

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 31 March 2015

Report of the Joint Independent Members Remuneration Panel

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams)

1. Background

- 1.1 The attached report has been submitted by the Joint Independent Members Remuneration Panel.
- 1.2 It set out the conclusions and recommendations from the early stages of a fundamental review of the Taunton Deane Scheme of Members' Allowances being carried out them.

2. Finance Comments

- 2.1 None at this stage. The Panel is aware that it is not obliged to have regard to the overall budgetary impact of its recommendations when making recommendations to the Council.
- 2.2 However, the Panel is aware of the financial restraints facing local authorities currently and into the future and the public perception of elected Members awarding themselves increases in allowances. The Panel will therefore have regard to these issues when bringing forward recommendations for consideration.

3. Legal Comments

- 3.1 Provisions in relation to Members' Allowances are set out in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021) and subsequent amendments to the regulations (SI 2003/1022 an. Under the Regulations the Council has to appoint an Independent Panel to make recommendations on its Scheme of Members' Allowances, for consideration by the Council. The Council may accept, reject, or amend any of the Panel's recommendations. The Regulations provide for a single panel to advise more than one Council.
- 3.2 The Council has joined the Joint Independent Members' Remuneration Panel alongside Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council and West Somerset Council.
- 3.3 All Members have a personal and a prejudicial interest in this item

through receipt of allowances. The Council's Code of Conduct includes a dispensation allowing all Members to attend and vote on Members' Allowance issues in spite of their prejudicial interest as long as the interest is declared at the relevant meeting. This paragraph has the effect of taking these declarations as having been made by all Members. Members do not therefore need to make a verbal declaration at the Council meeting.

4. Equalities Impact

- 4.1 Provision in the scheme for dependants' Carers Allowances will assist Members with such responsibilities in carrying out Council duties. A robust allowance regime can play an important role in attracting people from all sections of the community to stand as Councillor.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 There are no risks associated with this report and any recommendations as the Council is not required to agree them but simply to have regard to them when making decisions in respect of Members' Allowances.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Council is **recommended**:-

- To endorse the approach being taken by the Panel to undertake a fundamental review of the Taunton Deane Scheme and the plan for continuing reviews of the scheme – paragraph 3.4.6 refers;
- To agree the principles recommended to underpin the setting of the Basic Allowance for the new Council - paragraph 3.6.10 refers;
- To approve the principles recommended to underpin the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances in the new Council - paragraph 3.7.3 refers; and
- To approve the list of approved duties attached as Appendix C to this report to be applied as part of a new Members' Allowances Scheme – paragraph 3.8.4 refers.

- 6.2 If these recommendations are approved, they will form the basis for a new Members' Allowances Scheme for the Council to be brought forward for consideration in September 2015 following agreement of new democratic arrangements for the Council in May 2015.

Contact: Officer Name : Bruce Lang
Direct Dial No : 01984 635307
[e-mail](mailto:b.lang@tauntondeane.gov.uk) address : b.lang@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Report of the Joint Independent Panel on Members' Remuneration

Lead Officer and Author: Julian Gale, Strategic Manager – Community Governance & Monitoring Officer, Somerset County Council

Contact Details: 01823 359047

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report set out the conclusions and recommendations from the early stages of a fundamental review of the Taunton Deane Scheme of Members' Allowances being carried out by the Joint Independent Members' Remuneration Panel.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Council is recommended:

- **To endorse the approach being taken by the Panel to undertake a fundamental review of the Taunton Deane scheme and the plan for on-going reviews of the scheme – paragraph 3.4.6 refers**
- **To agree the principles recommended to underpin the setting of the Basic Allowance for the new council - paragraph 3.6.10 refers**
- **To approve the principles recommended to underpin the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances in the new Council - paragraph 3.7.3 refers**
- **To approve the list of approved duties attached as Appendix C to this report to be applied as part of a new Members' Allowances Scheme – paragraph 3.8.2 refers.**

If these recommendations are approved, they will form the basis for a new Members' Allowances Scheme for the Council to be brought forward for consideration later in 2015 following agreement of new democratic arrangements for the Council in May 2015.

3. Background

3.1 Panel Chairman and Membership

3.1.1 The independent Panel membership that produced this report was as follows:

Somerset County Council representatives:

- Rob Culligan
- Eelke Zoestbergen
- Paul Partington
- Ian Fellingham
- 1 vacancy

Mendip District Council representative:

- Graham Russell

Taunton Deane Borough Council representative:

- Keith Bevan (sub Tony Brown)

West Somerset Council:

- Robert Govier.

