sites they help out like schools and HMP Send"

### **Response 5**

"I have had to reduce my working hours, and the councillor allowance does not cover the reduction in my wages."

### **Response 6**

"For the amount of time required to carry out my ward and lead member responsibilities as well as the responsibility it carries the current allowance scheme means that other outside paid work needs to be done if one wishes to be able to pay living costs especially living in an area where rents and cost of living is high (southeast). Leadership needs time to be done properly, not just to read all the papers but to be able to do the critical and thoughtful thinking that is required. We receive less on a pro-rata basis than a basic officer level salary and yet are expected to make decisions and represent the council publicly, be open to abuse and public criticism. Having to carry out paid work alongside my lead member role is exhausting and stressful and is leading me to having an

unhealthy lifestyle - not enough sleep or physical activity as there simply isn't time in the day."

**Response 7**

"You really have to manage the rest of your life around councillor work and that can cause issues with your other work and your family. I have 2 small children so it can affect how much time I can devote to them when I can't keep the balance right.

I feel the amount of work would deter many people of working age from becoming councillors and if they tried it even more so. We need a cross section of the population and I worry that we have too many retired people who perhaps don't appreciate the demands of a young family in particular."

**Response 8**

"If I look at the allowance and how many hours I do, it works out as minimum wage for a part time job that involves evenings, weekdays, finding childcare, time away from family in the evenings. It requires a level of understanding which also requires reading large agendas and researching which also takes up many hours of the day along with the emails. Plus, the travelling to and from council meetings with often no time to get dinner when you have meetings from 5-9pm, travel time out to Parish and residents for example. I also have to find time in the week to work on my own business. Most meetings last 2 hours and some committees have even longer meetings."

**Response 9**

"Since I have become a Councillor, reduced my main job hours and the cost of living."

**Response 10**

"I don't claim any expenses as I believe that is why we get the allowance."

**Response 11**

"It doesn't effectively financially recompense a conscientious attempt to cover all areas of a councillor's activity. But most councillors do not enter the role as a job, and do not expect to be rewarded as such, it is a token payment to reflect the work put in by members of the community who are carrying out the role as volunteers."

**Q13. In your time as a councillor, have you incurred losses for which you have not been recompensed?**

Yes: 5

No: 19

Not stated: 1

If you answered 'Yes' explain why:

**Response 1**

“Bus fares, taxi fares when buses have been running too late to get me to a meeting on time or where I've got out of a meeting after buses have stopped running, and countless meals because either council meetings left me no time to cook before or after a meeting, or because council duties on top of work have left me too exhausted to cook for myself even when I theoretically have had time to do so. Not to mention purchasing teas/coffees, etc when meeting with residents to discuss casework issues. I would estimate that these costs probably run to around £200 to £300 a month.”

**Response 2**

“Purely income lost by having to take a day off, I am self-employed if I have a long meeting, I will have to take the entire day off.”

**Response 3**

“I do not claim travel costs but that is my choice.”

**Response 4**

“Expenses such as travel I can't bother to claim.”

**Response 5**

“A lot of travelling is done by private vehicle to and from Guildford for Council meetings and within the ward on ward business and to various sites within and outside the ward for planning site visits. Having never kept a record of such distances travelled, a quantification would only be a rough estimate and the figure would differ if based solely on fuel used rather than a rate per mile which would include an element for vehicle wear and tear.”

**Q14. Was the Scheme of Councillors' Allowances a relevant consideration in deciding whether to stand for election as a Borough Councillor?**

Yes: 7

No: 18

If you answered 'Yes' explain why:

**Response 1**

“If allowances were any less than they currently are then I absolutely could not have afforded to re-stand for another four years as a councillor.”

**Response 2**

"Part of me feels like it ought to be voluntary but at the same time the level of responsibility and the hours demanded are much higher than you would expect from a voluntary position. The main issue is competence. This is a serious and significant position and it falls on us to take it seriously which means learning a lot of information in areas which we would otherwise have no interest so that we can fulfil our duties as professionally as possible. Truthfully, I often think it should be a full time position or at the very least a permanent part time position and paid accordingly".

