



Vale of White Horse District Council Members Allowance Survey

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Independent Remuneration Panel Chairman





Vale of White Horse District Council Members Allowances Survey

The following information provides data from the recent survey distributed amongst Members of Vale of White Horse District Council. A similar survey was also sent to the Members of South Oxfordshire District Council but these have been collated in a separate report.

This is hosted by Survey Monkey which can collate all data provided into professional and presentable stats and data thus making a more effective and less time consuming way of collating data.

The survey covered a number of questions that asked specific details about the Members' role within the Council. The survey also asked for the Members' opinions on areas that they felt needed improvement. It also gives Members' the opportunity to disclose their name or submit the survey anonymously. However, the majority chose the option of submitting their names with it.

With a total of 38 recipients that the survey was sent out to and 14 Members participated thus making a response rate of 36.8%, thus meaning well over a third of Vale of White Horse Members responded.

Q1 In a typical week how many hours do you spend on Council business?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

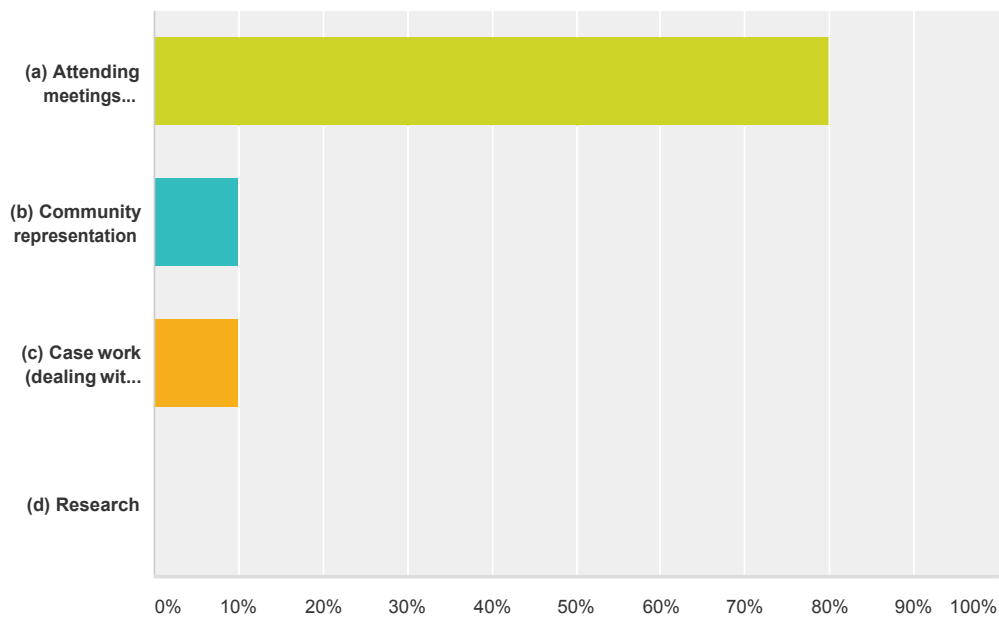
Q1. The amount of hours Members spent in their roles per week varied from as little as 8 up to as high as 30 and above, with an average between 10 and 23.

#	Responses	Date
1	8-10	12/16/2016 8:08 PM
2	30+	12/16/2016 2:28 PM
3	around 10-12 hours minimum per week	12/13/2016 4:15 PM
4	10	12/12/2016 11:01 AM
5	10	12/12/2016 10:21 AM
6	16	12/12/2016 10:18 AM
7	15	12/7/2016 4:44 PM
8	More than 30	12/6/2016 2:09 PM
9	varies from 8 to 16 (the latter with Planning Committee)	12/6/2016 8:52 AM
10	22	12/5/2016 10:28 AM
11	20	12/5/2016 10:01 AM
12	23	12/2/2016 4:21 PM
13	20 hours	12/2/2016 2:29 PM
14	8	12/1/2016 4:41 PM

Q2 Please indicate how this time is spent:

Answered: 10 Skipped: 4

Q2. This question followed on from question one, asking Members' to give more specific details on how they utilised their time. There were four multiple choice answers along with a comment section for them to give further details. Out of the 14 who responded, 10 submitted an answer while 13 did give a more detailed response and used the comment section. Overall, this resulted in a 92.8% response rate for this question; with 80% responding that the majority of their time was spent attending meetings on behalf of the Council.



