



South Oxfordshire District Council Members Allowance Survey Results

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South Oxfordshire Member Allowances Survey

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

The survey 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 36 recipients that the survey was sent out to, 14 actually participated thus making a response rate of 38.8% which equates to well over a third of South Oxfordshire's Members responding.

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

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

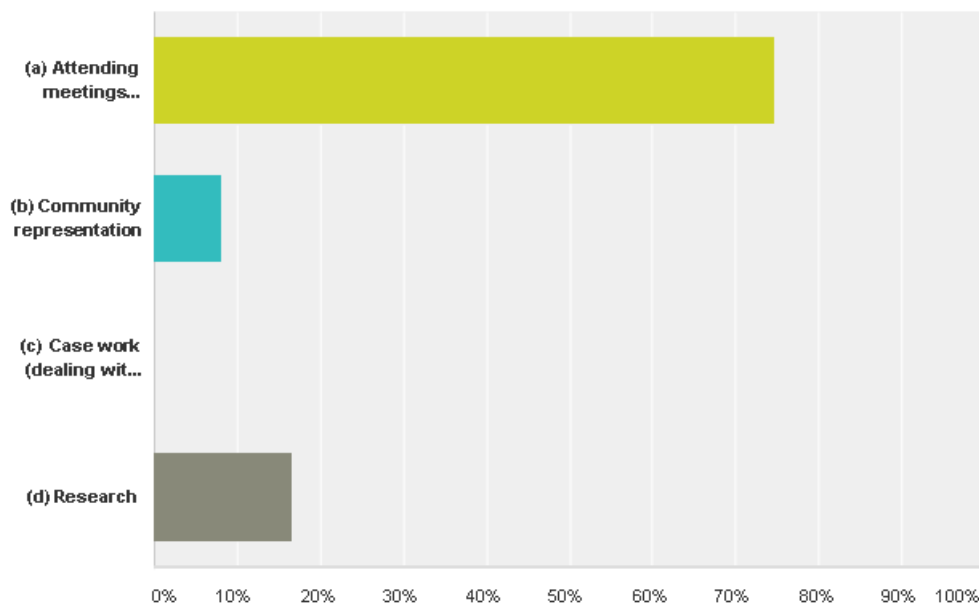
Q1. The amount of hours Members spent in their roles varied from as little as 4 to as high as 40.

#	Responses	Date
1	29	12/14/2016 3:09 PM
2	10-12	12/13/2016 5:10 PM
3	12	12/13/2016 11:30 AM
4	10	12/13/2016 4:30 AM
5	4	12/12/2016 11:28 AM
6	10-15	12/12/2016 10:01 AM
7	35	12/8/2016 11:34 AM
8	26 + Travel time	12/5/2016 10:23 PM
9	12	12/2/2016 1:47 PM
10	20	12/2/2016 10:49 AM
11	23 hours	12/2/2016 10:27 AM
12	5 to 10	12/2/2016 10:10 AM
13	40	12/1/2016 6:22 PM
14	30 - 35	12/1/2016 4:18 PM

Q2 Please indicate how this time is spent:

Answered: 12 Skipped: 2

Q2. 75% of the Members that answered this question selected that they spent the majority of their time in meetings, followed by 16.67% selecting that they spent time conducting research and 8.33% spending time participating in community representation. While 2 of the Members skipped this question completely there was also a further 12 detailed comments on how their time was used. The question overall had an 85.7% response rate.



Answer Choices	Responses
(a) Attending meetings (including travelling)	75.00% 9
(b) Community representation	8.33% 1
(c) Case work (dealing with particular issues in your ward)	0.00% 0
(d) Research	16.67% 2
Total	12