**Response 3**

"The allowance has made it possible for me to reduce the number of days I work as a teacher so I can dedicate more time to my council work."

**Response 4**

"If there wasn't an allowance then i wouldn't have been able to stand as a Councillor."

**Response 5**

"It is an allowance rather than income but we still get taxed on it - I think if you add up the hours spent on GBC work it would be about the same as the minimum wage. It is not an issue for me but getting childcare covered or caring responsibilities will probably be a problem for some people. This could mean there is less diversity as it may not appeal to certain groups of people."

**Response 6**

"Not when I initially stood as a councillor. However, I have had to reduce my hours at work in order to meet the demands of being a councillor and the reduction in my wage is not compensated by the allowance. It is likely to be a consideration going forwards. It does mean that being a councillor is largely the preserve of the affluent or retired and cannot represent the demographic of the ward."

**Response 7**

"I had to work out whether I could do this role alongside paid employment given that so much time is required. Without at least some recompense for the time required I would have not thought about standing. Councils need to be represented by members from the whole community. Low allowance payments automatically exclude many members of our community and thus we risk not hearing their voices nor getting their needs represented. Allowance payments were probably initially set when councillors were mainly retired and wealthy people not relying solely on the state pension and who needed an activity to

keep them busy. This is no longer the case. If we are to encourage the many good people who could represent their communities within the larger community then allowances need to be raised. By increasing diversity, we will end up with better governance."

**Response 8**

"To be honest I didn't think about the allowances or check the level though I knew you did get them. Perhaps as a Labour candidate I didn't expect to get elected so it wasn't a major concern."

**Response 9**

"I don't like my time being considered as 'free', because it always then gets squandered by other people. For me, it felt right that there was an amount put on it. I am in a position where I am not needing to do this for money but am very aware that this is different for many of my colleagues".

**Response 10**

"Yes, a consideration as I also have a young family so have to consider all financial and working commitments."

**Response 11**

"I stood to make a change in my community, it was never about allowances."

**Response 12**

"No, I don't think people should be doing it for the money. The allowance covers any expenditure I have a month."

**Response 13**

"It's a voluntary role and people generally stand for election because they want to do something for others or contribute to the community. There needs to be a balance between recognition for time spent on duties and not making it a salary (which could make it a job for some rather than a calling). That said, the level of allowance does mean that many of us who are not retired need to focus primarily on the day job - and I think that can be to the detriment of council work (e.g., not enough time in the working week to see constituents; rush to 3-hour meetings straight after work; less time to work on difficult pieces of work, etc). It could be argued that a higher allowance might enable more part-time work, allowing for more time to be spent on council matters."

**Response 14**

"As indicated above, whilst it is gratifying to receive some recompense for the considerable number of hours put in, the payment of an allowance was not a

significant factor in my deciding to stand and I suspect that most councillors take a similar view.”

**Q15. Which Committees do you serve on and what is your role (Chair, Vice Chair or member)?**

- 1 Member of: Planning, Corporate Governance & Standards, Executive.  
Chair of: Planning Policy Board, Climate Change Board, Planning Improvement Board.  
Member of sundry other working groups/board external to GBC in my capacity as portfolio holder.
- 2 Member of Planning Committee, G-Live Leisure Group, Armed Forces Champion, Strategy and Resources
- 3 Fulltime member of both the Planning Committee and the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee.
- 4 O&S, Community EAB
- 5 Executive Lead councillor for Regulatory and Democratic Services, Guildford and Waverley Joint Governance Committee  
Executive Shareholder and Trustee Committee (sub)  
Planning Committee (sub)
- 6 Member CG&S, joint governance committee, full council.
- 7 Planning Vice Chair  
Resources EAB member  
Corporate Governance & Standards (substitute)  
Overview & Scrutiny (substitute)
- 8 Chair Community EAB  
Joint EAB  
Overview & Scrutiny  
Licensing  
Full Council  
Employment Committee
- 9 Community EAB - Member  
Constitution WG
- 10 Full Council
- 11 I am deputy leader, so vice-chair of the Executive. I also serve on the licensing committee and am a board member of two companies in which the council has an interest.
- 12 Full Council, Planning and one of our Resources Executive Advisory Board
- 13 Sub member on Planning Committee  
Member of Licensing Committee  
Member of Executive Committee