Answer Choices	Responses
(a) Attending meetings (including travelling)	80.00% 8
(b) Community representation	10.00% 1
(c) Case work (dealing with particular issues in your ward)	10.00% 1
(d) Research	0.00% 0
Total	10

#	Please enter specific number of hours for each of the above options:	Date
1	All of the above with a and b being the most important	12/16/2016 8:08 PM
2	18, 6, 3 and 3	12/16/2016 2:28 PM
3	Meetings usually an average of 5-7 hours, some specific role tasks/reading. The rest is general correspondence and community representation	12/13/2016 4:15 PM
4	Mixture of first three but only able to tick one	12/12/2016 10:21 AM
5	a. 10. b. 2. c. 2. d. 2.	12/12/2016 10:18 AM
6	a. 6 b. 3 c. 2 d. 4 (including reading reports)	12/7/2016 4:44 PM
7	a) 5-8 b) 3-4 c)3-4 d)12 . Plus group meetings, organizing Scrutiny, portfolio reports, heads of service. these categories don't reflect where i spend my time. and I can't click more than one.	12/6/2016 2:09 PM
8	(a) 6 to 8 when Planning meets (b) 1 to 2 (c) 5 to 7 (d) under 1	12/6/2016 8:52 AM

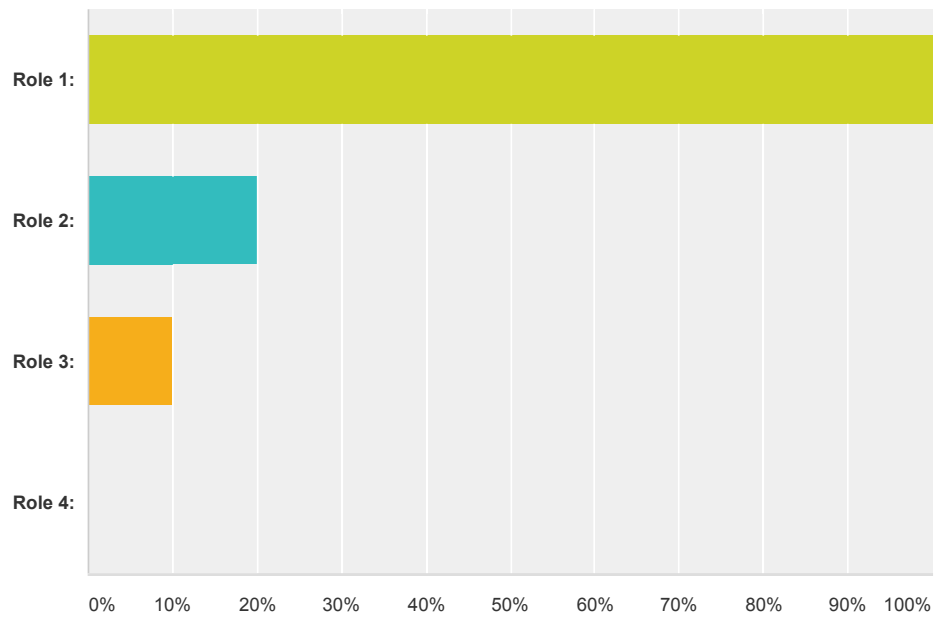
Independent Remuneration Panel Members' Allowances Questionnaire 2016 - Vale of White Horse

9	(a) 6, (b) 6, (c) 4, (d) 6	12/5/2016 10:28 AM
10	6	12/5/2016 10:01 AM
11	a. 10; b 3; c 1; d. 9	12/2/2016 4:21 PM
12	20 hours spent on community issues - preparing and attending meetings with Vale and the 7 Parishes in my ward	12/2/2016 2:29 PM
13	Mostly meetings	12/1/2016 4:41 PM

Q3 If you hold a role(s) within the Council i.e. Portfolio Holder, Chairman etc., how many hours do you spend in a typical week on Council business relevant to the role(s). [Please provide details separately for each role if more than one additional role is held.]

Answered: 10 Skipped: 4

Q3. Q3 had a slightly less response rate as only 10 of the participants answered this while 4 skipped. However, there were also 10 detailed responses answered in the comment section. The question was focusing specifically on how many roles the Members' held within the Council and how many hours they dedicated to each one. All selected that they had at least one role while three participants selected that they held more than one role.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Role 1:	100.00%	10
Role 2:	20.00%	2
Role 3:	10.00%	1
Role 4:	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 10		

Independent Remuneration Panel Members' Allowances Questionnaire 2016 - Vale of White Horse