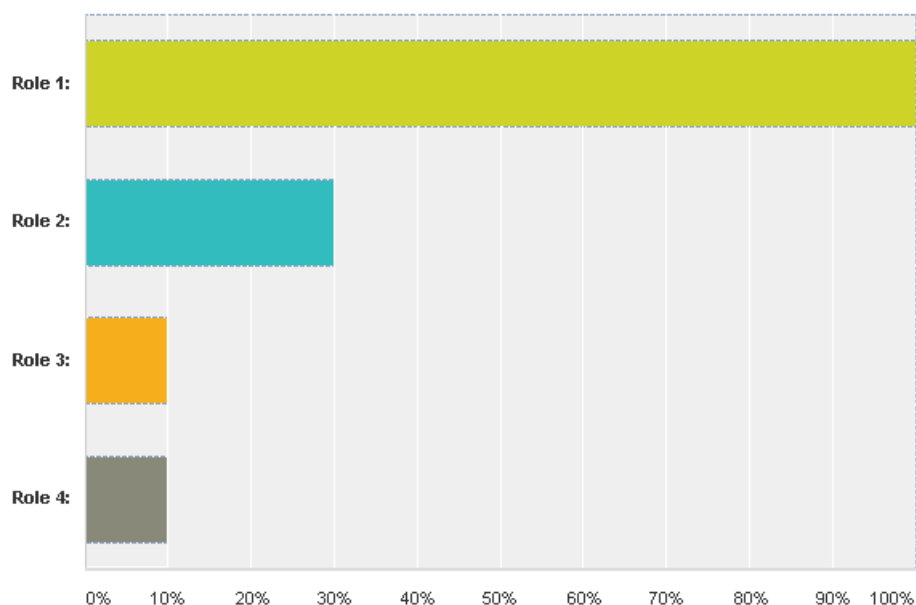
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#	Please enter specific number of hours for each of the above options:	Date
1	a) 15, b) 6, c) 2 d) 6	12/14/2016 3:09 PM
2	The above hours are spent in a mixture of all of the above	12/13/2016 5:10 PM
3	2	12/13/2016 11:30 AM
4	Varies for all the above options	12/13/2016 4:30 AM
5	a) 2.5 c) 1 d) .5 This only allows you to tick one box	12/12/2016 11:28 AM
6	At least 8 hrs council. 2-3 hours at parish meetings. 2 hours case work	12/12/2016 10:01 AM
7	a) 5 b)20 c) 5 d) 5	12/8/2016 11:34 AM
8	a) 6, b) 6, c) + email 11, d) 3	12/5/2016 10:23 PM
9	4	12/2/2016 1:47 PM
10	This question is wrong as it assumes I only work in one area. In my case all four apply as I represent the council at 5 parishes, as Chairman of the council I spend most nights at a meeting or representing the council and in this run up to Christmas I've been attending 2 events per day at the weekends.	12/2/2016 10:27 AM
11	a) 10 b) 10 c)15 d) 5	12/1/2016 6:22 PM
12	a) 60% b) 20% c) 5% d) 15%	12/1/2016 4:18 PM

#	Please specify specific roles below and hours spent on each role:	Date
1	Vice Chair	12/14/2016 3:09 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.]

Q3. This question is very similar to the previous question but instead asks the Members to specify the amount of hours spent in specific roles especially if they hold more than one role as opposed to the overall time given on a weekly basis.



Answer Choices	Responses
Role 1:	100.00% 10
Role 2:	30.00% 3
Role 3:	10.00% 1
Role 4:	10.00% 1
Total Respondents: 10	

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2	Vice Chair of HOSC 2 hours a week	12/13/2016 5:10 PM
3	Chairman of Grants 1	12/13/2016 11:30 AM
4	none	12/13/2016 4:30 AM
5	Planning Committee 96hrs, Scrutiny Chair 30hrs, Grants Committee 8hrs, Council 12hrs	12/12/2016 11:28 AM
6	Deputy leader 4-8 hours. Finance 1-2 unless budget time when increases up to 8 hours a week or more. Legal and democratic 1 hour a week	12/12/2016 10:01 AM
7	Chairman of Planning 30	12/8/2016 11:34 AM
8	Role 1 District Councillor, 12, Cabinet member 14	12/5/2016 10:23 PM
9	Role 1 Chairman 17 hours, Attending Parish Councils 3 hours (5 in all over month), community engagement 3-5 hours	12/2/2016 10:27 AM
10	8 hours	12/2/2016 10:10 AM
11	40	12/1/2016 6:22 PM
12	Leader: 95% of time on leader activities	12/1/2016 4:18 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: 10 Skipped: 4

