

**REPORT OF COUNCIL'S
INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION
PANEL (IRP)**

**Review of Members Allowances
Scheme**

December 2012

1. **Introduction/Methodology**

1.1 This report presents the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the Council for its consideration and approval.

1.2 The current Panel was appointed by a process agreed by the Finance and Governance Committee on 30 July 2012. Advertisements were placed in the local press outlining the Panel's independent role in reviewing Councillors' allowances and expenses. Applicants were invited to apply for the role of IRP member. Shortlisted candidates were invited for interview on the 14 September 2012.

1.3 The following 5 members were appointed.

Raith Overhill (Chair of the Panel) - Former Cambridge City Councillor 1973-2002; retired magistrate; a director and trustee of Cambridge Cyrenians.

Sue Booth - retired area manager, Alzheimers Society East; active volunteer in several local voluntary organisations.

Andrew Speed - original background in civil engineering and quantity surveying. Has extensive experience in corporate governance of both SME's and large international companies, and part of his current business, of which he is the majority shareholder and managing director, is to act as a non-executive director in a number of local SME's. Former Chairman of Governors at a local Primary School and has participated in mentoring at a local Secondary School.

Richard Tyler – Chartered Accountant; Trustee of Ely Community Unit Trust; Member of Ely Rotary Club; and Secretary of Bishop Laney's Charity.

Jonathan Wainwright - Following working for a large company, founded his own advertising agency, creating campaigns for clients like Renault, Nissan, Honda and Jaguar. The business was sold in 2004, following which his family moved to Ely from Ascot. Now provides business development consultancy to SME's and the Third Sector in East Anglia, specialising in social media, traditional communications and team development.

1.4 Four principles were adopted to guide the deliberations of the IRP:

- That allowance levels should reflect the increasing responsibilities and commitment expected and required of Councillors, their 'professional' conduct and depth of knowledge, but also take account of the 'voluntary' public service nature of the Councillors' contributions;

- That the allowances should neither encourage or discourage becoming a Councillor nor encourage or discourage participation in Committee work;
- That recommendations made by the IRP would be easy to understand, simple to apply and open to wider public scrutiny;
- That parity between Councillors and Council staff should be the starting point for establishing a rational process for setting allowances and expenses.

1.5 After meeting on 10 separate occasions, the Panel now have completed their review. In formulating their recommendations, they have taken into account allowances, additional responsibilities, additional duties and other expenses available to Councillors. The Panel also took into account other local authorities allowances made to their Members.

1.6 Furthermore, the Panel received 22 questionnaires from the 39 that were sent out to all Councillors, approximately a 51% return. 9 Councillors were interviewed, selected by the Panel as a representative cross-section of Members, giving their viewpoints regarding their role as Councillors. There was also consultation with local Parish Councils, enclosing a poster on the review. The Panel also requested that the general public be consulted via the Council's website and a local press release, which was picked up by a number of local newspapers.

1.7 The Panel was provided with a comprehensive information pack, relating to existing allowances and general information concerning East Cambridgeshire District Council.

2. Terms of Reference

2.1 The Panel had to work within the legislative constraints of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and associated Government Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances.

2.2 These Regulations/Guidance require the IRP to make recommendations on:

- The amount of Basic Allowance payable to Councillors;
- The responsibilities and duties that lead to payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) and the amounts of such allowances;
- Backdating of allowances;
- The amounts and duties for which travelling and subsistence allowances can be paid;
- Allowances for Co-opted Members;
- Whether the Scheme should include an allowance for the expenses of arranging care for children and dependents and, if so, the amount of the allowance;
- Whether annual adjustments should be made to allowance levels by means of an index and, if so, for how long such a measure should last, up to a maximum period of 4 years;
- Whether the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances should be pensionable and which Members should be entitled to pensions.

These were the constraints under which we made our recommendations.

3. Questionnaire/Member Interviews/Public Consultation Exercise - Results

3.1 General findings from 22 Member questionnaires returned:

3.1.1 18 retired/self-employed
3 employed
1 other

10,090 hours spent annually on Council duties for 22 Councillors
Average of 52 hours per month or approx 2 days per week

3.1.2 Basic Allowance
11 felt Basic Allowance too low
8 about right
1 too high

Therefore, majority of Members felt that Basic Allowance too low at present. From a mean of comments on suggested level of Basic Allowance, a figure of £4,442 per annum was arrived at. In 2010, the Council voluntarily agreed a cut in allowances of 10%, the recommended increase represented a rise of 8.5%, which was still 1.5% less than the original 10% cut.