#	Please specify specific roles below and hours spent on each role:	Date
1	Audit and governance committee - quarterly maybe upto 3 evenings to go through the papers, role 2 scrutiny committee member, monthly, at least one evening to go through papers, role 3 joint scrutiny committee, bi monthly as for scrutiny	12/16/2016 8:08 PM
2	8, 8 and 2	12/16/2016 2:28 PM
3	Joint Chair of Audit and Governance	12/13/2016 4:15 PM
4	chairman of licencing - 1 average	12/12/2016 10:21 AM
5	Role 1: Vice Chair of Wantage Area Committee - 0 hrs a week as meeting are so infrequent	12/7/2016 4:44 PM
6	Shadow portfolio Planning. 2 hours a week . Group leader, 4 hrs per week. Scrutiny chair, 2-4 hours per week, or more. Opposition leader means meeting with Cons, Cheif Exec and HoS's I guess 2-4 hours a week.	12/6/2016 2:09 PM
7	Liberal Democrat spokesman on Planning, varies from 1 to 8 hours a week	12/6/2016 8:52 AM
8	17	12/5/2016 10:01 AM
9	1. Cabinet Member Planning 16; 2. Deputy Ldr 7	12/2/2016 4:21 PM
10	Constitutional Review Cttee - 2 hours p.w.	12/2/2016 2:29 PM
11	6 Hours Property / regeneration	12/1/2016 4:41 PM

Q4 Please indicate how this time is spent in each of your roles: A) Attending meetings (including travelling) B) Community representation C) Case work (dealing with particular issues in your ward) D) Research

Answered: 11 Skipped: 3

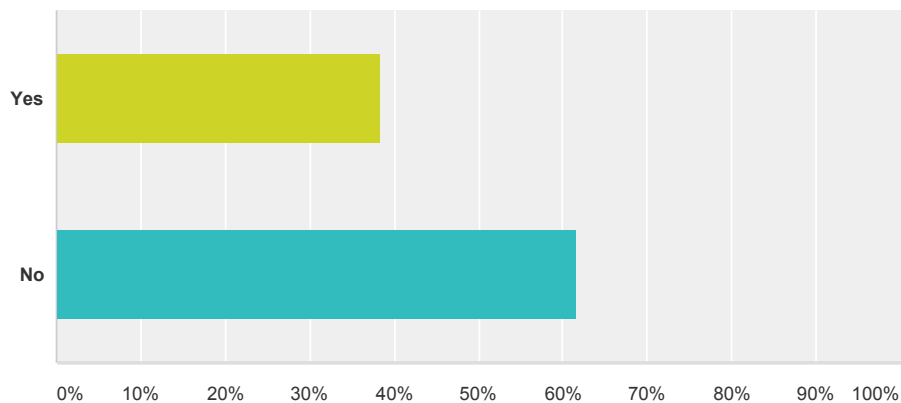
Q4. 11 participants did answer this question, resulting in an 84.6% response rate. As this question was given as a comment rather than a selected choice answer there was no data for Survey Monkey to display thus resulting in the data simply being the detailed responses.

#	Responses	Date
1	See above, I allow upto 3hrs for each meeting including travelling	12/16/2016 8:08 PM
2	as noted in question 2 above	12/16/2016 2:28 PM
3	Attending and preparing meetings typically a couple of hours per week, but a large peak of activity for meetings, especially reading reports	12/13/2016 4:15 PM
4	a	12/12/2016 10:21 AM
5	1. only attending meetings once a quarter	12/7/2016 4:44 PM
6	I don't understand the question. when you say 'this time' what do you mean?	12/6/2016 2:09 PM
7	(a) 6 hours plus when the Committee meets (b) 1 to 2 (c) anything up to 5 hours a week (d) minimal	12/6/2016 8:52 AM
8	a) 5 b) 4 c) 5 d) 3	12/5/2016 10:01 AM
9	a. 10 b. 3 c. 1 d. 9	12/2/2016 4:21 PM
10	A10	12/2/2016 2:29 PM
11	As above	12/1/2016 4:41 PM

Q5 Do you incur any significant costs which you believe are not covered by your present allowance?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 1

Q5. Although the majority that answered this question selected the option that they did not it still had a very mixed response rate. 38.46% responded that they felt it did not cover any extra costs while 61.54% felt it was an adequate rate. The comments section provided a varied amount of answers as to why Members' felt that the allowance did not cover all costs incurred. These comments varied from printing and communication costs, as well as travel expenses. Furthermore, one delegate did answer that although the financial costs did not have an effect it did however affect his family life.