3.1.2 Since this report was written the Panel's membership has changed as a result of the County Council reducing its representation on the Panel from 5 members to 3 members to provide a better balance to the overall membership. Two of the County Council's representatives (Rob Culligan and Eelke Zoestbergen) have now retired from the Panel having reached the end of their term of office. Jason Woods has been appointed by the County Council as a new Panel representative to bring the County Council's representation back up to 3 members.

A summary of Mr Woods' background is set out below.

Jason Woods was raised and educated in Taunton and now lives with his wife and 2 children in Wembdon where he is a Parish Councillor. He has over 25 years of experience as an Engineer in the Royal Navy, rising through the ranks to become a Commissioned Officer. During a rich and varied career he has seen active service around the world and carried out a multitude of roles encompassing; aviation front line and support engineering roles, as well as training, project and change management.

A Science, Engineering and MBA graduate he is now working in Human Resource Management and reading for an MSc in Training, & Acquisition Consultancy with the University of Portsmouth. In July he will be returning to Somerset to take up an appointment as the Education Officer at RNAS Yeovilton where he will be responsible for upwards of 3000 personnel from all 3 services. He will then be moving into an acquisition role at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol.

Outside of these professional roles Jason is an avid supporter of Somerset Cricket and runs with the Quantock Harriers. He is hoping to stay fit to compete in this year's London Marathon in April.

3.1.3 Pending the appointment of Mr Woods the first three meetings of the expanded Panel that resulted in this report were Chaired by the Chair of the former Panel, Rob Culligan.

3.2 Background to the work of the Panel

3.2.1 Provisions in relation to members' allowances are set out in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021) and subsequent amendments to the regulations (SI 2003/1022 and SI 2003/1692) ["the Regulations"]. Under the Regulations the Council has to appoint an Independent Panel to make recommendations on its Scheme of Members' Allowances. The Council must have due regard to the recommendations of the Panel before it makes any changes to its Members' Allowances Scheme but it may accept, reject, or amend any of the Panel's recommendations. The Regulations provide for a single panel to advise more than one Council.

The Council has joined the Joint Independent Members' Remuneration Panel alongside Somerset County Council, West Somerset Council and Mendip

District Council.

3.3 The fundamental review of the district council schemes

3.3.1 So far the work of the Panel has focused on:

- Learning about the three district council schemes within its remit including the history and culture behind the schemes, where known, and any particular issues which need to be addressed when reviewing each Scheme. The Panel decided from the outset that where possible it would try and establish some general principles across all three schemes where this makes sense but that each scheme would continue to be individual to each council.
- Agreeing a timetable and process for each review which in summary means that the Panel's early considerations focus on establishing key principles to underpin each district scheme. Full scheme recommendations including actual amounts of allowances will follow to the July 2015 Council meeting following the adoption of new democratic arrangements after the district council elections.
- Undertaking a survey of the members of each council for views on the current scheme to inform future Panel considerations. This information will be complemented by extensive benchmarking information inside and outside of Somerset. Any Panel recommendations must be inter alia supported by the evidence, based on reasonable assumptions, be relevant to the needs of the Council and its members and must be flexible enough to cope with future changes.
- Reviewing the principles underpinning the current Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances for each council.
- Establishing a single list of 'approved duties' for the three councils.

3.4 Background to the fundamental review of the Taunton Deane Scheme

3.4.1 The timing was considered right for a fundamental review of each of the district schemes because:

- Of the widening of the Panel's remit to encompass three councils to enable effective benchmarking within Somerset as well as wider comparisons outside of Somerset
- The timing of this work which will lead to recommendations for the adoption of a new Members' Allowances Scheme following the elections in May and once any revised democratic arrangements have been agreed.
- Of a general wish to see if there was scope to remove financial and other barriers to potential candidates for election.

3.4.2 The intention is not to produce the same scheme for all three councils. Where it makes sense to do so the Panel will recommend some common principles and content but each Council's individual circumstances will be respected in the schemes that are recommended for approval after the district council elections. The new scheme to be recommended will be based on sound evidence and principles and should compare well with other councils' schemes both within and outside of Somerset.