3.1.3 Mileage
14 wanted a return to Inland Revenue rate (45p per mile rather than current rate of 47.7p per mile).

4 Local Government Employers Casual Rate

3 other rate

So compelling case for a return to Inland Revenue rate.

3.1.4 A full summary of the Member Questionnaire findings is attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 Summary of questionnaire/Member interview findings:

3.2.1 Remuneration seems to be based on time spent rather than quality of work carried out by Councillors. The interviews showed that no Councillors keep proper records of the time spent on Councillor duties (e.g. a timesheet), so their assessments are unlikely to be accurate. Therefore the IRP agreed that they should make a recommendation under an 'other recommendations' heading about the keeping of a simple log of time spent to assist in monitoring and give an accurate picture for future IRPs. However, the IRP must base this review's findings on information gathered as part of current process only.

3.2.2 Also the IRP needed to bear in mind the context of the previous voluntary 10% cut in allowances; the current economic climate; the Budget position of the Council and affordability. Therefore, if a rise in Basic Allowances/SRAs was recommended, the IRP acknowledged that Members may wish to consider some element of phasing on affordability grounds, if necessary.

3.2.3 However, the questionnaire/interview results showed that the time spent on Councillor duties (2 days per week) was similar to the findings of the previous IRPs, so this gave reassurance of some consistency. Therefore, the IRP used 2 days per week as their benchmark.

3.2.4 The IRP noted that comments were made by a number of Members at the interviews about the fact that Vice-Chairs very rarely chaired meetings and meetings were cancelled/re-arranged when the Chairman was not available. This is very disruptive to Members and Officers, not normal practice elsewhere in the public/private sector and calls into question why Vice-Chairs are being paid an SRA, if they hardly ever undertake the role of chairing a meeting. The IRP recognised that this disruption was tangible in terms of Officer and Member resources, but would be difficult to quantify. At the request of the IRP, the Principal Democratic Services Officer provided data on the number of occasions Vice-Chairs had chaired meetings in the past 3 years:

Of 202 meetings held in past 3 years -

Vice-Chairs chaired meetings 3 times:
Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20/9/10
Planning Committee 2/2/11
Community and Environment Committee 1/3/12

1 occasion Chair and Vice-Chair not present and Chair appointed for meeting – Community Services Committee 19/5/10

- 3.2.5 The IRP acknowledged that Vice-Chairs attended briefings, and the role of Vice-Chair allowed for Members to gain experience and training to move into a Chairing role, but this still did not answer the question of why Vice-Chairs should be paid a significant level of SRA, if they were unlikely to actually chair a meeting.
- 3.2.6 The need for 'new blood' on the Council came up at a number of the Member interviews. Also a strong political imperative for being a Councillor came out of interviews and some younger Members clearly regarded being a Councillor as a career move/stepping stone. The IRP queried how a more representative cross-section of the community could be encouraged to stand as Councillors, as the current make-up of the Council did not include any people with disabilities or from minority groups and there were a lower proportion of women and young or employed (rather than self-employed) people.
- 3.2.7 However, the IRP acknowledged that the Councillor demographic had improved since the elections in 2011 and change probably would need to be achieved by means other than the Members Allowances Scheme, since the IRP could not recommend huge rises which may or may not encourage people to consider standing for election. Nevertheless, the Members Allowances Scheme should ensure that Members are fairly recompensed, particularly in the areas of expenses, to send the right message about encouraging people to stand for election, e.g. increase the crèche/dependent carers allowance to a realistic level – the IRP realised that this was not claimed by any Councillors at present, but hoped that it might encourage or be an incentive for the future.
- 3.2.8 However, the IRP noted that it also appears that some Members do not claim all the allowances they are entitled to, such as mileage and other expenses – this may be because some live in Ely/locally and feel it is not worth claiming small amounts, or are not fully aware what they can claim for, e.g. some Members at interview did not seem to think that they could claim for attendance at Parish Council meetings, although it is an 'approved duty'. A number of the Members interviewed regarded the voluntary element of being a Councillor as very important or paramount.