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	38.46% 5
No	61.54% 8
Total	13

#	If YES, please provide details:	Date
1	I serve a large rural area and therefore incur additional travelling expenses when attending 12 Parish Council meetings	12/16/2016 2:28 PM
2	It is hard to say - but the use of computer equipment, printers etc that require regular update and maintenance is quite expensive.	12/13/2016 4:15 PM
3	printing costs (although important things are printed and sent to us)	12/7/2016 4:44 PM
4	I baord my dog overnight when there are evening meetings that conflict with my husbands work. Internet access and computer maintenance (would be nice if we were supplied with computer equip). may reports are in colour and I don;t have a colour printer. I ask an officer to print hem and have to go collect them.	12/6/2016 2:09 PM
5	Not financial costs, just effects family life	12/5/2016 10:28 AM
6	Printing, telephone, mileage	12/1/2016 4:41 PM

Q6 Government guidance states that “it is important that some element of the work of Councillors continues to be voluntary”. As part of their deliberations, Independent Remuneration Panels will assess what Public Service Discount should apply to the basic allowance - that is the percentage of their time Councillors expect to give without any financial remuneration. Accordingly, what do you feel is an acceptable amount of time to be given, unremunerated, if any, expressed as a percentage?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 3

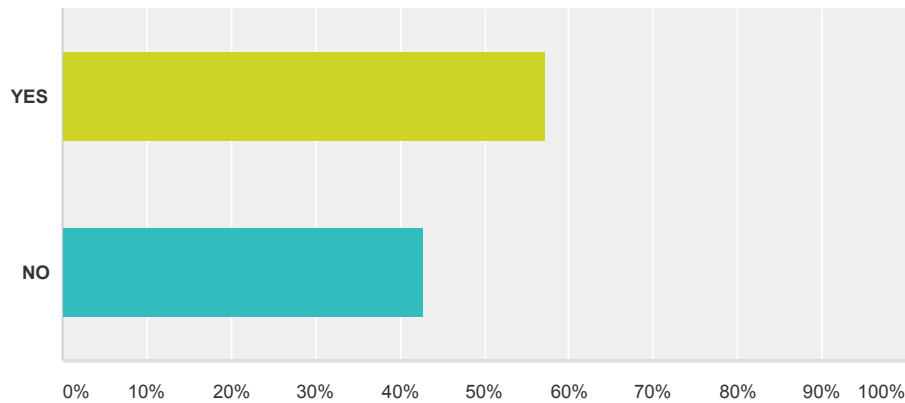
Q6. This question was asking more specifically on how much of their time should be voluntary. 11 participants answered this question while 3 skipped thus resulting in a response rate of 84.6%. The responses ranged from 10 – 50%.

#	Responses	Date
1	20	12/16/2016 8:08 PM
2	10%	12/16/2016 2:28 PM
3	20%	12/13/2016 4:15 PM
4	25%	12/12/2016 10:18 AM
5	35% (a third)	12/7/2016 4:44 PM
6	If I were to look at the bare minimum that's required of members, that's one meeting every 6 months. That's all that's required. Good representation would be full attendance, but even that is only 5 or 6 council meetings per year, and no preparation required. Many people are on no committees; I'm on 5, can substitute for two others, plus I go along to Cabinet and Audit & Governance. A few of us put in a LOT of time to do the best job that we can. Some put in nearly nothing. the nearly nothing is the lowest common denominator. That's the free work, IMO	12/6/2016 2:09 PM
7	30%	12/6/2016 8:52 AM
8	50%	12/5/2016 10:01 AM
9	50%	12/2/2016 4:21 PM
10	about 20%	12/2/2016 2:29 PM
11	25%	12/1/2016 4:41 PM

Q7 The present level of Basic Allowance payable to all Councillors is £4,575. Do you think this is appropriate?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

Q7. Although the majority of participants felt that the Basic Allowance was at an appropriate level there was an almost even split answer of agreeing and disagreeing with this. The results were 57.14% answered that they did feel it was an appropriate amount while a total of 42.86% felt that it was not an appropriate amount. All of the detailed responses were in favour of raising the allowance.



Answer Choices	Responses
YES	57.14% 8
NO	42.86% 6
Total	14

#	If NO, should it be LOWER or HIGHER? Please give a reason for your answer:	Date
1	Higher	12/12/2016 11:01 AM
2	In most cases yes. I am a member of the Planning Committee and the workload is high, perhaps time for a special responsibility payment ?	12/12/2016 10:20 AM
3	Higher, there are lots of important meetings that take place during the day which means for working people they either have to take holiday or unpaid leave.	12/7/2016 4:54 PM
4	Either the basic allowance should be higher, or maybe better, the special responsibility allowance should be paid to those who do more than the bare minimum.	12/6/2016 2:24 PM
5	should be indexed to take account of inflation CPI would be appropriate	12/6/2016 8:54 AM
6	Higher. I have to reduce my working hours to fit Cllr business in	12/5/2016 10:29 AM

