

A Review

Of

Members' Allowances

For

Huntingdonshire District Council

The Seventh Report

By the

Independent Remuneration Panel

Ann Dinsdale
Dr Declan Hall (Chair)
Dr Jennifer Horn

May 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommended BA & SRAs 2015-616				
Post	Number	Recommended SRA	Recommended Total Per Member	Recommended Sub Total
Basic Allowance	52		£4,235	£220,220
Executive SRAs				
Leader	1	£14,010	£18,245	£14,010
Deputy Leader	1	£10,537	£14,772	£10,537
Other Cabinet Members	6	£8,394	£12,629	£50,364
Chairmen's SRAs				
Development Management Panel	1	£6,311	£10,546	£6,311
Licensing & Protection Panel/Committee	1	£6,311	£10,546	£6,311
Overview & Scrutiny Panels	3	£4,903	£9,138	£14,709
Council	1	£3,503	£7,738	£3,503
Employment Panel	1	£2,374	£6,609	£2,374
Standards Committee	1	£700	£4,935	£700
Corporate Governance Panel	1	£2,374	£6,609	£2,374
Vice Chairmen's SRAs				
Development Management Panel	1	£2,524	£6,759	£2,524
Licensing & Protection Panel/Committee	1	£2,104	£6,339	£2,104
Overview & Scrutiny Panels	3	£1,635	£5,870	£4,905
Council	1	£1,156	£5,391	£1,156
Employment Panel	1	£712	£4,947	£712
Standards Committee	1	NA	NA	NA
Corporate Governance Panel	1	£712	£4,947	£712
Opposition Groups				
Leader Principal Opposition ¹	1	£4,203	£8,438	£4,203
Deputy Leader	1	£1,400	£5,635	£1,400
Leader Minor Opposition	1	£1,400	£5,635	£1,400
Other SRAs				
DMP Members	14	£620	£4,855	£8,680
Sub Totals BA				£220,220
Sub Totals SRA				£138,989
TOTAL				£359,209

1.

¹ Recommended SRA for Leader of Principal Opposition Group and Deputy Group Leader based on current size of group. It will vary depending on size of group

The Panel also recommends that:

If the number of Other Cabinet Members increases

Where the Cabinet is varied in size that the following SRAs are paid:

Number of Other Cabinet Members	SRA Payable	Total Payable to Other Executive Members
6 or less	£8,394	£50,364
7	£7,195	£50,364
8	£6,296	£50,364

Banding the SRA for Leader and Deputy Leader of Principal Opposition Group

To future proof the scheme and to create a stronger relationship between group size and the SRA for Opposition Leader and Deputy Leader that the following banding system is adopted:

Principal Opposition Group size	Opposition Group Leader Recommended SRA	Deputy Opposition Group Leader Recommended SRA
20 or more	£7,005	£2,335
15-19	£5,604	£1,868
10-14	£4,904	£1,605
6-9	£4,203	£1,400
5 or less	£4,203	No SRA recommended

If two largest Opposition Groups are of equal size

To future proof the scheme the Panel also recommends that where the two largest Opposition Groups are of equal size that the respective group leaders should each receive the Principal Opposition Group Leader's SRA that applies to their group size

Similarly, where the two largest Opposition Groups are of equal size the respective deputy group leaders should each receive the Principal Opposition Group Deputy Leader's SRA that applies to their group size.

Co-optees' Allowances – Standards (2)

The Co-optees' Allowance is not altered and remains at £231 for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the Council may decide to apply.

The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)

The current rates payable for the Dependants Carers' Allowance and the terms and conditions by which it may be claimed are maintained.

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

The current rates payable for the Travel and Subsistence Allowances and the terms and conditions by which they may be claimed are maintained.

Indexation

The following indices be used for indexation purposes

- **The Basic Allowance, SRAs and Co-optees' Allowance:**
 - Indexed to the locally agreed cost of living percentage increase in Huntingdonshire District Council local government staff salaries and implemented from the date of the AM for the same year that it applies to staff
- **Travel Allowances:**
 - Mileage: indexed to the HMRC rates
 - Public Transport: indexed to rates that can be claimed by Officers
- **Subsistence allowances – out of Authority Only:**
 - Indexed to and paid at the same rates and conditions applicable to Officers
- **DCA:**
 - Childcare element: the maximum hourly cap indexed to the hourly minimum wage appropriate to the age of the carer
 - Elderly/Disabled element: the maximum hourly cap indexed to the hourly rate paid to home care assistants by Cambridgeshire County Council

The Panel further recommends that the indices run for the maximum length permitted by the legislation, namely for 4 years up to end of the 2018/19 municipal year.

Implementation

The recommendations contained in this report are implemented from date of the Council's AM on 20 May 2015.