- 
- Member of Climate Change Board
  - Member of Constitution Review Board
  - 14 Planning Committee,  
Substitute on the O&S committee (though I attend them anyway)  
Also several working groups that are just getting started on leisure facilities and housing
  - 15 Full Council
  - 16 Licencing committee - member  
Executive advisory group - member
  - 17 Licencing Committee  
Overview & Scrutiny  
( Sub on two other committees + 2 working task groups)
  - 18 Chair Corporate Governance and Standards Committee  
Resources Executive Advisory Board - Member
  - 19 Member of:  
Planning  
Overview and Scrutiny  
Full Council
  - 20 Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Chair  
Corporate Governance Committee - member  
Full Council - member  
Capital, transport and infrastructure projects board member  
Shaping Guildford's Future board member  
Weyside Urban Village board member  
Planning Committee - substitute member  
Licencing Committee - substitute member  
Weyside Urban Village Board - member
  - 21 Appointments  
Employment  
Guildford and Waverley
  - 22 I chair the Planning Committee  
I am an ordinary member of the full council, Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, Guildford & Waverley Joint Appointments Committee and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
  - 23 Licencing Committee as a Member
  - 24 Licencing Committee - Chair  
Policy Programme Board - member  
Climate Change Board - member  
Strategy Executive Advisory Board - member  
AONB Board - member

- 
- 25 Planning Committee  
Licensing Committee (one of a number of Deputy Chairmen)  
Financial Recovery Committee (through position of leader of GGG).

**Q16. Put the committees into your preferred order from 1 to 6 in the order of importance to you. 1 being the most important and 6 the least important.**

Result:

1. Planning
2. Overview and Scrutiny
3. Corporate Governance and Standards
4. Licensing
5. Community EAB
6. Resources EAB

Rank	O&S	Licensing	Planning	CGSC	CEAB	REAB
1	5	0	14	5	0	0
2	12	6	3	3	0	0
3	5	1	7	10	1	0
4	1	11	0	4	6	2
5	1	1	0	2	13	7
6	0	5	0	0	4	15

**Q17. Are you aware of any instances where the Scheme has influenced prospective councillors in their decision on whether to stand for election as a Borough Councillor?**

Yes: 6

No: 18

Not stated: 1

If you answered 'Yes' explain why:

**Response 1**

“Of all the councillors I know who were elected for the first time in May, every single one would not have done so if it had not been for the allowances scheme offering at least some recompense for time spent on council duties.”

**Response 2**

“There's no way most could afford to do it. At least not properly.”

**Response 3**

“As someone who was searching for prospective candidates in the recent elections, I heard a handful of people who would have made excellent councillors tell me that they could not afford to be councillors.”



#### **Response 4**

"I know several who could not afford to be a councillor if they were not remunerated. This tends to vary according to political party. The members range from one who works as a cleaning lady, to one who likes to boast of his private helicopter".

#### **Response 5**

"I know some councillors who are dependent on the allowance and it is their main source of income. Many are also councillors at Surrey County Council."

#### **Response 6**

"After the election in 2019 it was apparent that there were a number of Councillors that did not seem to contribute in any way to Council meetings or be involved in any Boards or Working Groups. There is a general term I have heard a lot, only 20% do the work, 80% just turn up (with papers unread!). Let's hope this next 4 years are different."

**Q18. Do you have any other comments you would like the Independent Remuneration Panel to take into consideration during the review of this Council's scheme of Councillors' Allowances or suggestions on how you would like to see it improved?**

#### **Response 1**

"I would suggest the following changes:

Take account of additional time commitments for membership of some, but not all, committees (e.g., planning, CG&S) and boards/working groups which meet during the daytime. Take account of likely loss of earnings as part of your calculations, and the aspects of councillor duties which will conflict with the ability to perform regular employment. Replace the opposition leader allowance with a significant increase in the group leader's allowance as this would be a more equitable way of recognising the responsibilities of both opposition and administration at GBC, rather than it being an all or nothing system which rewards the leaders of the two largest groups but ignores the others. Reduce, but not eliminate, the public service discount for being a councillor."