Q8 If you are able to, please indicate an appropriate level £:

Answered: 5 Skipped: 9

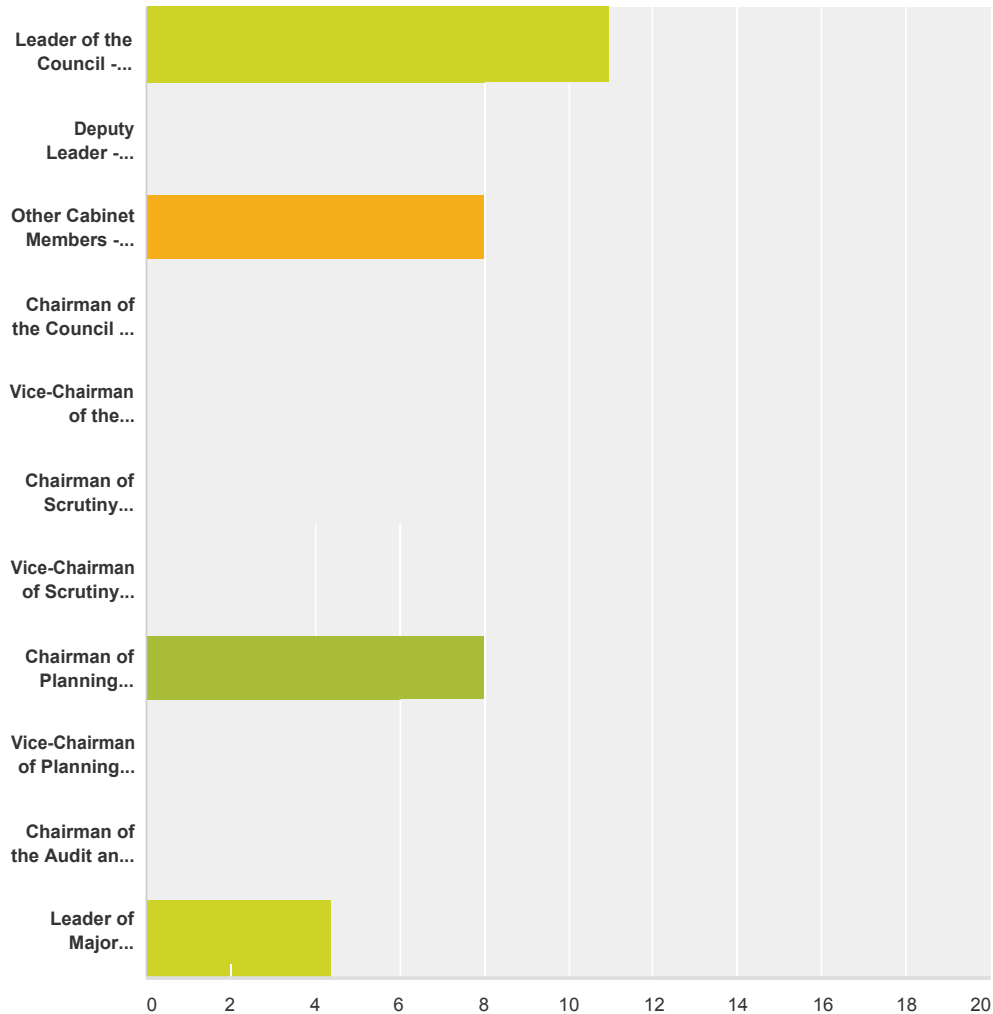
Q8. This question was mainly for those specifically that felt the Basic Allowance was not at an appropriate level, the majority of participants skipped this question. Although the question was indicating to give a specific figure, two participants gave their opinions on how to raise the allowance level. One included paying Members on the amount of work they do whilst the other suggested taking inflation in to account should be considered.

#	Responses	Date
1	6000	12/12/2016 11:01 AM
2	£1,000.	12/12/2016 10:20 AM
3	£8000	12/7/2016 4:54 PM
4	The wide range between say, Edinburgh and Vale is hard to understand. If we want to attract younger, working age people, we need to pay a living wage. If we continue in the expectation that only well-to-do retired people or those with independent incomes can afford to be a volunteer councillor, then we should abandon plans to attract younger working age people. I feel very strongly we should be paid for all the work we do. Probably the best way to go about it is to adjust the special responsibility allowances so that they realistically reflect the work so many of us actually do. Everyone serving on committees or in work groups should get an SRA. The basic allowance is for the basic work of showing up to full council meetings and helping your residents.	12/6/2016 2:24 PM
5	should be 4 to 5% higher to take account of inflation since the last review	12/6/2016 8:54 AM

Q9 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are currently paid as follows: [To assist the Panel to produce a more consistent group of allowances, please can you score each role / position in respect of importance and impact: 1 to 11, with 1 being the most important, and 11 being the least important.]