Huntingdonshire District Council

Independent Remuneration Panel

A Review of Members' Allowances

The Seventh Report

May 2015

The Regulatory Context and Terms of Reference

1. This report is a synopsis of the proceedings and recommendations made by the statutory Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) appointed by Huntingdonshire District Council to advise the Council on its current Members' Allowances scheme.
2. The Panel was convened under *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)* (the '2003 Regulations'). These regulations require all local authorities to establish and maintain an allowances Panel that must be convened to provide advice on Members' allowances before a Council changes or amends its allowances scheme. All councils are required to 'pay regard' to their Panels' recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances scheme.
3. In this particular instance, the Panel has been reconvened under the 2003 Regulations [paragraph 10. (5)] which states:

Where an authority has regard to an index for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances it must not rely on that index for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the independent remuneration panel established in respect of that authority on the application of an index to its scheme.
4. This provision, known as the '4-year rule', is utilised to oblige all Councils to reconvene their independent remuneration panels at least every four years so that, in a context where councils retain final responsibility for determining their own allowances, they are subject to periodic scrutiny and accountability. Under the 4-year rule the Council is required to reconvene and seeks its advice by the date of the annual meeting on 20 May 2015. It is under the requirement of the 4-year rule that the Panel has undertaken this (seventh) review of Members' Allowances for Huntingdonshire District Council.

Terms of Reference

5. The Panel was presented with a general terms of reference, namely to undertake a full review of the Council Members' Allowances scheme and to make any necessary amendments in relation to the following:
- As to the amount of basic allowance that should be payable to its elected Members
 - About the responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance and as to the amount of such an allowance
 - The duties for which travelling and subsistence allowances can be paid and as to the amounts of this allowance
 - The duties for which subsistence allowances can be paid and as to the amounts of this allowance
 - As to the suitability and amount of a co-optees' allowance
 - As to whether the Authority's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and if it does make such a recommendation, the amount of this allowance and the means by which it is determined
 - As to whether annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and if so, for how long such a measure should run
 - On whether any allowance should be backdated to the beginning of a financial year in the event of a scheme being amended.
 - The implementation of the recommendations
 - The extent and level of Members' IT & Telephone support and the most effective means to deliver such support

The Panel may make further recommendations with respect to Member allowances as it sees fit

In arriving at its recommendations the Panel is expected to take into account:

- The views, both written and oral, of Members
- Office factual briefings and relevant written information on the Council
- The scope and level of allowances paid in similar councils
- The current budgetary situation of the Council
- Any on-going developments in the governance structures and roles that have occurred across the Council since May 2011
- Other relevant information on the Council

The Panel

6. Huntingdonshire District Council reconvened its Independent Remuneration Panel, constituting of the following:

Ann Dinsdale LLP: Local Solicitor (Business Sector) and local resident

Declan Hall PhD: Independent Consultant (National perspective)

Jennifer Horn PhD: Director, Optical Activity Ltd (Business Sector)

7. The 4th member of the Panel, Dennis Baker OBE was not available to attend the Panel so was not formally part of this review. However, the Council, in agreement with the rest of the Panel, sent the relevant papers to Dennis and a copy of the draft report so as to stay informed and to pose if required critical challenge from an informed but arm's length perspective.
8. The Panel was supported by Tony Roberts PhD, Democratic Services Officer, who acted as the 'Panellists' Friend' and was the organisational lead in facilitating the review process.
9. The Panel would like to record its gratitude to the Members and Officers of Huntingdonshire District Council for making themselves available to meet with the Panel and ensuring the work of the Panel was carried out in an efficient and effective manner.

Process and Methodology

10. The Panel met at Pathfinder House, Huntingdon on 23rd March 2015. The Panel meetings were held in private session to enable the Panel to talk with Members and Officers and to conduct its deliberations in confidence.
11. In arriving at its recommendations, the Panel took into account *inter alia* the following range of evidence:
 - Relevant information on Huntingdonshire District Council including previous Panel reports, a schedule of meetings (2014/15) for the Council, committees and sub committees, their terms of reference and who chairs them, Member attendance figures (2013/14) for Council, committee and main sub-committees, and summary of survey on average hours worked as a Councillor as reported by the Councillor Consensus 2013, etc.
 - Representations made by Members to the Panel
 - Officer briefings on the developments in Council structures and to answer factual questions from the Panel
 - The range and level of allowances payable in the comparator group of authorities utilised for benchmarking purposes, namely

- Huntingdonshire District Councils' 10 'Nearest Neighbours' (CIPFA² - new model 2014) and the relevant other Cambridgeshire district councils, namely Fenland and South Cambridgeshire
 - Other relevant supporting material such the 2003 Members Allowances Regulations, 2006 Statutory Guidance on Members Allowances,
12. For full details of whom the Panel met and full range of information reviewed see:
- Appendix 1: Members and Officers who met with the Panel
 - Appendix 2: List of all the evidence considered by the Panel
 - Appendix 3: Details on the allowances schemes and comparative data referred to by the Panel for benchmarking purposes

Key Messages and Observations

Recognizing the current economic context

13. There is evidence supporting the case to increase some of the allowances currently payable, particularly the Basic Allowance - which as with all the SRAs has been frozen since 2009 - and also taking into account that now Members have to pay for their own ICT provision.
14. Ideally, the prime role of the Panel is to assess what it judges the roles and posts under review are worth based on the evaluation of the evidence. Yet, the Panel cannot but be aware of the current era of public sector austerity and where Huntingdonshire District Council is seeking further savings. This was a message that was underlined in the representation received even by those who felt there may be a strong case to increase some or most of the allowances. There was an overwhelming view that regardless of the merit it is simply not an appropriate time to be increasing allowances.
15. It is a message the Panel has took on board and as such the recommendations if adopted in full will result in annual savings of £12,356 based on the current political configuration of the Council.