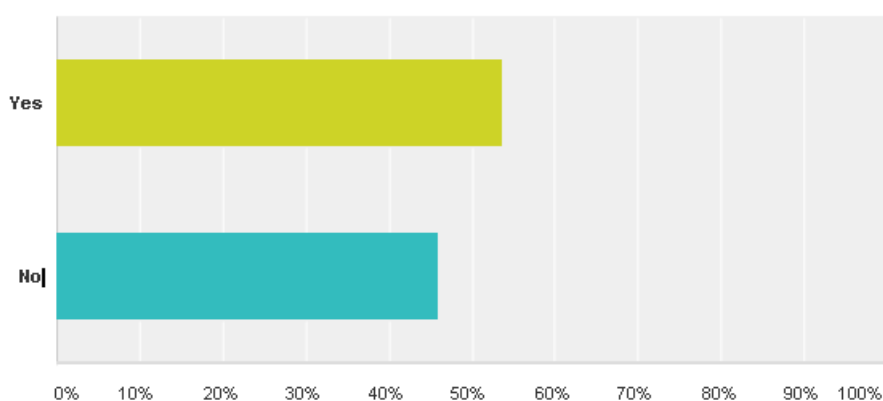
Q4. This question was asked as more of a follow on from the previous question and very similar to Question Two. Whilst Question Two asks how time given is divided into the various Council duties overall while Question four is asking more specifically about the amount of hours given to Council duties held within each role if they hold more than one. However, there appeared to be some confusion with this as a number of Members felt that it was a repeat question . Ten participants answered the question and gave an estimation of the amount of hours they spent within each of their roles resulting in a response rate of 71.4%.

#	Responses	Date
1	Monday Site Visit for Planning, 2 hours Monday Meeting with Bowls Committee ref Grant Application 2 hours Wednesday Meeting to discuss civic attendances 3 hours Thursday Former Chairs 4 hours Wednesday Planning 6 hours Thursday Council 3 hours Research for Grants 1 hour Research for planning 7 hours	12/14/2016 3:09 PM
2	The above hours are spent in a mixture of all of the above	12/13/2016 5:10 PM
3	All of the above - time varies	12/13/2016 4:30 AM
4	Attending meetings for all hours	12/12/2016 10:01 AM
5	A) 5 B)15 C)5 D)5	12/8/2016 11:34 AM
6	DC a - 2, DCb - 4, DCc - 5, DCd - 1 CM a -4, CM - 2, CMc- 6, CM 2	12/5/2016 10:23 PM
7	A. Attending Council meetings 4 hours B. Representing Council at Civic Events 17 hours C: Case work 3-4 hours D. Research (difficult to measure)	12/2/2016 10:27 AM
8	A, 2-3hours, B 1.5, C4hours, D, 1.5	12/2/2016 10:10 AM
9	A) 10 B)10 C)10 B)10	12/1/2016 6:22 PM
10	See question 2	12/1/2016 4:18 PM

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

Answered: 13 Skipped: 1

Q5. Question Five has a response rate of 92.8% but there appears to be a lot of mixed views on significant costs. 53.85% of those that answered felt that they did incur significant costs that were not currently covered while the other 46.15% responded that they did not. Listed in the comments section, the main costs that Members felt were not covered were stationary, IT, food and beverages between meetings and care.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	53.85%	7
No	46.15%	6
Total		13

#	If YES, please provide details:	Date
1	Lunches, coffees between meetings on same day.	12/14/2016 3:09 PM
2	Office expenses, IT/Broadband, Stationery	12/13/2016 11:30 AM
3	Computer, paper, Inks, phone	12/12/2016 11:28 AM
4	There are times when my workload at work plus council put heavy pressure on my time	12/12/2016 10:01 AM
5	I believe councillors are under paid especially those with Special Responsibilities because our pay is less than the minimum wage and must be subsidised by our own pockets.	12/8/2016 11:34 AM
6	I don't charge any travelling expense for any civic events in my ward or neighbouring wards. Nor do I for attending the 5 parish councils or when I often drive to Didcot to speak at planning meetings on behalf of residents or my local parishes. However, I do if I'm sitting on this planning committee.	12/2/2016 10:27 AM
7	Arranging care for elderly relative	12/1/2016 6:22 PM
8	Question not clear.	12/1/2016 4:18 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: 14 Skipped: 0