Answered: 11 Skipped: 3

Q9. This Question featured all of the roles that have a Special Responsibility Allowance and Members were asked to rate each one from 1 – 11 in ranking of importance. 11 participated in answering this question with 71% of those that answered felt that the Leader of the Council was the most important whilst the Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee was seen as the least important.

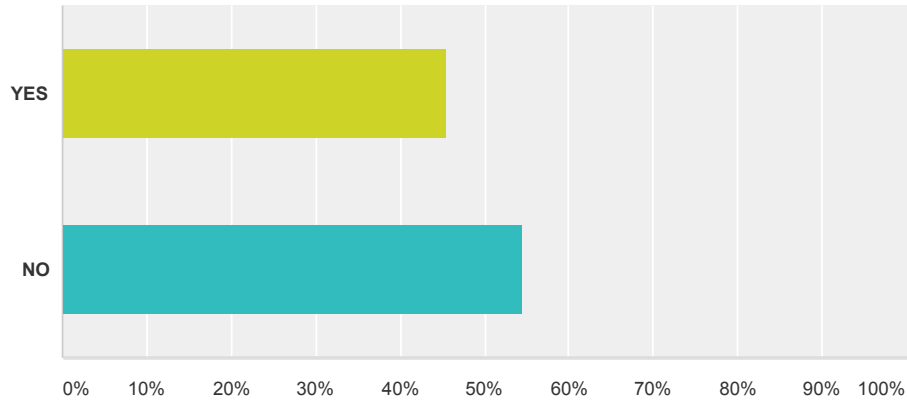


Independent Remuneration Panel Members' Allowances Questionnaire 2016 - Vale of White Horse

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total	Score
Leader of the Council - £18,151	100.00% 10	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10	11.00
Deputy Leader - £13,311	0.00% 0	44.44% 4	22.22% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	9	7.78
Other Cabinet Members - £8,470	0.00% 0	33.33% 3	44.44% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22.22% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9	8.00
Chairman of the Council - £4,840	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	44.44% 4	22.22% 2	11.11% 1	22.22% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9	6.89
Vice-Chairman of the Council - £1,210	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	40.00% 4	0.00% 0	30.00% 3	20.00% 2	10	3.00
Chairman of Scrutiny Committee - £2,420	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	22.22% 2	11.11% 1	44.44% 4	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9	6.78
Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee - £1,210	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	10.00% 1	20.00% 2	10.00% 1	40.00% 4	10	2.90
Chairman of Planning Committee - £4,840	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	10.00% 1	20.00% 2	40.00% 4	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10	7.90
Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee - £2,420	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	10.00% 1	30.00% 3	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10	4.50
Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee - £1,210	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	11.11% 1	11.11% 1	22.22% 2	11.11% 1	22.22% 2	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	9	4.78
Leader of Major Opposition Group - £1,210	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	20.00% 2	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	30.00% 3	10	4.40

Q10 Would you like to see any of these changes made to these allowances?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 3



Q10. This question gave Members' the chance to express any changes that they would like to see implemented or felt that were necessary. 11 participants answered with the results at 45.45% responding that they felt they would like to see changes implemented while 54.55% responded that they would not.

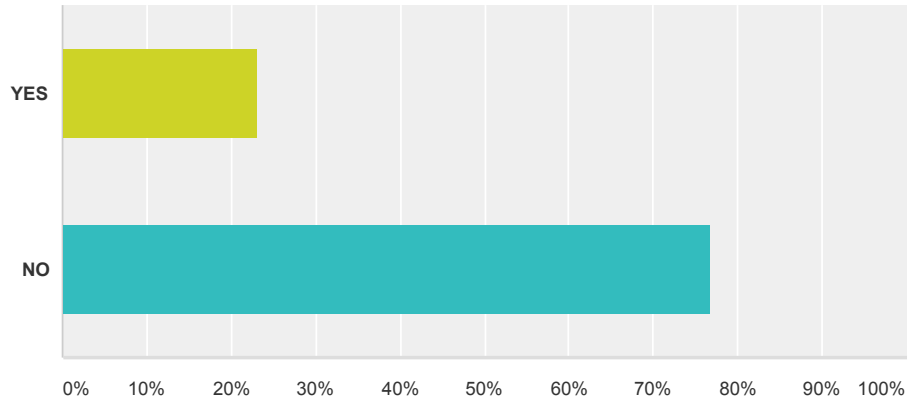
Answer Choices	Responses	
YES	45.45%	5
NO	54.55%	6
Total		11