Local Government in an increasingly changing environment

16. Another key message from Members was that local government and Members themselves are now beginning to operate in a changed environment - that will continue to evolve for the next 2-3 years. This reinforces the case for not revisiting the fundamentals of the current scheme.

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² CIPFA - Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy that for benchmarking purposes assigns all councils a set of 'near neighbours' based on a standard set of socio-economic data with a new model for 2014

17. The first reason for this change is the continuing financial constraints that are pushing councils in different directions regarding their service provision and delivery models. Secondly, the implementation of the various provisions of the Localism Act 2011 is starting to afford greater scope to councils to undertake a wider range of activities than they have in the past. Thirdly, the emergence of regional and local devolution on the political agenda looks set to take local government into uncharted territory. Although the specific proposals on how local government devolution are not known what is known is that all the major political parties are committed to moving it forward in some form. As a result, Members had a strong sense that Huntingdonshire District Council and its Members will be operating in a different fashion in 2-3 years time.
18. The Panel is not a position to put a value on evolving roles going forward in the most stable of environments and even less so in the current context. For the Panel to substantially revise allowances now would create unnecessary upheaval when it will have to be revisited in any case sooner rather than later.

Introducing a performance related element to Members remuneration

19. In some of the representations the issue of creating a stronger link between Member remuneration and performance was raised. The time constraints on the review meant that the Panel did not have the opportunity to fully explore what is a complicated issue.
20. It is noted that that there are signs nationally that some councils have moved forward on member performance and remuneration in that the principle has been established. Moreover, it appears that the principle is successfully been put into operation in that small financial penalties are being imposed on Members who are not attending the required percentage of meetings. However before the Panel would be prepared to go down that route it would seek a wider consultation with the Members as such a move requires widespread support. The Panel will take time to explore this issue during its next review or sooner if invited to do so by the Council.

The role of Panel

21. Consequently the main role of the Panel for this review has been to address anomalies arising out of implementation of relevant legislation and changes in governance structures rather than carry out a fundamental review.

The Basic Allowance - Recalibrated

22. The current Basic Allowance (£4,235) is based on the approach set out in the Statutory Guidance in that the Panel took into account 3 variables in arriving at the level. By revisiting these 3 variables to take into account the most recent relevant information the Panel has arrived at a 'recalibrated' Basic Allowance.

Time

23. The Basic Allowance is primarily a time based allowance and the original expected time input was 55 days per year that has not been revisited since 2002. The evidence strongly suggests that this original estimation is now out of date particularly relating to the increased contact with constituents and the time spent on reading and preparation - all boosted by the now common place reliance on electronic means of communication and working that was not in place in 2002.
24. The 2013 Census of Councillors shows that on average district councillors who hold no positions of responsibility put in up to 14 hours per week (equivalent to 90 days per year on an 8 hour day). The Panel has adopted the Cllr Census figures for recalibration purposes.

Recognising the voluntary principle or Public Service Discount

25. It is recognised that there is a voluntary or public service element in being a Member and that not all of their time should be remunerated and a proportion should be given voluntary, typically known as the public service discount. In 2002 the Panel set the PSD at one third on the basis that it was the most typical at the time. Since then it has emerged that the larger urban single tier councils typically adopt a PSD closer to 30% while district councils tend to adopt a figure closer to 35-40% - reflecting the closer links to communities and the more locally focused services such as environmental services which impacts on everyone whereas to use an extreme example social services impacts on a very small section of the population.
26. For the purposes of recalibration the Panel slightly increased the PSD to 40%.

Rate of remuneration

27. The third variable is to put a value on the Members; remunerated time which in 2003 was £95 per day and based on the mean gross pay for all full time employees in Cambridgeshire - as the closest link the Panel could establish to the average earnings of Members constituents. Since then the ONS has changed their format and now publish average earnings for employees in all council areas. The 2014 figure for Huntingdonshire is £101 per day, the median gross pay for all full time jobs within the district.³
28. The recalibrated Basic Allowance has been arrived at by utilising the updated variables as follows:

1. _____

³ See ONS, Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings, Weekly pay - Gross - for all full time employee jobs - United Kingdom 2014, Tale 7.1a. It shows the median value to be £508.40 per week which equates to £101.68 which the Panel rounded down to £101. The median rather than mean has been used as the ONS advises it is a more accurate measure of average earnings.

Time: 90 days per year
 PSD: 40%
 Rate of remuneration: £101 per day

= 90 days minus 40%
 = 54 days X £101
 = £5,454.