- 3.4.3** The regulations define a number of basic requirements for allowances' schemes alongside which considerable scope is given to a council to adopt local provisions according to their circumstances. The only mandatory element provided for in the Regulations is the payment of a Basic Allowance to all members of a Council. All of the other elements that are currently paid under the scheme, ie, Special Responsibility, Travel, Subsistence and Carers' allowances are discretionary.
- 3.4.4** The basic principles on which Remuneration Panels work are not legislative but there are national operational standards. In summary they include:
- The 50% rule (no more than 50% of Members of any individual Council should receive an SRA)
 - Any Member should only receive one SRA at any one time.
 - Basic Allowance payments should be based on a voluntary time contribution of 30% or 33% to underpin the difference between a salary and an allowance.
 - When considering the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances clarity is needed when considering each specific position and whether it qualifies – is it a supporting one, requiring time and effort or is it a leadership role requiring judgement and responsibility.
- 3.4.5** The Panel is aware that it is not obliged to have regard to the overall budgetary impact of its recommendations when making recommendations to a Council. However, the Panel is aware of the financial restraints facing local authorities currently and into the future and the public perception of elected Members awarding themselves increases in allowances. The Panel will therefore have regard to these issues when bringing forward recommendations for consideration.
- 3.4.6** The Council is **invited to endorse** the approach that the Panel intends to take to the reviews of the district councils' schemes. To replicate the approach that the Panel took to the County Council scheme, the Panel will undertake a fundamental review of each scheme in the lead up to the district council elections. Panel recommendations in advance of the elections will focus on principles. Recommendations on the detail of each scheme will then follow after the election once the Panel has assessed any changes to the democratic arrangements of the Council. Any changes agreed by the Council at that stage can then be backdated by the Council to a relevant date. After this the Panel will maintain a light touch review of the scheme on at least an annual basis and will bring a brief report to the Council in the spring of each year with recommendations for changes if considered necessary. This process will continue until the next fundamental review.

3.5 Results of the Members' Survey

- 3.5.1** Appendix A attached to this report sets out the results of the members' survey carried out recently to assess the views of current elected members on the members' allowances schemes currently in place for each of the district councils. The actual number of returns from each council was low but does allow some comparison across councils and enables some accumulation of the data whilst not presenting a statistically representative picture. This has given

the Panel some indications of where it might develop its thinking.

- 3.5.2** The conclusions from the Taunton Deane responses to the survey suggest:
- A split of views in support of maintaining the BA at its current level and increasing the BA
 - Those in favour of increasing the BA make reference to the fact that in recent years the BA has not kept pace with inflation; that it may act as a disincentive to those wishing to stand for election; and the need for it to adequately reflect the commitment and time that elected members give to their local community.

Individual comments on other aspects of the Scheme will be picked up by the Panel in its considerations at the relevant time.

3.6 Basic Allowance (BA) considerations

- 3.6.1** There is one issue that the Panel would like to provide clarity on from the outset and that is the issue of linking allowances to members' performance. This was raised as an issue in the member surveys. The Panel would ask the Council to note that it is not the Panel's function to consider the performance of members either individually or collectively and there is no scope within the regulations as they apply to the BA to pay differential rates of allowance according to performance or activity levels.

- 3.6.2** **By way of a reminder to the Council, the statutory guidance in relation to BA states that it is intended to recognise the time commitment of Members, including on constituency matters and attendance at political group meetings. It also provides for the coverage of incidental costs such as the use of their homes. The guidance goes on to indicate that having established what the members do and the hours which are devoted to these tasks, the Council must then agree a rate at which and the number of hours for which Members ought to be remunerated through the BA.**

- 3.6.3** Appendices A and B cover the issue of the number of hours a week worked by councillors on Council business and includes the figures that emerged through the member surveys. Appendix B details the background to a proposal that 20 hours a week is used as the basis for the BA calculation. This is very much in line with figures used nationally as the basis for BA calculations.

- 3.6.4** The second key assumption in respect of the Basic Allowance is the element of voluntary service. The assumption traditionally is that 30% or 33% should not be recompensed. This helps to achieve a clear split between a salary and an allowance. The Panel's view is that the voluntary element should be retained at a level of 33%.

- 3.6.5** Traditionally many councils used figures produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) for calculating allowances based on a recommended figure per day, based on a benchmark of a median white-collar wage and adjusted as necessary to meet local circumstances. This figure is no longer published and therefore councils must find a new methodology for the calculation of BA. Such an approach and methodology has much to commend it and although the LGA figure is no longer published it is likely that the Office of National Statistics

provides data that may be used in establishing a new basis and principles on which to base BA payments. What is apparent from looking at what other councils are doing including the County Council is that increasingly BA schemes are being linked to officer pay scales. This has the advantage of building in an automatic indexing facility by then linking any increases in allowances to increases in officer pay awards. Given the advantages of this approach the Panel will be using this as the recommended basis for a new BA calculation.