3.2.9 There was strong feeling from the Questionnaires/Member interviews, that Members Allowances should not be pensionable, with 17 Members against pensions and only 4 in favour.

3.2.10 The Chairman had received 3 responses to the public consultation exercise, one from a Parish Council stating they had discussed the matter at their meeting and had no comment; one from a member of the public in favour of increasing allowances; and one from a member of the public against any rise in the current economic climate. A summary of the full responses is appended to the IRP report (Appendix 2). This was the first time that public consultation had taken place and could be improved upon in the future.

4. IRP Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Overall Rationale

Based upon the information requested/provided to the IRP, the Members Allowances Scheme recommended would be comparatively cost neutral, bearing in mind the current economic climate and Budget position of local authorities. It was also noted that East Cambridgeshire District Council's allowances were well below the norm.

4.2 IRP Recommendations

4.2.1 'Expenses' elements of Members Allowances Scheme

Mileage

Inland Revenue Rate of 45p per mile (previously 47.7p per mile)

Rationale – response by majority of Members.

Cycles

25p per mile (previously 5p per mile)

Rationale – set at more realistic level to encourage local Members to cycle to meetings, rather than using their car.

Motorcycle

	Up To 125cc Per Mile	Over 125cc Per Mile
Up to 4,000 miles		
3 rd Party Insurance	23.64p	35.83p
Comprehensive Insurance	26.20p	41.01p
Over 4,000 miles	9.99p	14.62p

Rationale – East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) / Automobile Association (AA) guideline rates

Subsistence

Allowance	Amount
Breakfast	£7.21
Lunch	£9.95
Tea	£3.94
Evening Meal	£12.33

Rationale – EELGA guideline rates

Creche or Dependent Carers Allowance

£6.50 per hour up to £45.50 per day (based on a 7 hour day)

Rationale – the rate of £6.50 per hour has been calculated at 5% above the current national minimum wage figure of £6.19 per hour, to more realistically reflect likely actual costs – aware that not claimed by any Councillors at present, but hoped that it might encourage or be an incentive for the future.

4.2.2 Basic Allowance

£4,442 per annum

Rationale – majority of Members considered current level too low and mean of Member comments on suggested level of Basic Allowance, gave a figure of £4,442 per annum, which was an increase of £373 per annum or £31 per month, equating to 8.5%, which was still 1.5% less than the voluntary 10% cut made in 2010. Also accorded with previous IRP methodology of 2 days per week at Principal Officer grade 10 on the ECDC pay scale with 60% voluntary contribution, indexed/amended from 2007 to 2010. This was also comparable with data provided to the IRP on the level of Basic Allowance paid by other similar sized '4th Option' Councils in our family group.

4.2.3 Special Responsibility Allowances

	<u>Recommended Chair</u>	<u>Recommended Vice Chair</u>	<u>Current Chair</u>	<u>Current Vice-Chair</u>
Community & Environment Committee	£1666	£260	2452	£613
Development & Transport Committee	£1666	£260	2452	£613
Finance & Governance Committee	£1666	£300	2452	£613
Personnel & Corporate Services Committee	£1,000	£190	2452	£613
Planning Committee	£2452	£840	2452	£1226
Licensing Committee	£1666	£420	£1666	£416
Scrutiny Committee	£1666	£420	£1666	£416
Neighbourhood Panels	£1,000	N/A	NIL	N/A
Working Party and Sub Committee	£ 37.17 per month	N/A	£ 37.17 per month	N/A

Rationale – Chairs SRAs: Planning Committee be designated as the ‘high’ weight Committee and the other Committees as ‘medium’ or ‘low’ weight Committees, based on the frequency of meetings and roles and responsibilities of the Committees. An SRA should be paid to the Chairs of Neighbourhood Panels in recognition of the public-facing nature of the Panels, although at a ‘low’ weight to reflect the lower level of the duties undertaken and frequency of meetings.