29. Recalibration shows that the Huntingdonshire District Council Basic Allowance has not kept pace with workloads and rate of remuneration. Moreover, benchmarking also shows that the Huntingdonshire District Council is below the mean Basic Allowance across the comparator councils, which is £5,062.
30. However, the Panel for reasons outlined above is not recommending any change to the current level payable. At this stage, the Panel is flagging up the recalibrated Basic Allowance as a marker for a future review that will be given further consideration in conjunction with introducing a performance element.
31. **The Panel recommends no change to the current Basic Allowance (£4,235) payable in Huntingdonshire District Council for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the council may apply.**

Special Responsibility Allowances

The Leader

32. The current SRA (£14,010) for the Leader was originally arrived at assessing the role as requiring the equivalent of an additional half of full time commitment and multiplying that time by the then day rate of £95. While the Leader's role is still not a full time one it has become more demanding in terms of responsibility over the years. Some of these changes have been legislative. For instance, where a Council has a Leader plus Cabinet form of executive the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 mandates a strong Leader model. In this model it is the Leader, rather than the Council, that
- Determines the size of the Cabinet
 - Appoints the members of the Cabinet
 - Allocates portfolios to members of the Cabinet
 - Delegates decision making powers to the Cabinet, both collectively and individually and
 - Removes and replaces members of the Cabinet
33. Constitutionally at least the Leader has more powers even if the political reality is that the Leader still has to retain the confidence of their group.

34. Another development is the rise of the regional and sub-regional agenda. For instance, the Leader is on the board of the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). LEPs replaced the Regional Development Agencies by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in 2011 and are voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses to help determine local economic priorities and lead on economic growth and job creation within the area. Although the Leader is not on the regional LEP Board as a Council appointee the fact remains he is on it because he is a Leader with particular skills and knowledge. More importantly the Leader now has to attend monthly meetings of the LEP and is working more closely with local and regional business and other stakeholders to decide priorities for investment to promote economic development across the sub-region including ensuring that the interests of Huntingdonshire are taken into consideration when determining those priorities. Local government devolution will in all likelihood place more demands on the post of Leader.
35. The Panel recognises that the Leader's SRA does not fully reflect the additional responsibilities the role now entails and this is supported by benchmarking where the mean SRA is £15,829. However for reasons of financial prudence and the fluid environment for local government in general the Panel is not recommending any change to the Leaders' SRA at this stage.
36. **The Panel recommends no change to the current SRA (£14,010) paid to the Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the council may apply.**

The Deputy Leader

37. The SRA (£10,537) for the Deputy Leader was arrived at (as were most other SRAs) by assessing it as a ratio of the Leader's role, in this case 75%. This is a comparatively high ratio (the typical range being 60-65%) which in turn places the SRA for the Deputy Leader in line with peers, with the mean SRA paid to Deputy Leaders in the comparator councils being £10,283. However, the Deputy Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council has traditionally been an active one who is expected to take on a number of detailed and discrete tasks at the Leaders direction as well as the normal functions.
38. **The Panel recommends no change to the current SRA (£10,537) paid to the Deputy Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the council may apply.**

The Other Cabinet Members

39. The current SRA (£8,394) paid to other Cabinet Members was arrived at by setting it at 60% of the Leaders' SRA which is in line with comparative practice. No evidence was received to suggest this SRA needed revising except in regards to variations in the number of other Cabinet Members.

40. Since the last review and as permitted since the relevant provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 were implemented, the Leader has varied the numbers of other Cabinet Members, going down to 4 and back up to 5 and now 6 again. This is only to be expected with the Leader reshuffling the Cabinet as required, subject to a maximum of 8 other Cabinet Members and a minimum of 2, plus Leader and Deputy Leader. Thus to future proof the scheme **the Panel recommends the following SRAs are payable to other Cabinet Members subject to any future indexation that may be applied**

Number of Other Cabinet Members	SRA Payable	Total Payable to Other Executive Members
6 or less	£8,394	£50,364
7	£7,195	£50,364
8	£6,296	£50,364

The Chairmen of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels

41. The Council maintains 3 Overview & Scrutiny Panels to discharge this statutory function. Each Chairman receives a SRA of £5,604 (40% of the Leaders' SRA) whereas the mean SRA paid in the benchmarking group is somewhat less at £4,818. This bald comparison in itself is not a reason to revise the SRA for the Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen downwards. However, taking into account that there are 3 remunerated Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny in Huntingdonshire District Council and the 3 Vice Chairmen are also remunerated (£2,242) the cost of supporting the overview and scrutiny function through the Huntingdonshire District Council Members' Allowances scheme is £23,538. The 2nd highest paid chairman of Overview and Scrutiny in the benchmarking group, which is Colchester at £6,732, has only one such committee nor is the Vice Chairman remunerated so that SRA represents the total cost of remunerating the scrutiny function in Colchester. On the other hand, Braintree for instance pays an SRA of £4,536 to Chairs of Task and Finish Groups that undertake thematic scrutiny reviews so the total spent each year on scrutiny will vary.
42. Despite the current relatively high total cost the Panel decided to only marginally revise downwards the SRA paid to the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, by reducing the operative ratio from 40% to 35%. The Panel would have gone further but was informed the Council is undertaking a governance review regarding Overview and Scrutiny. The Panel will take a further view on SRAs for Overview and Scrutiny once the outcome of the review is known and some experience of the new configuration has been gained including consideration of differential SRAs if required.
43. **The Panel recommends that the Chairmen of the 3 Overview and Scrutiny Panels are paid an SRA of £4,903. Moreover until the Panel**

reviews SRAs for scrutiny the maximum number of SRAs payable to such Chairmen is capped at 3.