- 3.6.6** Examples of possible ways of using hours worked to base a calculation on are set out in Appendix B including basing the calculation on a multiplier of the national minimum wage. Whatever basis is used by the Panel for making this calculation there will then be a need to link this to an appropriate point in the officer pay scale to arrive at a recommended figure for the Basic Allowance and as the basis for future indexation.
- 3.6.7** In terms of setting a level of Basic Allowance for the new Council, the Panel will benchmark against comparable councils as well as having regard to the current level of the BA and the specific circumstances of the Council.
- 3.6.8** Of the three district councils covered by the Panel, the Basic Allowance at Taunton Deane is the one that is closest to the average and closest by reference to a 'payment per hour' figure based on the national minimum wage. However having said that, the current figure of £4,344 is still below the regional average figure of £4,534 and the figure of £4,606 if it had been fully indexed against earnings since 2009. The former would require a 4.4% increase, while the latter would equate to a 6.0% increase.
- 3.6.9** The Panel is aware that the Council has updated the scheme by applying the indexing of the BA to officer pay awards and this is a sound basis for an indexing arrangement. This is picked up in the Panel recommendations.
- 3.6.10** At this stage the Panel is **recommending** the Council to agree the following principles in respect of the Basic Allowance to apply post-election in 2015:-
1. That the BA should be based on a calculation based on an average number of hours worked by a councillor
 2. That 20 hours per week should be the basis for this calculation and reduced by a third to reflect the voluntary element
 3. That a mechanism is found to base the level of BA on an appropriate spinal point in the officers grading structure
 4. That future changes in the level of BA paid should be indexed to officer pay awards. This arrangement to last for the duration of the quadrennium and reviewed as part of the next fundamental review of the scheme in advance of the 2019 district elections.

3.7 Special Responsibility Allowance considerations

3.7.1 The Panel has started a review of the Special Responsibility Allowance provisions of all three councils.

3.7.2 The Panel will pick up and respond to matters of detail raised in the member

surveys about SRAs in due course. At this stage the Panel reviewed the basis on which the current SRA schemes were based.

3.7.3 The Panel's **recommendations** picking up good practice are:

- To link SRA scheme payments to multiples of BA to provide a sound base for calculation of the SRA bands and individual payments. It also has the advantage of creating an automatic indexing provision as increases in the BA will be reflected in increases in SRAs.
- To minimise the number of SRA bands and provide consistent bands across the three councils where it makes sense to do so but to also allow provision for individual council requirements to reflect their culture and their democratic arrangements.
- To invite the Panel to bring forward recommendations for a banding structure and calculations to the July 2015 meeting of the Council based on comprehensive benchmarking evidence and having developed and considered broad assumptions about the main responsibilities of key posts. This will require the Panel to agree headline responsibilities for key posts.

3.8 List of Approved Duties

3.8.1 The list of approved duties is essential to provide clarity to members and officers alike about the council duties undertaken and which can and cannot be claimed for. A clear list is essential in the light of the problem with MPs' expenses and in order to provide an audit trail in the event of challenge.

3.8.2 The approved duties lists of the three councils are very different. Taunton Deane's current list is the most comprehensive of the three councils and the Panel have decided to use it as the base (assimilated with the list of approved duties used by the County Council) for a common list of approved duties to be recommended for agreement by the three councils.

3.8.3 The one anomaly in the Taunton Deane list is the provision to pay travel for a range of constituency duties. It is unique to find this provision in a list of approved duties as such expenses are usually expected to be covered by the Basic Allowance. The Panel were informed that few members claim for constituency duties and the Panel has therefore removed it from the list in front of the Council for approval today.

3.8.4 The proposed list is attached as Appendix C to this report and is **recommended** for approval as part of a new Members' Allowances Scheme for implementation post the district council elections. Mendip District Council has already approved this list of approved duties.

APPENDIX A

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

IMRP SURVEY OF MEMBERS

Of the 56 Members, 16 completed questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 29%.

Basic Allowance

Question 1: *Should the Basic Allowance be kept at its current level of £4,344 for 2015/16?*

Question 2: *If you answered 'NO' to Question 1, should the Basic Allowance:*

Be increased. If so, to what level?

Be reduced. If so, to what Level?

	Number of responses	% of responses	Number of members	% of members
'YES'	7	43.8%	7	12.5%
'NO' – Increase the Basic Allowance	8	50.0%	8	14.3%
'NO' – Reduce the Basic Allowance	1	6.2%	1	1.8%
No answer on returned survey	-	-	-	-
Survey not returned			40	71.4%
	16	100.0%	56	100.0%

Suggested figures for an increased Basic Allowance: “*same increase as staff*”; “Increase by 1%” (equates to £4,387); “Increase by 1%” (equates to £4,387) “+1-2%”; “+5%” (equates to £4,561); “+5%” (equates to £4,561); £5,200 (+19.7%).