#	If YES, please provide details:	Date
1	Unless deputy leader has additional cabinet responsibility should be compensated pro rata when covering for leader, why isn't licensing included in this	12/16/2016 8:10 PM
2	Chairman of Planning, Chairman of Scrutiny should be SRA equivalent to Cabinet. Scrutiny is a lot of work without officer support, and should be remunerated. I also do a lot of work as leader of opppston, and get nothing for that. Chairman of Planning has a hard job too, and should be paid equally to cabinet members. Vice-chairmen don't really do anything. Chairman of Council has an important role in the community. But he DOES have an officer who acts as a personal assistant.	12/6/2016 2:30 PM
3	Chair of scrutiny and Leader of the opposition involves a huge amount of work, and requires attendance at a lots of meetings. Leader of the opposition could be a full time job so needs to attract a higher allowance.	12/5/2016 10:34 AM
4	SRA allowances could increase for the roles taking the post time/commitment.	12/5/2016 10:04 AM
5	Index linked with inflation	12/2/2016 4:27 PM
6	Chairman of Planning has a very heavy burden and should rank higher	12/1/2016 4:43 PM

Q11 Would you like to see any new SRAs introduced?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 1

Q11. 13 participants responded to this question and the result had a very strong response rate of 76.92% selecting no to introducing new SRA roles as opposed to 23.08% that did. Three participants included detailed answers in the comments section.



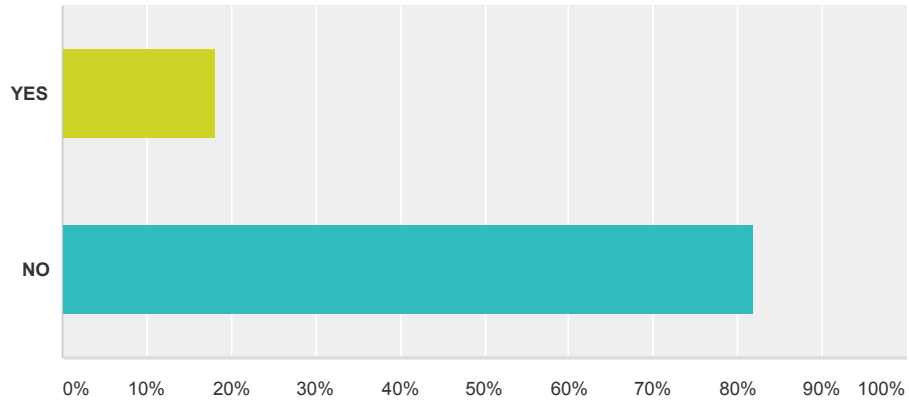
Answer Choices	Responses
YES	23.08% 3
NO	76.92% 10
Total	13

#	If YES, please provide details:	Date
1	There needs to be a way of compensating the planning committee members retrospectively for time spent in site visits and committee meetings that compensates if a member has to take unpaid leave to do site visits and extra meetings	12/16/2016 8:10 PM
2	As before, a special responsibility payment for members of the Planning Committee. Meets every three weeks. Site visits and a long evening meeting, time taken to read roughly 90+ agenda pages as well as letters and emails from applicants and objectors.	12/12/2016 10:23 AM
3	Planning Committee members, Scrutiny Committee members, Audit & Governance Committee members	12/6/2016 2:30 PM

**Q12 Childcare - up to £7.20 per hour (in line with the national minimum wage)
 Dependent Relative Care - up to £15 per hour. Annual maximum claimable per councilor - £2,698. Do you think these rates should be increased?**

Answered: 11 Skipped: 3

Q12. This is another question that has a strong response rate of participants responding "no" with a total of 81.82% as opposed to 18.18% that voted "yes".



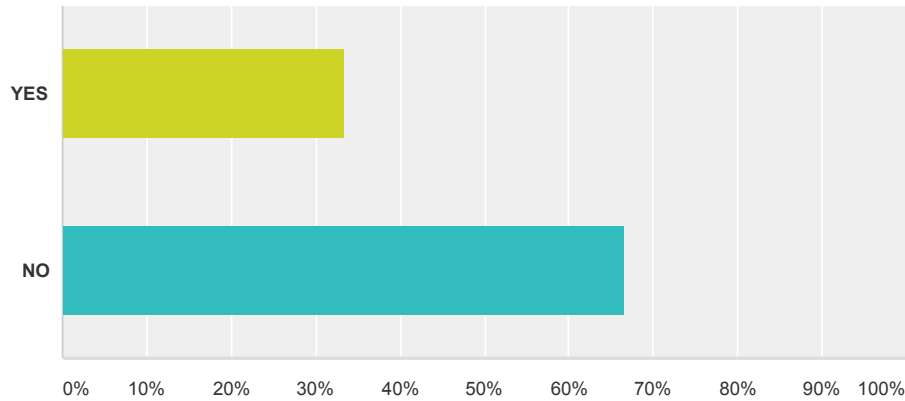
Answer Choices	Responses
YES	18.18% 2
NO	81.82% 9
Total	11