Chairman of the Development Management Panel (DMP)

44. The Chairman of DMPs current SRA (£6,311), set at 45% of the Leader's SRA, is above the mean SRA (£5,449). However, the weighted mean is £6,307, which takes into account that Test Valley remunerates 3 Planning Chairs, including their 2 two area planning chairs.
45. The representation received supported the view that chairing the Planning Committee is high profile reflecting the development pressures across the district that can on occasion be contentious. **The Panel is content with the current SRA and recommends that the Chairman of the Planning Committee continues to receive an SRA of £6,311 for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the council may decide to apply.**

Other Members of the Development Management Panel (DMP)

46. Currently the other Members of the DMP (excluding the Chairman and Vice Chairman and any Cabinet member appointed to the DMP) receive an SRA of £620. This SRA is normally not paid, only 2 councils in the benchmarking group pay such an allowance (Braintree £839 and Colchester £1,602) and neither remunerate their Vice Chairs.
47. This SRA was paid to recognise the extra workload associated with being on the DMP which meets monthly and as a simple means to provide recompense for the cost of site visits DMP Members are expected to undertake under their own cognizance. The Panel received no evidence to suggest that the original rationale for paying this SRA was no longer valid.
48. **The Panel recommends that the other Members of the DMP continue to receive an SRA of £620 for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the council may decide to apply.**

Chairman of the Licensing Committee/Licensing & Protection Panel

49. The SRA (£6,311) for the Chairman of the Licensing Committee and Licensing and Protection Panel is higher than any of paid the benchmarking group where the mean SRA is £3,086. The post involves chairing 2 separate council committees namely the:
- Licensing & Protection Panel - that addresses such issues as environmental protection and taxi licensing
 - Licensing Committee - that mainly deals with matters under the Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005 and most recently the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

50. The Committee and Panel meet consecutively on the same day with the same members and at this level the workload has not been consistent with some meetings cancelled in the past as the agendas cannot be filled. However, most of the work of the Committee/Panel is undertaken by the Licensing and Protection Applications Sub Group which deals with such items as taxi licensing applications and the Licensing Committee Sub Committees that deal with such items as objections to variations in opening hours of public houses. The Chairman of the Committee/Panel chairs most of these sub groups and sub committees, with the Vice Chairman stepping in when required. The SRA recognises the role of the Chairman at this level. Consequently, the Panel has decided not to revise this SRA.
51. **The Panel recommends that the Chairman of the Licensing Committee & Licensing & Protection Panel continues to receive an SRA of £6,311 for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the council may decide to apply.**

Chairman of the Council

52. The Chairman of the Council currently receives an SRA of £3,763 which is an historical figure. Benchmarking shows the mean SRA for this post to be £5,389 in the six out of 10 councils that pay such an SRA. Moreover the Chairman receives an additional £4,000 per year to assist with the out of pocket expenses inherent in holding the post, such as buying raffle tickets. There is no way to know from analysing their allowances schemes whether this is also the case in the comparator councils. Generally the practice is mixed so some of the SRAs paid to Chairmen in the comparator councils will be the total sum received to support the role. Consequently the Panel has decided to marginally revise downwards the SRA for the Council Chairman by setting it at 25% of the Leader's SRA, which equates to £3,503.
53. **The Panel recommends that the Chairman of the Council receives an SRA of £3,503 for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the council may decide to apply.**

Chairmen of the Employment and Corporate Governance Panels

54. The SRA (£2,779) for the Chairman of the Employment Panel was set at 20% of the Leaders' SRA. Benchmarking shows this post or equivalent is paid in only half of the 12 comparator councils, with the mean SRA being £2,349. Since the previous review a number of functions of the Employment Panel have been delegated to the Managing Director.
55. The SRA for the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel was originally set at 15% of the Leader's SRA. Benchmarking shows this post or equivalent is paid in only 4 of the 12 comparator councils, with the mean SRA being £2,259. However since the previous review the Corporate Governance Panel has acquired the Audit function the chairman of which is normally

remunerated elsewhere. The Panel decided to split the difference between the current SRAs paid to these 2 Chairmen as their remit is broadly on par, which equates to £2,374

56. **The Panel recommends that the Chairmen of the Employment Panel and Corporate Governance Panel are paid an SRA of £2,374 for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the council may decide to apply.**

Chairman of the Standards Committee

57. The remit of the Standards Committee has changed substantially since the implementation of the various provisions of the Localism Act 2011. The Standards Committee has lost much of its role in assessing complaints against Members as well as a diminution in the a range of powers available when a complaint has been deemed valid, most notably it can no longer suspend a Member and has powers of censure only. Effectively, complaints against Members are now dealt with in a more informal fashion by the Monitoring Officer and new statutory post of Independent Person. As was the intent of the Localism Act it now means complaints are dealt with and the issue resolved without involving the Standards Committee although the Chairman may be consulted at this early informal stage. While the Standards Committee retains a general responsibility to maintain and promote a Code for Conduct its workload is so reduced that half its quarterly meetings are cancelled due to lack of business.
58. The SRA £2,779 was originally set at 20% of the Leader's SRA and is higher than any other equivalent chairman in the comparator councils. Benchmarking shows that this post is now only remunerated in half of the comparator councils with the mean SRA being £1,241. The Panel has decided to recalibrate this SRA and reset it at 5% of the Leader's SRA.
59. **The Panel recommends that the Chairman of the Standards Committee is paid an SRA of £700 for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the council may decide to apply.**