Rationale – Vice Chairs SRAs: Could correlate Vice-Chairs role with Chair of a Working Party/Sub-Committee, so have taken figure of £37.17 per month and multiplied by number of timetabled meetings per year of Committee concerned and rounded up. Vice-Chair of Planning Committee to receive a higher SRA to reflect additional responsibilities and duties associated with role.

4.2.4 Group Allowances

	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Current</u>
Leader of Council	£4906	£4906
Deputy Leader of Council	£1636	£1636
Leader of Conservative Group	£1450	£1636
Leader of Liberal Democrats	£714	£1636
Leader of Group of Independents	£484	£362

- Leader of Council – twice SRA for ‘high weight’ Committee Chair;
- Deputy Leader – 33% of Leader’s Allowance;
- Group Leaders – fixed allowance £300 plus a sum of £46 per Member of the Group.

Rationale – role of Group Leader greater the larger the size of the political group, so should be reflected in the allowance paid.

4.2.5 Group Spokespersons Allowance

To be paid to the Liberal Democrats for those sitting on Policy Committees and Planning Committee, Group Spokespersons for Scrutiny Committee and to the Independent Spokesperson on Planning Committee at 10% of the relevant Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance.

Rationale – retain at current levels as appear to be reasonable and consistent with other levels of allowances.

4.2.6 Co-Optees' Allowance/Independent Person Allowance

Parish/Town Council Members of Finance & Governance Hearings Sub-Committee £250 per year

Lead Independent Person	£1000
Deputy Independent Person	£500

Rationale – retain at current levels as new regime only commenced in July 2012, those appointed aware of level of allowances when applied for role and unsure at this stage of level of workload/responsibilities likely to be associated with posts.

4.2.7 Pensions

Members Allowances should not be pensionable.

Rationale – response by majority of Members. Regarded by majority of Members in questionnaire/interview as allowances rather than remuneration and therefore should not be pensionable.

4.2.8 SRA Entitlement

Councillors should only be able to claim one SRA in addition to that of a Group Leader or Leader of the Council.

Rationale – to give wider opportunities for improving the skills and experience of Councillors through increasing the number of Members holding posts with additional roles and responsibilities, for the benefit of the Council as a whole.

4.2.9 Indexation

The annual index should be based on the level of the local government staff pay award for the year concerned.

Rationale – the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances have been based on a Principal Officer grade 10 on the ECDC pay scale, based on 2 days per week and voluntary service percentage contributions.

4.3 Other Recommendations

- 4.3.1 There are currently no qualitative methods in place for measuring the effectiveness of Councillors in carrying out their role/duties and Members themselves are not undertaking any quantitative measures at present, such as keeping a log of the time spent on Councillor duties. Therefore, on the qualitative side, the IRP would recommend that a Councillor job profile be produced to outline the roles expected of a Councillor and some sort of performance monitoring against this be undertaken (indicative Councillor job description from South Kesteven District Council attached at Appendix 3). On the quantitative side, the IRP would recommend that a simple timesheet be produced for Councillors to record the time spent on their duties to assist both themselves and future IRPs in making an accurate assessment of the overall time spent on the different aspects of the role of a Councillor.
- 4.3.2 The IRP would also like the Political Groups to consider how they could actively encourage a more representative cross-section of the community to stand as Councillors and the IRP would recommend the establishment of 1 year training allowance for newly elected Councillors of £1,000 per person, to more quickly and fully prepare them for their role.
- 4.3.3 The Majority of responses to the Member Questionnaire (11 out of 22) stated that the IRP should meet every two years. So the IRP would recommend that a mid-term review be conducted in two years time.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 - full summary of Member Questionnaire findings

Appendix 2 – summary of responses from public consultation exercise

Appendix 3 - indicative Councillor job description from South Kesteven District Council

EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Results of Members' Allowances Questionnaires – 2012

1. TIME

(a) Please give an estimate of your time spent on the following areas of work as a District Councillor. Do not include time devoted to Party Political work or time spent on duties as a Parish or County Councillor.