#	If YES, please indicate rate and season:	Date
1	I don't know. I don't claim any of them.	12/6/2016 2:31 PM
2	£7.50 per hour (new minimum wage)	12/2/2016 2:31 PM

Q13 The current scheme of travel allowances are linked to those recommended by HMRC level. Do you have any comments on the current scheme for Councillors?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 2

Q13. A copy of the Travel Allowances Scheme was attached along with the survey in an email for reference in regards of this question. Again, this was another question that the majority of those that answered had selected no, 12 overall answered with only 2 skipping, along with 5 participants leaving a comment. 66.67% of participants felt that they had no further comments while 33.33% did.



Answer Choices	Responses
YES	33.33% 4
NO	66.67% 8
Total	12

#	If YES, please provide details:	Date
1	it is sometimes time consuming on both sides to keep claiming travel allowances, I am not sure if a more efficient method is possible. Often members are too busy and forget to claim.	12/13/2016 4:24 PM
2	Can members enjoy the car buying scheme that staff do? Although did I hear the Tories are taking away this benefit from working people?	12/6/2016 2:33 PM
3	Fuel allowance to increase with inflation	12/2/2016 4:36 PM
4	Ward cllrs for rural wards incur considerable costs tarvelling to far flung parishes. Tranel costs should be allowed	12/2/2016 2:33 PM
5	I never claim	12/1/2016 4:44 PM

Q14 If you have any other comments on Members' Allowances, please detail below:

Answered: 8 Skipped: 6

Q14. This was a question for those that felt they had further comments on the Members' Allowances that were not covered by any of the previous questions. Out of the 14 participants, only 8 answered with 6 skipping.

#	Responses	Date
1	Unfortunately I was unable to answer the question relating to the SRA's as the scores were deleted from the previous score on the list	12/16/2016 2:39 PM
2	As a member with a full time professional job the number of meetings that I need to cover for 12 Parishes is quite large and "draining" It is effectively an additional part time job and we do not do it for the money, but sometimes the balance does not feel right. I am not advocating an increase in allowances as we do not do it for the money and it is hard to find the right level of allowance for the workload and general expenses, but perhaps some simplifications and "making things more efficient and effective" can help	12/13/2016 4:24 PM
3	Some Councillors are diligent and others do as little as they can get away with yet we all get the same. It was a bad day when attendance allowances were scrapped and a flat rate for all was introduced. But that is the system we now have and is expensive.	12/12/2016 10:27 AM
4	Some members don't have computers. This makes it hard for them to fulfill a position of any responsibility. could council do something to provide the bare IT equipment necessary to do the job?	12/6/2016 2:33 PM
5	The scheme is broadly acceptable but needs updating to take account of inflation	12/6/2016 8:57 AM
6	I think more recognition is needed for the Opposition and Scrutiny leaders. Without effect scrutiny the council will make mistakes and doing these roles is a huge amount of work.	12/5/2016 10:36 AM
7	I claim only for petrol, so I am not best placed to comment.	12/2/2016 4:36 PM
8	There should be a printing facility / preloaded iPads?	12/1/2016 4:44 PM

Q15 Name:

Answered: 12 Skipped: 2

Q15. Only 12 participants provided their name.

#	Responses	Date
1	Chris Palmer	12/16/2016 8:10 PM
2	Elaine Ware	12/16/2016 2:39 PM
3	Simon Howell	12/13/2016 4:24 PM
4	Monica Lovatt	12/12/2016 10:27 AM
5	Ben Mabbett	12/7/2016 4:58 PM
6	Debby Hallett	12/6/2016 2:33 PM
7	Cllr Bob Johnston	12/6/2016 8:57 AM
8	Emily Smith	12/5/2016 10:36 AM
9	Matthew Barber	12/5/2016 10:04 AM
10	Roger Cox	12/2/2016 4:36 PM
11	Cllr. Yvonne Constance	12/2/2016 2:33 PM
12	M Murray	12/1/2016 4:44 PM