#### **Response 2**

"Given the financial position of the Council there is no way increases in allowances should be recommended."

"I think it would be good to flag to new/all councillors that they might be entitled to Special Leave through their workplace depending on each employers' policies in place. I get 2 weeks paid leave which helps as for example the Police and Crime Panel takes at least half a day during my working day. I am not clear

how the tax works on the allowance as I am a higher rate taxpayer but don't think I pay 40% on the allowance - does it get taxed at a different rate? It would also be good to be able to submit expenses through an online portal rather than hard copy paper into GBC offices".

### **Response 3**

"The allowance scheme, to my mind, is neither fish nor fowl. It is not adequate recompense for the time spend on council activity (if one considers this a job) but was not a factor in my choosing to stand as a councillor. However, I am aware that others consider the allowance as a salary."

### **Response 4**

"I would like to ask the Independent Remuneration Panel to consider what level of expertise and experience they would like councillors to have and then rate that alongside the pay scale of officers and review on that basis. We expect our councillors to be pillars of the community, active and helpful facilitators, ambassadors for a multi-million pound organisation and yet remunerate them as if they are part-time 'almost' volunteers with expenses. I would take on far more community activities as well as sit on more boards and take on more sub-committees if I had more time available. Councils would be better places if they could take on the best people available who want to give their time to the community in a really positive way. And that doesn't mean elderly, retired, mainly male wealthy people on good pensions :)"

### **Response 5**

Really to consider the points raised earlier about whether the allowances scheme is at a sufficient level to retain people with children for example, to continue.

### **Response 6**

Travel allowance.

### **Response 7**

"While I have only been a borough councillor since May 2019, I was previously a councillor from 1991 to 2011 and was in full-time employment for much of that time. I am in a fortunate position of being retired and am therefore able to commit more hours to being a councillor. Other people have to fit their responsibilities around being in full-time work and I know from experience that employers are not always sympathetic if councillors need to take time off for council duties. That can be held against members when it comes to career progression and may influence their decision on whether to stand again in

future. I feel that it is important that the scheme of allowances reflects that situation."

**Response 8**

I do not believe that there should be any increase in Councillors' allowances at the moment given the current financial position of the Council. I would refuse an increase at this time.

**Response 9**

I do not consider in the present circumstances; allowances should be increased - would send the wrong message to Council Taxpayers. I would though, be equally averse to them being reduced.

**Q19. If you were looking to make financial savings within the current scheme of allowances, what should the panel consider?**

**Response 1**

"There are none. If we are serious about allowing people from all walks of life to be councillors and about ensuring that councillors have time to do their jobs properly, whilst retaining some measure of wellbeing, then we need to pay more to accomplish this. Alternatively, if we wish to continue to live in denial about how the system of allowances makes it far harder for some to be councillors than others, then the worst we could do is ensure the existing allowance scheme keeps pace with inflation."

**Response 2**

Reduce the number of councillors and pay those that remain better.

**Response 3**

across the board percentage decrease.

**Response 4**

I would increase the allowance not reduce it.

**Response 5**

"Remove the office of Mayor with all the attendant civic costs and have the Full Council chaired by a rotating Chair.

**Response 6**

None. I think people on committees where you have to spend a lot of time reading and researching, should perhaps be compensated for that additional work.

**Response 7**

I won't not suggest lowering it in any way. Perhaps adding value, similar to an employee benefits plan would be beneficial.

**Response 8**

Freezing increases for a specific period of time.

**Response 9**

Do not increase it.

**Response 10**

Councillors experience hardship in the same way as the rest of the population. I would suggest that the only potential saving would be to freeze allowances at their current level for the next four years.

**Q20. The Independent Remuneration Panel would like to interview a selection of councillors as part of the review of allowances. Would you like to be interviewed by the Panel?**

Yes: 14

No: 11