<u>Average Hours Per Month</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Chairmen</u>	<u>Vice Chairmen</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Group Leaders</u>	<u>Council Leader</u>	<u>Spokes-persons</u>
Formal Council & Committee/Sub-Committee Meetings	8.99	9.20	9.50	7.06	7.25	6.00	11.50
Other Meetings, e.g. case/project related working parties	2.77	3.80	1.83	1.50	1.50	10.00	3.00
Informal Meetings at the Council	3.39	2.60	2.67	4.13	2.25	11.00	3.38
Specific Meetings with Officers	3.70	5.20	2.00	3.75	3.50	11.00	2.63
Ward/Case Work	10.41	6.60	12.50	3.25	12.50	4.00	19.75
Representing the Council on Outside Bodies	2.55	2.20	3.33	2.88	1.25	4.00	1.75
Reading/preparing notes/research for meetings	8.43	5.40	11.33	8.00	17.25	8.00	4.00
Telephone calls, letters, emails	9.75	9.40	5.83	6.00	11.75	20.00	16.25
Travel	4.23	4.60	4.17	5.25	2.50	8.00	2.75
Training or development as part of Council work	1.55	1.80	1.33	2.25	1.00	2.00	1.00
Time taken by any other activities undertaken as Councillor	2.00	1.60	2.17	3.00	1.25	4.00	1.13

(b) If you have Special Responsibilities please identify the additional time required to carry out your role, indicating what your Special Responsibilities are:

<u>Average Hours Per Month</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Chairmen</u>	<u>Vice Chairmen</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Group Leaders</u>	<u>Council Leader</u>	<u>Spokes-persons</u>
	1.53	2.00	0.33	0.00	0.75	8.00	0.38

Comments:

- Chairman of Scrutiny Committee, Ex-Vice Chairman of Licensing (Hours accounted for in previous calculations).
- Please note: the information submitted on this form is given on the basis of my workload when I was serving on 2 sub-committees (I was Vice Chair of one of these), as well as other outside bodies and Vice-Chair of a Neighbourhood Panel.
- Vice chairman – visiting other councils as rep of ECDC for services, Receptions, etc.
- Waste Champion RECAP board Chair and Waste Sub Committee Chair, Health and Well Being Representative Member of County Health and Well Being advisory Group and East Cambs and Well Being Group.
- Spokesperson for Lib Dem group on a Committee. I have included that time in the reading preparation and meetings with officers. But it does mean that I must read all papers thoroughly and take a lead in my group on relevant issues.
- Licensing Chairman.
- Chairman of a Committee. Having meeting with officer during working hours means that I take 8 hours a month out of my normal working month. 1 hour per week each with heads of services reporting to that Committee.
- Vice Chairman of a Committee. Chairman of a Working Party. Chairman of a Neighbourhood Panel.
- Council Leader, Group Leader, Chairman – Finance & Governance, Chairman – Development & Transport, Chairman – Burwell M.P. Working Party, Chairman – Joint Strategic Planning Committee, Chairman – N Ely Jt Ctte – 8 hours.
- 2 hours a month. [N.B. Vice Chair of a Committee].
- Chairman of Planning Committee. Briefing meetings discussions with officers & Legal. I have included time in with other meetings, etc.
- Group Leader. Finance & Governance Spokesperson. Chairman Performance Indicators & Risk working party. Chairman Discretionary Business Rates Relief Service Review (No Allowance).
- Spokes person for a Committee, talking to officers average 30 mins per meeting.
- Group Leader. 1 to 2 hours.

(c) Please give an average amount of time per month overall for your activities as a Councillor:

<u>Average Hours Per Month</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Chairmen</u>	<u>Vice Chairmen</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Group Leaders</u>	<u>Council Leader</u>	<u>Spokespersons</u>
	50.95	49.80	56.00	38.50	53.00	96.00	45.00

(d) Do you consider the monthly commitment to your Council work?

Not enough time to do the job	0
About right	17
Takes up too much time	5

(e) If you are in employment, do you take time off from work to carry out Council work?

Never	0
Less than 2 hours per week	1

Between 2 and 5 hours 2
 More than 5 hours 2

(f) Does your Employer allow you any ‘time off’ to undertake your duties as a Councillor and if so how much time do they allow?

- I allow myself time off. [*Self employed*]
- Only as much as I take holidays and make up time in the evening or early morning.
- Yes – I work part-time, and based from my office at home.
- I take whatever time needed but still have to make up my time/workload at work.
- Self-employed. Time spent as Councillor at expense of own business (one man business).