The Vice Chairmen of Committees

60. The SRAs for the Vice Chairmen of Committees have always been set with reference to their respective Chairmen's' SRAs on the following ratios (including current SRA):
- Vice Chairman DMP (£2,837): 45% of Chairman's SRA
 - Vice Chairman Licensing/Protection (£2,837): 45% of Chairman's SRA
 - Vice Chairmen Scrutiny Panels (£2,242): 40% of Chairman's SRA
 - Vice Chairman Council (£1,563): 40% of Chairman's SRA
 - Vice Chairman Employment (£927): 33% of Chairman's SRA
 - Vice Chairman Governance (£649): 33% of Chairman's SRA
 - Vice Chairman Standards (£927): 33% of Chairman's SRA

61. Benchmarking shows that Huntingdonshire District Council pays the highest SRA for the Vice Chairmen of
- Scrutiny
 - Development Control (Management)
 - Licensing/Protection
 - Employment
62. The Council is alone in paying a SRA to the Vice Chairmen of the Corporate Governance Panel and Standards Committee. The SRAs for Vice Chairmen in Huntingdonshire stand out as being significant sums for what is in the main a traditional stand-in role. Consequently the Panel has decided to recalibrate the SRAs for the Vice Chairmen to bring them more in line with comparative relativities.
63. **The Panel recommends that the SRAs for the Vice Chairmen of the committees and panels are recalibrated as follows:**

Vice Chairman	Ratio	Recommended SRA
Vice Chairman DMP	40% of Chairman's SRA	£2,524
Vice Chairman Licensing/Protection	33% of Chairman's SRA	£2,104
Vice Chairmen Scrutiny Panels	33% of Chairman's SRA	£1,635
Vice Chairman Council	33% of Chairman's SRA	£1,156
Vice Chairman Employment	30% of Chairman's SRA	£712
Vice Chairman Governance	30% of Chairman's SRA	£712
Vice Chairman Standards	Discontinue SRA	

The Leader of the Principal Opposition Group

64. The current SRA (£7,005) for the Leader of the Principal Opposition has historically been arrived at by setting it at 50% of the Leader's SRA. This is comparatively high (the mean SRA is £5,002 in the benchmarking group) and relates to a different era when the Principal Opposition Group was much larger than it is today. This has led to the anomalous situation where the Leader of the Principal Opposition Group of 7 receives an SRA of £7,005 and the Leader of Minority Opposition Group of 5 receives an SRA of £723 - an almost 1000% difference in remuneration with a difference in group size of 40%.

65. To future proof the scheme and to create a stronger relationship between group size and the Leader's SRA the Panel recommends the following banding system is adopted:

Principal Opposition Group size	Percentage of Leader's SRA	Recommended SRA
20 or more	50%	£7,005
15-19	40%	£5,604
10-14	35%	£4,904
9 or less	30%	£4,203

Deputy Leader of the Principal Opposition

66. Similarly the SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Principal Opposition Group (£2,837 - set at 40% of Opposition Group Leaders' SRA) reflects a different political era. Benchmarking shows that it is not typically paid, only one of the comparator councils pay such an SRA (£1,104 in Cherwell). The Panel has decided to maintain this SRA in the interests of ensuring there is a well resourced opposition but to apply a lower ratio, namely 33% of their Group's Leaders operative SRA. The Panel recommends that the Deputy Leader of the Principal Opposition also has a graded SRA depending on group size as follows:

Group size	Opposition Group Leader's Recommended SRA	Percentage of Group Leader's SRA	Deputy Group Leader's recommended SRA
20 or more	£7,005	33%	£2,335
15-19	£5,604	33%	£1,868
10-14	£4,904	33%	£1,605
6-9	£4,203	33%	£1,400
5 or less	£4,203	NA	No SRA recommended

Leader of Minority Opposition Group[s]

67. Currently any Leader of a Minority Opposition Group that attains 5 Members (10% of council membership) qualifies for a Minority Opposition Group Leaders' SRA of £723 (a historic figure). Currently this applies to only one group. This post is typically remunerated, in the benchmarking group it is paid in 7 councils (the mean SRA being £2,685) and at the time of writing there are at least 2 other councils where there is no Minority Opposition Group Leaders to remunerate.

68. At the last review the Panel recommended and the Council accepted the adoption of 5 member threshold for the SRA to be paid. This criterion has general acceptance but the Panel has decided that the SRA should be increased to a 10% of the Leader's SRA to bring it in line with peers.
69. Consequently **the Panel recommends that the SRA for the Leader[s] of a Minority Opposition Group that attains 5 members is £1,400.**

If the two largest Opposition Groups are of equal size

70. To future proof the **scheme the Panel also recommends that where the two largest Opposition Groups are of equal size that the respective group leaders should each receive the Leader of a Principal Opposition Group's SRA that applies to their group size**
71. For instance, if the two largest Opposition Groups had nine Members apiece then the SRA payable to each Group Leader would be as follows:
- Principal Opposition Group Leader SRA (9 Members): £4,203
72. Furthermore, **each Deputy Leader of a Principal Opposition Group of equal size should each receive the Deputy Leader of a Principal Opposition Group's SRA that applies to their group size.** For instance, if the 2 Principal Opposition Groups have 9 Members each then their SRA would be £1,605 each.

