

Special Responsibility Allowance Survey 2022-2023

As a frontline member, how many hours per month do you estimate that you spend on each of the following activities? Please don't include anything that has a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) attached to it. (See questions 1-7)

Q1: Attendance at a council meetings

Q2: Attendance at other committee meetings

Q3: Meeting preparation (e.g. reading time)

Q4: Outside Bodies Representation (e.g. attendance at meetings)

Q5: Ward based work (e.g. surgeries, telephone calls, emails and virtual meetings with constituents)

Q6: Political group meetings relating to council business

Q7: Other

Q8: If you are in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance, what does it relate to?

If you are in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance how many hours per month do you estimate that you spend on each of the following council activities as a direct consequence of your position of responsibility as distinct from your involvement as a member elected to represent your ward?

Q9: Attendance at a council committee meetings

Q10: Meeting preparation (e.g. reading time)

Q11: Outside Bodies Representation (e.g. attendance at meetings)

Q12: Dealing with members of the public and other bodies about matters relating to the service area(s) or functions for which you have a position of responsibility

Q13: Briefing meetings with officers

Q14: Other

Q15: Do you feel that your time commitment and the responsibility that you carry is adequately reflected in the current level of Special Responsibility Allowance applicable to you?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please explain your answer.

Scrutiny

It has been proposed by the re-thinking governance working group and agreed at full council to increase the number of scrutiny committees from its current three committees to five committees.

The specific proposals involve:

- Change name of committee from Adults and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to Health Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
- Updated functions of Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee
- Change of name of committee from General Scrutiny to Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Update to the functions of Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Create a New Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, and
- Create a new Scrutiny Management Board

Q16: Do you agree that all chairpersons of the new scrutiny committees should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 1.25 x the basic allowance. With the 2 additional committees this will equate to an increase of £18k in the members allowance scheme.

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please explain your answer.

Scrutiny Management Board

It is proposed that the new Scrutiny Management Board will deal with cross cutting scrutiny matters and coordination of scrutiny work-programmes. Under current proposals, the Scrutiny Management Board will be comprised of a Chair, Vice Chair, Scrutiny Committee Chairs and other elected members as required to make the board politically balanced.

Q17: Do you agree that the chair of the Scrutiny Management Board receives a larger Special Responsibility Allowance, given the broader remit of this committee?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please explain your answer.

Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups

Scrutiny “task and finish” approaches are where scrutiny committees set up informal working parties to carry out work on a particular topic outside of the main committee and report back. It has been suggested by the re-thinking governance working group that the chairperson of a task and finish group should receive a one-off Special Responsibility Allowance. This would potentially encourage more members to put themselves forward to chair and lead task and finish group activity.

It has been suggested that the one-off Special Responsibility Allowance should be set at £500 per task and finish.

Q18: Do you agree that the chairperson of a task and finish group should receive a one-off Special Responsibility Allowance?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Please explain your answer.

Q19: Do you feel that the suggested Special Responsibility Allowance for a task and finish group chairperson of £500 is set at the right level?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Please explain your answer.

Proposals to set additional elements to the sliding scale basic allowance.

Following the last local elections, May 2019 the Independent Remuneration Panel recommended that the full basic allowance would only be awarded to councillors once they had completed their mandatory training. That recommendation was accepted by full Council and this practice continues.

In addition to this, the re-thinking governance working group, have proposed that the Independent Remuneration Panel considers whether the sliding basic allowance should also be linked to attendance at council meetings. The group have proposed that in addition to full council meetings all members should seek to sit on at least one additional committee. This would ensure that all councillors gain experience in committee meeting business and encourage greater engagement with council business in addition to that addressed at full Council.

Q20: Do you agree that the higher rate of basic allowance should be linked to members taking on additional committee membership and responsibilities to that of full council?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Please explain your answer.

Deputy Leader – Special Responsibility Allowance

The primary role of the Deputy Leader is to support the Leader in providing political leadership to the council and in the absence of the Leader the Deputy Leader should undertake to perform the role of the Leader.

Duties and responsibilities of the role include: deputising for the Leader in their absence, undertaking portfolio responsibilities as a cabinet member, providing political leadership to the council, co-ordinating the work of cabinet, supporting and covering for portfolio holders when required, and establishing effective working relationships with members, the Chief Executive and other key staff.

Data provided from the benchmark cohort for this local authority shows that all but one of the local authorities in the group pay a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Deputy Leader. The (mean) average payment based on this data is £18,083.

Q21: Do you agree that the Deputy Leader role should attract a Special Responsibility Allowance?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Please explain your answer.

Q22: Do you agree that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the role should be set at the average figure of £18,083?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Please explain your answer.

Q23: Do you propose that the Special Responsibility Allowance should be set at a different rate (please provide details)?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Please explain your answer.

Q24: When considering whether or not to stand for re-election in the future, how significant a factor would the level of allowances be for you?

Please provide details.