2. JOB WEIGHT OF COMMITTEE WORK

It is of great importance for us to establish the relative weight in terms of level of responsibility and commitment of time that should be assigned to the Council Committees.

(a) How would you rank these Committees in terms of responsibility and time commitment (e.g. very high, high, middle, or low)?

Committee	Very High	High	Medium	Low
<u>Policy Committees</u>				
Community & Environment	6	8	5	0
Development & Transport	5	12	2	0
Finance & Governance	12	4	3	0
Personnel & Corporate Services	5	6	7	0
<u>Regulatory & Other Committees</u>				
Planning	6	9	1	0
Licensing	3	4	8	1
Scrutiny	3	4	5	2
Neighbourhood Panels	2	2	8	3
<u>Sub-Committees/Working Parties</u>				
Finance & Governance				
Hearings Sub-Committee/Panel	0	7	5	0
Joint Member Liaison Group for North Ely	0	5	5	1
Town Centres Working Party	0	4	8	1

Please give reasons for your rankings:

- The policy and regulatory committees all have a lot of paper work to go through and have a high level of responsibility. The neighbourhood panels have lower paper and responsibility levels but do have a more "localism" aspect, so Middle.

- Policy committees very high, since they are concerned with formulating and implementing the Council's policy.
- Planning is high in terms of time, because it is demand-led with statutory time limits. Finance & Governance is high in terms of responsibility because of financial control and monitoring. All of the rest low to medium as they all have their particular responsibility, but in many cases can set their own workload.
- V-H - Policy and Finance; High - Policy and Finance affecting the public; Middle - Policy.
- Community & Environment - very high - if done properly, time needs to be given to drive the agenda of this busy Committee forward, with input outside of meeting. Development & Transport - very high - if done properly, time needs to be given to drive the agenda of this busy Committee forward, with input outside of meeting. Finance and Governance - Middle - driven more by officers. Personnel and Corporate Services - Middle - driven more by officers and legalities. Licensing - Low - many meetings are cancelled and the agenda is driven by legalities and officer input. Scrutiny - Middle - although more meetings are now in the calendar, I don't think large levels of input are required outside of committee meetings. Neighbourhood Panels - Low - but depends on how active a Panel it is and the desire of individuals to make the Panel work well.
- I find this very difficult to answer as chairman of a policy committee they are all very high and all need the same very high commitment from councillors.
- High - I think all the policy committees are important to the Council's decision-making. Finance & Governance - Very High - this committee is the most important one to oversee the Council's finances and studying and understanding figures is not a simple task to many people that do not understand. Planning - High - meets monthly and takes a whole day with site visits in the morning and committee meeting in the afternoon. Licensing - Middle - Important to get it right. Scrutiny - High - very important to have a Scrutiny committee although our council has a Scrutiny committee run by its own administration (chairman and vice chairman) ??? Finance and Governance Sub-Committee - Middle - as and when required there is also a Personnel Sub Committee for dealing with discipline items.
- All departments rely on Finance & Gov followed by the right Personnel & Establishment Organisation. Serving the community must be the 1st duty of the Council looking after its Environment. Then looking to its infrastructure & transport needs. Planning/Licensing/Scrutiny are duties imposed by Government. Sub-committees are to work with others to establish local needs beyond those already actioned.
- Community and Environment - Very High. Development and Transport - High as this committee requires a lot of reading and visits. Finance and Governance - Middle as less intensive in reading but high in responsibility.
- Very High - Neighbourhood Panels - they are the first point of contact with the electorate. High - Sub-Committees/Working Parties - they feed info from the electorate into Policy Comm. Middle - Policy Committees. - they give direction to the Council based on consultation. Middle - Regulatory/other committees - less freedom to reflect local issues.

- All committees are important to the area of work they serve. F+G - Very High - deals with all finance and rate fixing. Planning - Very High - quasi-judicial important to get correct decisions on matters affecting the lives and well being of people. Heavy legal & financial consequences if the role is not properly exercised.
- Policy committees and regulatory committees all have a very high ranking in terms of responsibility and are high in terms of time commitment. Neighbourhood panels are just part of your normal commitment to being a councillor and are for information as much as anything else. Issues are often a re-run of what is being dealt with elsewhere, so low. Working parties can be very high in terms of time commitment, but it is only for a short time. They are rewarding as they enable you to look at something in depth. The responsibility is medium as decisions are taken by Policy Committees.
- All at high importance.
- Neighbourhood Panels have importance for maintaining contact into the public. Scrutiny is currently undervalued.