Suggested figure for a reduced Basic Allowance: £4,000 (-7.9%).

Question 3: *Are there any comments that you wish to make about the Basic Allowance?*

Comments in support of increased rate:

Views were expressed that the BA:

- *Had slipped backwards in recent years and may discourage people standing for election.*
- *Should be increased in line with staff pay increases.*

- *Should be increased to reflect that the BA had not kept pace with inflation and the time and energy that councillors put in to the role as a valuable but often not recognised resource for the community.*

Other comments

There was one comment in favour of reducing the BA in line with budget reductions.

Other Aspects of the Allowance Scheme

Question 4: *Do you have any comments on the wider Scheme and/or are there any specific issues that you would like the Panel to consider in its review?*

General comments

Generally speaking the comments received ranged from being in favour of leaving the remaining allowances unchanged to ensuring that they were sufficient to ensuring that councillors were not having to subsidise the carrying out of their official duties.

General Comments on Special Responsibility Allowance:

There was recognition of the additional work and responsibility that is provided for by SRAs and that these should stay the same or increase with staff pay increases .

Comments made about specific SRAs were received and will be picked up in the Panel's detailed proposals for a SRA scheme for the new council.

Comments on Travel and Subsistence:

There was support for overnight stays in hotels being paid at the same rate as senior officers.

Comments on Approved Duties:

A specific point was made in support of remuneration of costs for attendance at Political Group meetings attendance.

Time Spent on District Council Duties

Question 5: *On average, over the course of a year, how many hours per week do you spend on District Council duties? (This includes meetings, travel, dealing with constituent problems, etc.)*

The hours reported by survey respondents ranged from 4 to 45 hours with the median point being 18 hours a week.

The consolidated figures from the 3 councils suggest a median figure of 20 hours a week as the basis for calculating a Basic Allowance on the basis of a payment per hour – see Appendix B for further detail.