Co-optees' Allowances – Standards (2)

73. The Council continues to appoint 2 parish councillors to the Standards Committee to deal with complaints against parish councillors if required. They are both eligible for an annual Co-optees' Allowance of £231. No evidence was received to revisit this allowance.
74. **The Panel recommends that the Co-optees' Allowance is not altered and remains at £231 for 2015/16 subject to any indexation the Council may decide to apply.**

The Dependents' Carers' Allowance (DCA)

75. Although the DCA is only claimed occasionally there was general support to maintain the allowance on principle, a view the Panel continues to endorse.
76. No evidence was received to indicate the Dependents' Carers' Allowance required amending. **The Panel recommends that the current rates payable**

for the Dependants Carers' Allowance and the terms and conditions by which it may be claimed are maintained.

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

77. No evidence was received to indicate the Travel and Subsistence Allowances require amending. **The Panel recommends that the current rates payable for the Travel and Subsistence Allowances and the terms and conditions by which they may be claimed are maintained.**

Indexation

78. Although provision for indexation is in place since 2010 the Council has chosen not to implement the index for the Basic Allowance and SRAs. For instance, in 2013 Officers received a locally agreed 2% cost of living increase but it was not applied to the Basic Allowance and SRAs as the Council declined the index, which is its prerogative. Nonetheless, there was general support for the principle of indexation to be in place so as to give the Council the choice.

79. **The Panel recommends that the following indices be used for indexation purposes.**

- **The Basic Allowance, SRAs and Co-optees' Allowance:**
 - Indexed to the locally agreed cost of living percentage increase in Huntingdonshire District Council local government staff salaries and implemented from the date of the AM for the same year that it applies to staff
- **Travel Allowances:**
 - Mileage: indexed to the HMRC rates
 - Public Transport: indexed to rates that can be claimed by Officers
- **Subsistence allowances – out of Authority Only:**
 - Indexed to and paid at the same rates and conditions applicable to Officers
- **DCA:**
 - Childcare element: the maximum hourly cap indexed to the hourly minimum wage appropriate to the age of the carer
 - Elderly/Disabled element: the maximum hourly cap indexed to the hourly rate paid to home care assistants by Cambridgeshire County Council

80. **The Panel further recommends that the indices run for the maximum length permitted by the legislation, namely for 4 years up to end of the 2018/19 municipal year.**

Implementation

- 81. The Panel further recommends that its recommendations contained in this report are implemented from date of the Council's AM on 20 May 2015.**

Appendix 1: Members and Officers who met with the Panel**Members:**

Cllr J. Ablewhite	Leader of Council & Conservative Group, Chairman of the Cabinet & Executive Member for Strategic & Delivery Partnerships
Cllr M. Baker	Minority Opposition Group Leader - Liberal Democrat
Cllr K. Churchill	Principal Opposition Group Leader - UKIP
Cllr D. Tuplin	Independent Member

Written submissions from Members:

Cllr B. Boddington	Chairman of the Development Management Panel (Conservative)
Cllr P. Bucknell	Vice Chairman of the Council (Conservative)
Cllr R. Carter	Vice-Chairman Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Social Well-Being (Conservative)
Cllr S. Chriswell	Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Panel - Social Well-Being (Conservative)
Cllr J. Davies	Chairman of the Licensing & Protection Panel and Licensing Committee (Conservative)
Cllr R. Fuller	Vice Chairman of the Licensing & Protection Panel and Licensing Committee (Conservative)
Cllr R. Harrison	Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Economic Well-Being (Conservative)
Cllr P. Kadewere	Labour Member
Cllr T. Sanderson	Executive Member for Strategic Economic Development & Legal (Conservative)
Cllr R West	Vice-Chairman of Employment Panel (Conservative)

Officers who briefed the Panel:

Joanne Lancaster	Managing Director
Tony Roberts (PhD)	Democratic Services Officer
Julie Slatter	Director for Corporate Services

Appendix 2: Information received & reviewed by the Panel

1. Itinerary
2. Panel Terms of Reference
3. Huntingdonshire District Council Members' Allowances Scheme 2014/15
4. Huntingdonshire District Council Members' Allowances & Expenses statutory publication 2013/14
5. Huntingdonshire District Council meetings calendar 2014/15
6. Member Role Profiles
7. Break down of number of meeting for each licensing panel (2012/13 & 2013/14 & so far this year) including who has chaired and served on them
8. Huntingdonshire DC IRP: Sixth Report November 2010
9. Councillors Census 2013 - summary of average hours worked by authority and non/post holder
10. National Joint Council for Local Government Services, 2014-16 Payscales & Allowances including up rating figures, 14 November 2014
11. Aide Memoir sent to all Members
12. Statutory Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances 2003
13. Statutory Instruments: 2003 No. 1021 – The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
14. 2003 No. 1021 – The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations
15. Hard copies of allowances schemes utilised for benchmarking purposes including comparative summary (see below) data/material
16. Written submissions from Members
17. ONS, Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings, Weekly pay - Gross - for all full time employee jobs - United Kingdom 2014, Table 7.1a.