3. COSTS

(a) **The current level of basic allowance in East Cambridgeshire is £4,069, do you think this is:**

Too low	11
About right	8
Too high	1

Comments:

- Too low - It should be raised to £5000.
- Too low - For this amount of work it is far too low, but this is not the reason for doing it. [Also for SRAs]
- Too low - It should be raised to £5500-£5750
- Too low - should be raised to reflect the increase in R.P.I.
- Too low - It should be raised to £6000
- Too low - it should be raised to £4500 but not during a period of austerity.
- Too low - It should be raised to £4500.
- Too low - but insufficient to encourage interest.
- Too low - it should be £6000.
- Too low - average for all DCs
- Too low – it should be £8000.
- Too low – it should be £4475.
- Too high - it should be lowered to £1000 with a set of say £25 per committee meeting attendance allowance.
- The allowance structure is not why I sought election, if I claim nothing it gives me more freedom to speak my mind.

(b) Are the special responsibility allowances set?

Too low	6
About right	11
Too high	3

Comments:

- About right except for Licensing Chair and Vice - Chair which are too high.
- Too low for Spokespersons. Too high for vice chairs, who do no more than a Spokesperson. If Chairman not available for the meetings, they cancel them.
- Too low - again this is insufficient to encourage interest.
- Should be percentage of Leader's Allowance.
- Vice chair of planning too high.
- Too high - certain committees are underrated (Planning, Policy).

(c) Putting aside the basic allowances and special responsibility allowances, do the other allowances currently available cover your costs?

Yes	11
No	3

Comments:

- Just about for mileage, but only able to claim if other party members attend.
- Not if I was working and losing time.

(d) Do you claim for all of your entitled allowances?

Yes	8
No	12
Sometimes	1

If not, why not?

- Only mileage, parking. No computer costs because complicated to identify costs and claim.
- Do not bother to claim any allowances in addition to basic.
- No - I have my own computer.
- No as I am adequately rewarded as it is.
- Do not claim mileage allowance. Not worth the effort.
- Do not claim for attending Parish Council meeting, as I am not aware I am entitled to.
- I don't claim other allowances, but if I did, I think they should cover the cost.
- No - basic allowance is sufficient for my personal needs and expectations.
- No - too few to bother with.
- Mostly, but I do not worry if I miss or forget meeting claims.
- I have not claimed for Travel, as most claims are trivial. I have just discovered I can claim for Broadband.

(e) The current car mileage rate of 47.7p was based on the Local Government Employers rate and as such the amount over the Inland Revenue Rate of 45p is taxable. Do you think that the car mileage rate should be set?

At the Inland Revenue rate	14
At the Local Government Employers Casual Users rate	4
At some other rate (please specify)	3

Comments:

- Should be set at the lowest rate possible to encourage car sharing and smaller more economical vehicles.
- Expenses mileage rate claimed but only to meetings attended by other party members. Perhaps we need ruling on expenses to see officers etc.
- Different Authorities do not necessarily pay the full LG Employers rate, therefore I do not think councillors should encourage a hike in travelling costs.
- Adequate but barely covers true cost.
- Plus 10%.

(f) Do you think the allowance rates for third parties, (e.g. carers, childcare) are in line with market costs?

Yes	2
No	0

Do these costs increase outside normal office hours?

[No opinions received.]

Comments:

- I estimate that with current costs for childcare, the £25 allowance would cover Members resident in the north of the district but would be at the margin for those living in the south. It would not however meet the costs of any Member with a strong desire to be a Member of the Planning Committee who has either childcare or dependent relative care costs to be covered.
- Travelling costs - the same at all hours of the day. Why should these be different rate? (Why is this a question, I thought this was about Councillors)
- I do not know about these but I suspect they are only just enough.
- About right (as a contribution to care). Often decrease outside office hours as other members of a household can help. This is what happens in anything else you do.