Julian Gale

20.03.15

APPENDIX B

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

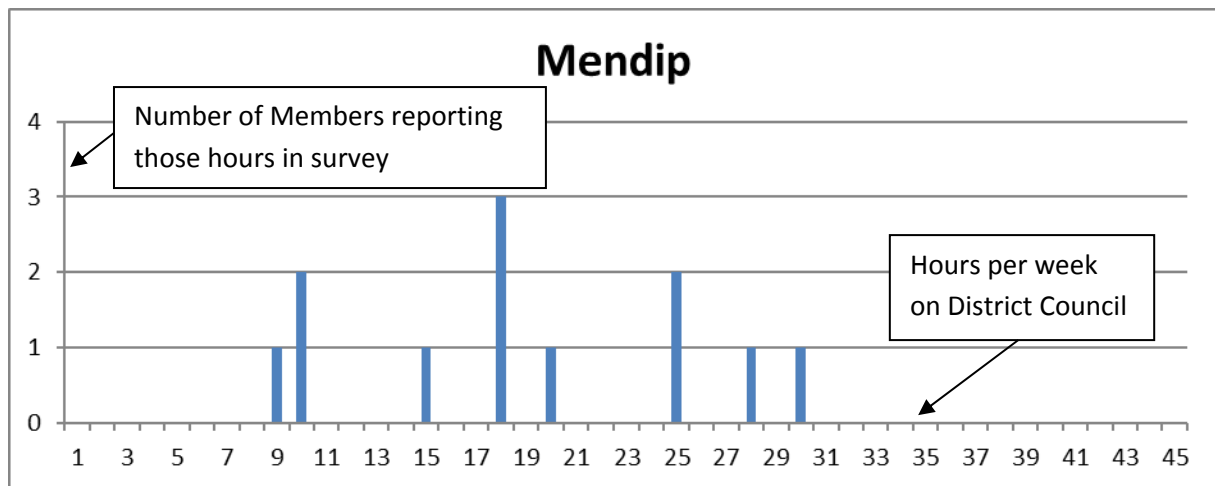
CALCULATION OF A BASIC ALLOWANCE BASED ON EARNINGS

1. INTRODUCTION

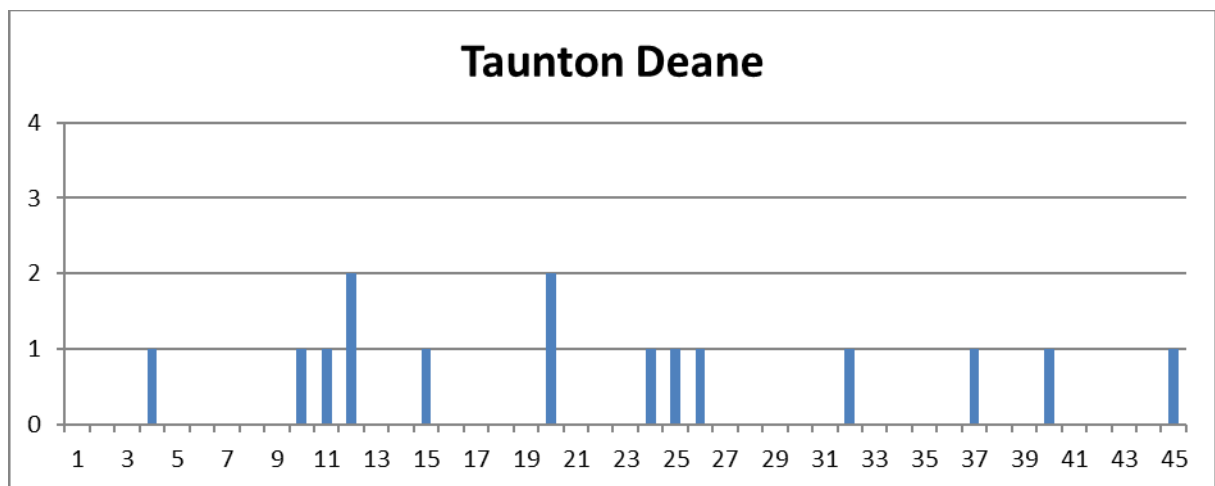
1.1 This paper explains the calculation of an annual Basic Allowance figure on the basis of 'payment per hour spent on District Council duties'. The broad approach is a standard one used by IMRPs and was the basis upon which Somerset County Council's Basic allowance was established in its last full review, with subsequent annual indexation then being linked to officer pay increases.

2. HOURS SPENT ON DISTRICT COUNCIL DUTIES

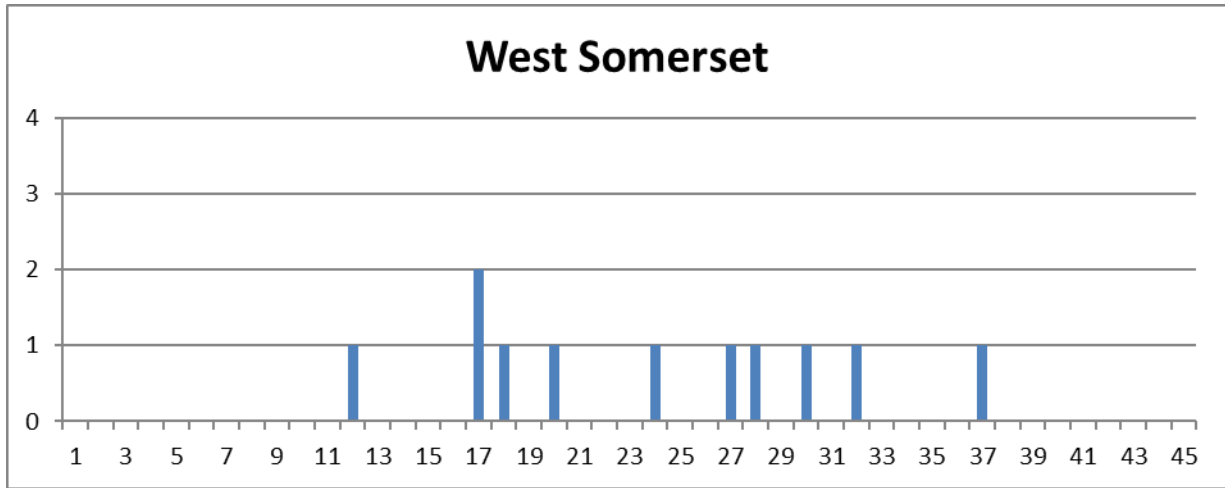
2.1 The recent survey of all Members provides valuable data on the amount of time that Members spend on District Council duties. The following three charts show the results per Council, followed by a final chart that combines the data.