Appendix 3: Allowances paid in comparator authorities

BM1: HDC CIPFA 10 Nearest Neighbours & relevant Cambridgeshire Districts: BA + Exec, Scrutiny, Planning & Council SRAs 2014/15												
Authority	Basic Allowance	Leader's SRA	Total Leader	Deputy Leader	Cabinet Mbrs - Others	Chairmen Overview & Scrutiny	O&S V/C	Chair Planning	Planning V/C	Planning Mbrs	Chair Council	Council V/C
Aylesbury Vale	£5,388	£16,164	£21,552	£12,120	£10,776	£4,044		£5,388			£5,388	
Basingstoke & Deane	£6,603	£22,018	£28,621	£14,669	£11,009	£5,504	£550	£6,605	£660			
Braintree	£4,536	£13,608	£18,144	£11,340	£9,072	£4,536		£4,536		£839	£4,536	
Charnwood	£4,820	£11,931	£16,751	£8,352	£4,772	£3,341	£1,432	£3,579	£1,432			
Chelmsford	£5,544	£21,738	£27,282	£14,346	£10,869	£4,304		£7,170				
Cherwell	£4,155	£14,500	£18,655	£6,291	£6,291	£3,702		£4,200				
Colchester	£6,412	£19,235	£25,647	£12,118	£11,541	£6,732		£6,732		£1,010	£11,600	£2,600
Fenland	£4,576	£16,154	£20,730	£9,153	£9,153	£8,008	£1,602	£8,008	£1,602		£4,027	
Maidstone	£4,666	£23,326	£27,992	£11,663	£11,663	£4,665		£5,831				
South Cambridgeshire	£4,720	£10,507	£15,227	£7,881	£7,006	£3,565	£1,783	£4,526	£2,263		£3,962	£1,981
Stafford	£3,837	£8,800	£12,637	£7,278	£5,529	£3,103		£4,062	£846			
Test Valley	£6,313	£11,968	£18,281	£8,181	£7,626	£6,313	£1,263	£4,747	£960		£2,820	£556
<i>Huntingdonshire</i>	<i>£4,235</i>	<i>£14,010</i>	<i>£18,245</i>	<i>£10,537</i>	<i>£8,394</i>	<i>£5,604</i>	<i>£2,242</i>	<i>£6,311</i>	<i>£2,837</i>	<i>£620</i>	<i>£3,763</i>	<i>£1,563</i>
Mean	£5,131	£15,829	£20,960	£10,283	£8,776	£4,818	£1,326	£5,449	£1,294	£925	£5,389	£1,712
Median	£4,770	£15,327	£19,693	£10,247	£9,113	£4,420	£1,432	£5,068	£1,196	£925	£4,282	£1,981
Highest	£6,603	£23,326	£28,621	£14,669	£11,663	£8,008	£1,783	£8,008	£2,263	£1,010	£11,600	£2,600
Lowest	£3,837	£8,800	£12,637	£6,291	£4,772	£3,103	£550	£3,579	£660	£839	£2,820	£556

BM2: HDC CIPFA 10 Nearest Neighbours & relevant Cambridgeshire Districts: Other Main SRAs 2014/15												
Authority	Chair Licensing &/or Regulatory	V/C Licensing &/or Regulatory	Chair Employment or HR	V/C Employment	Chair Governance	V/C Governance	Chair Standards	V/C Standards	Chair Audit	Leader Main Opp	Main Opp Dep Leader	Leader 2nd Opp
Aylesbury Vale	£2,700								£4,044	£2,736		£1,368
Basingstoke & Deane	£5,504	£550	£5,504	£550					£5,504	£6,605		£3,303
Braintree	£4,536				£4,536					£4,536		£1,134
Charnwood	£2,386	£716					£1,432		£3,341	£4,000		
Chelmsford	£2,718				£1,086				£1,086	£7,170		
Cherwell	£1,104		£1,104				£1,104		£2,250	£2,898	£1,104	
Colchester	£5,771								£3,847	£7,694		£6,155
Fenland	£3,204		£1,602		£1,602		£1,602			£5,583		£1,602
Maidstone	£2,332						£1,166		£1,166	£5,831		£2,331
South Cambridgeshire	£510		£439		£1,811					£3,565		
Stafford	£1,523		£3,611				£902		£2,223	£4,400		£2,900
Test Valley	£4,747	£960	£2,076	£404					£2,076			
Huntingdonshire	£6,311	£2,837	£2,779	£927	£1,968	£649	£2,779	£927		£7,005	£2,837	£723
Mean	£3,086	£742	£2,389		£2,259		£1,241		£2,837	£5,002		£2,685
Median	£2,709	£716	£1,839		£1,707		£1,166		£2,250	£4,536		£2,331
Highest	£5,771	£960	£5,504	£550	£4,536		£1,602		£5,504	£7,694	£1,104	£6,155
Lowest	£510	£550	£439	£404	£1,086		£902		£1,086	£2,736	£1,104	£1,134