(g) Do you think the overall rate of increase for allowances per year should be?

In line with inflation	15
Above inflation	1
Below inflation	0
Linked to Local Government Staff Pay Award	5

Comments:

- In line with inflation but there needs to be some catching up once the necessary freezing of allowances has passed.
- In line with inflation - when average is reached or linked to staff award.

(h) Was the allowances scheme a factor in your decision to become a Councillor?

Yes	0
No	22

Comments:

- No - I was unaware of the allowance scheme when I joined the Council a number of years ago but I appreciate the allowance very much now that I am a pensioner.
- Not originally but over the years it has become necessary - especially for those in employment.

(i) Does the current level and range of allowances make you more likely or less likely to stand for re-election?

More	4
Less	5
Neither	6

Comments:

- Age is the main factor.

4. GENERAL

(a) Do you think that the basic and special responsibility allowances to Members should be pensionable?

Yes	4
No	17

Please give reason(s) for your answer

- No - Already a pensioner
- No - Being a councillor is a public service and voluntary position, taken up on election in the full knowledge that it is for public service and not for financial remuneration.
- No - but possibly Leader's allowance should be pensionable.
- No - Councils cannot afford the present system, I would be against extending the scheme to councillors.
- No - It would be too expensive.
- No - most councillors are pensioners.
- No - too complicated.

- No - very unworkable.
- No - Would increase cost to taxpayer
- No - You should have your own pension in place, because you only might be a Councillor for 4 years.
- No - would like to say yes but recognise costs needs to be contained.
- Not employment.
- The majority of current Members are already of pensionable age and should not be seeking to expropriate further financial gain at the expense of residents within East Cambs.
- Yes - every other area of employment is usually pensionable. The CC & most other councils already allow members to join the scheme.
- Yes - Providing it is retrospective.
- Yes - This is public work and should be recognised as such.
- Possibly for those with heavy responsibilities.

(b) Do you have comments or suggestions for improvement to make regarding the Council's current Allowance Scheme?

- Some reflection for the amount of time put in.
- On the other hand once the job of councillor becomes rewarded with a paypacket that reflects the time spent along with pension rights then the job becomes a career. We then lose the voluntary element of the individual councillor trying to better the place in which s/he lives.
- Not at the moment.
- This Council has no green credentials. The remuneration for car mileage should reflect a Member's car engine capacity with higher rewards to those driving low carbon footprint vehicles and those using 4x4s and gas guzzlers penalised for polluting the environment.
- Keep it as it is plus increase by RPI but not until after the next Local Elections.
- The long term aim should be to make allowances reflect the losses in remuneration incurred by those who are in full time employment as they are taxable. Those on high tax rates actually receive a lot less in real terms - often that is why they do not claim.

(c) How often do you think the IRP should meet?

Every year	0
Two years	11
Four years	6
Associated with District Council elections	5

Personal Status:	Employed	2
	Self-Employed	6
	Retired	12
	Unemployed	0
	Other	2

Dated: 14th November 2012.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSES

2 responses from public consultation exercise:

I feel, I suspect along with others, that with the current economic situation any move to increase the remuneration received by Councillors is inappropriate. Many people are having to make do with less in real terms and would feel that any move to increase Council Tax (or even funding from central government – which would have to come from other forms of tax) to pay for increases at this time would be unfair.

Many people carry out voluntary work and receive nothing for it (in my own case I volunteer for a local charitable body once a week) and do not even receive travelling expenses, so the aspiring (and current) Councillors are really doing quite well with the status quo.

Certainly in my opinion no changes should be considered at the present time (unless they can result in a reduction in the Council Tax of course!).

I consider that the payment of allowances to cover the costs to individuals who have been elected to office with the District to be appropriate. It would not be appropriate to have an organisation with gross expenditure of £36M and net expenditure of £9M that depends entirely on volunteer efforts. Payment to reflect in some part the responsibilities held perhaps create a more business-like culture and approach to the organisation and should aid planning, particularly in the long term. It improves not only the responsibility of the individuals concerned, it makes them more accountable to their peers and to the public. Most importantly, payments can seek to reduce the disincentives that may be identified by individuals who may not otherwise wish to accept responsibility.