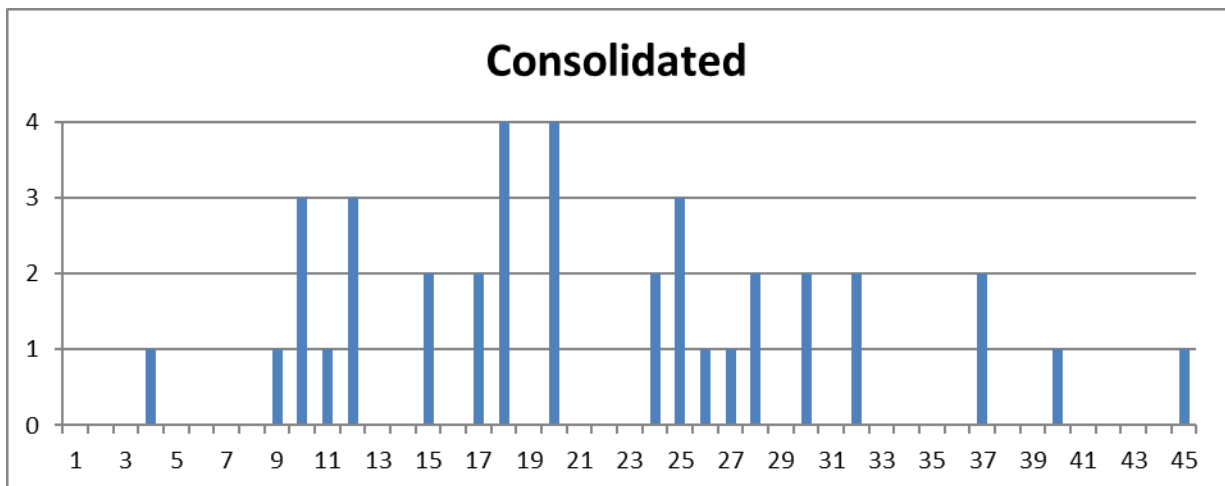
Mendip: Average = 19 hours per week Median (mid-point) = 18 hours per week



Taunton Deane: Average = 22 hours per week Median (mid-point) = 20 hours per week



West Somerset: Average = 24 hours per week Median (mid-point) = 24 hours per week



Consolidated: Average = 22 hours per week Median (mid-point) = 20 hours per week

2.2 Two measures are shown – the average and the median (the mid-point in a data series). The average is often used to come up with a single “typical” figure for a data series. However in this instance the median is considered the better indicator. This is because for Members who receive a Special Responsibility Allowance they will be working extra hours to undertake their extra duties and this is reflected in their receipt of an SRA. In this calculation we are interested in only those hours spent on the general duties undertaken by all Members for which they receive the Basic Allowance. Because a significant proportion of survey responses were anonymous, we are unable to identify individual responses from recipients of SRAs. However we can make the assumption that those Members reporting high weekly hours are likely to be SRA recipients (which is supported by the comments made in individual survey responses) plus some very active non-SRA recipients. The median point is the mid-point in the data series and helps to mitigate against any skew that will exist in the average figure due to the inclusion of weekly hours used to undertake SRA duties in the calculation of the average.

2.3 The survey response rates for the three districts were each around 30%, giving relatively low absolute numbers of responses for each district. For this reason the consolidated data set is recommended as the best basis for determining a typical figure for hours spent per week on general District Council duties.

2.4 In this calculation it is therefore assumed that over a typical year a District Councillor typically **spends 20 hours per week** on activities relating to the general duties of a Member for which the Basic Allowance applies.

3. CALCULATION OF BASIC ALLOWANCE FIGURES

3.1 The Panel has applied the common assumption that a proportion of the time spent by Councillors is voluntary (one-third) meaning that the hours per week assumed to merit payment reduces from 20 hours per week to **13.3 hours per week**.

3.1 Based on these assumptions two possible methods of calculation could be:

Minimum wage:

The minimum wage for persons aged 21 and over is currently £6.50 per hour. For 13.3 hours this comes to £86.45 per week or £4,495 per annum.

Average Earnings:

The latest figure for average hourly earnings in the South West is £12.07 per hour (2013, Office of National Statistics). For 13.3 hours work per week this results in a payment of £160.53 per week or £8,348 per annum.

By comparison regional benchmarking data attached shows the 2013 regional average Basic Allowance as £4,534, which is very much in line with the above minimum wage calculation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The benchmarking data set out below indicates that Taunton Deane's BA is a little below the average for district councils across the South West.

5. BENCHMARKING DATA

5.1 Information on Basic Allowances for South West Local Authorities' Members Schemes is shown in the following table.

Authority	Basic Allowance, 2013/14	Population
South Somerset	£6,163	155,000
Gloucester City	£5,250	101,890
Cheltenham	£5,066	111,700

Stroud	£5,000	110,000
Teignbridge	£4,969	126,800
West Dorset	£4,938	92,360
South Hams	£4,836	82,400
North Devon	£4,570	88,000
AVERAGE	£4,534	
Mid Devon	£4,500	76,465
Exeter	£4,430	117,600
North Dorset	£4,374	64,716
East Devon	£4,360	132,300
Taunton Deane	£4,301	107,400
Sedgemoor	£4,260	107,600
Forest of Dean	£4,250	81,342
Cotswold	£4,000	82,708
Mendip	£3,605	109,100
West Somerset	£2,733	32,228

6. INDEXATION ANALYSES (FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY)

6.1 The following analysis outlines what the Basic Allowance would be if, following its last major review, it had been increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or Average Earnings. (N.B. The Retail Price Index is no longer an Official Statistic and has therefore not been included in this analysis.)

6.2 In the case of Taunton Deane, the current Basic Allowance of £4,344 was set in December 2013 when a 1% increase was approved by council. Indexing against December 2013 is as follows.

Indexing Factor	December 2013 Index Figure	Latest Index Figure	% increase	Implied Basic Allowance
Consumer Price Index	127.5	128.2*	+0.5%	£4,366
Average Earnings	£478	£483**	+1.0%	£4,387

(* November 2014)

(Source: Office of National Statistics)

(**October 2014)

However, the increase agreed in December 2013 was the first increase since the previous Allowance level of £4,301 had been set in 2009. If the allowance was indexed against the 2009 date, the figures would be as follows.

Indexing Factor	December 2009 Index Figure	Latest Index Figure	% increase	Implied Basic Allowance
Consumer Price Index	112.6	128.2*	+13.9%	£4,899
Average Earnings	£451	£483**	+7.1%	£4,606

(* November 2014)

(Source: Office of National Statistics)

(**October 2014)

The Average Earnings index is arguably the more relevant indexing factor, given the general real reduction in earnings experienced by most households in recent years when increases in earnings have generally not kept in line with increases in prices.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF APPROVED DUTIES FOR TDBC/MDC/WSDC for purposes of Travel and Subsistence and Dependent Carers' claims

	<u>Attendance at:-</u>
1.	formal meetings of the Council, including Committees and Sub Committees and any other authorised meeting of these bodies or event organised by these bodies (including joint committees), where the councillor (a) has been appointed by [TDBC/MDC/WSDC] as a member, a substitute or representative or (b) is exercising a constitutional right to attend and /or to speak or (c) is attending in an observer capacity only;
2.	formal meetings of the [Executive/Cabinet], its sub committees and any other authorised meetings thereof where the councillor has (a) been appointed by the Leader/Council as a member or (b) is exercising a constitutional right to attend and/or to speak or (c) is attending in an observer capacity only;
3.	ad-hoc formally constituted working groups/panels (e.g. scrutiny task and finish groups) where the councillor is (a) a named member of the body or (b) is formally invited to participate;
4.	meetings of Somerset County Council committees/sub committees where the councillor has been appointed by [TDBC/MDC/WSDC] as a member or a representative;
5.	meetings of bodies to which the Council makes appointments except where the body itself pays allowances to the Council's representative (<i>the approval relates to meetings of the body itself, its standing committees/sub committees but not to other activities of the body</i>)
6.	meetings of any local authority association of which the Council is a member where the councillor is the appointed representative or nominated substitute;
7.	any conference where attendance is authorised by the Council [and involves an overnight stay];
8.	any Council premises, or other agreed location, for a meeting agreed with either a member in receipt of an SRA or an Officer for the purpose of discussing matters relating to Council business in which it is reasonable to expect the councillor to have an interest;
9.	briefing meetings at the invitation of an Officer of the Council provided that the members of at least two political groups have been invited;

10.	an approved agenda setting meeting or member development/awareness raising/seminar activity organised by the Council;
11.	meetings of Parish/Town Councils or equivalent community associations where the councillor attends as the local district councillor or as a representative of the [TDBC/MDC/WSDC] Council and not as a member of the Parish/Town Council/Community Association itself;
12.	any civic or ceremonial event at the specific invitation of, or in support of, the Chair/Mayor of the Council;
13.	site visits by members of the Planning/Development Control Committee;
14.	any site visit or inspection visits undertaken by members approved by or on behalf of the Council;
15.	tender opening meetings where invited by an Officer to attend;
	<u>Performance of:-</u>
16.	duties carried out by a member holding an office for which a special responsibility allowance applies;
17.	any particular duty for which express authority is given by or on behalf of the Council in case of emergency;
18.	such other duty for which prior approval has been given by the Chief Executive or other authorised Officer, in consultation with the Leader.