Q6. This question had one of the highest response rates with all 14 Members answering this question resulting in a 100% participation. The question was designed to ask Members how much of their time given for Council duties should be voluntary. The Members felt that although some time should be given as voluntary the allowances should be made higher for those that took part in a lot more meetings and events than those that did not. The percentage of how much of their time should be voluntary ranged from anywhere between 10 – 25%, along with one answer suggestion that none of the time given by Members should be voluntary.

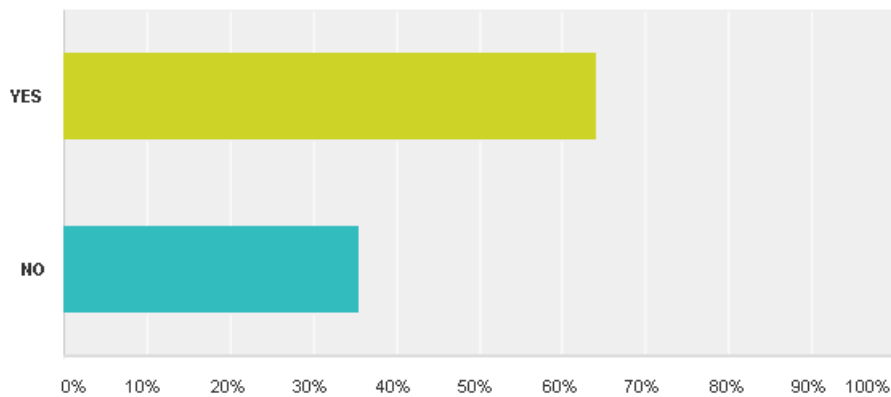
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#	Responses	Date
1	Taking into account my cou cillor allowance I would say I give about 75% of my time voluntarily. It would be good if this could be 50%. What seems illogical is that some councillors are not member of any committee so only attend 6 meetings a year whereas I attend, say 40, and receive the same allowance.	12/14/2016 3:09 PM
2	10%	12/13/2016 5:10 PM
3	25%	12/13/2016 11:30 AM
4	None	12/13/2016 4:30 AM
5	The time which I give to the community and constituents which I have not listed above. 20%	12/12/2016 11:28 AM
6	Evening work should be at no charge to the council but to encourage more younger members of society they should be recompensed	12/12/2016 10:01 AM
7	I used to think it was good to give your time for nothing but it is increasingly difficult for many to commit to the hours and we are not attracting a good mixture od councillors , so 0%	12/8/2016 11:34 AM
8	Many more hours, talking with the public face to face or on the telephone who you meet when you are in public places in your ward. The role means that you are always working, whenever the public expect a response e.g. evenings and weekends. Also the hours travelling which I have not included in the figures shown above as travelling was not identified in item 2. Typically between 4 and 8 hours per week.	12/5/2016 10:23 PM
9	20	12/2/2016 1:47 PM
10	20%	12/2/2016 10:49 AM
11	As chairman I would say the 50% of time is voluntary whilst as just a ward councillor I would say 70% of my time is voluntary. (i.e. the majority of ward councillor time is spent in the community with no reward bar this standard annual allowance).	12/2/2016 10:27 AM
12	What is not considered is the amount of time being stopped while out shopping or when in town with family, it's non stop but it's all part of the territory.	12/2/2016 10:10 AM
13	25%	12/1/2016 6:22 PM
14	2-4 hours per week.	12/1/2016 4:18 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. This was given as a tick box question of a Yes/No answer for Members to give their opinion on the Basic Allowance rate. Again, there was a 100% response rate, with 64.29% selecting that they felt it was appropriate while 35.71% did not. There were also 10 participants that had left comments with opinions ranging from Allowances should be kept in line with minimum wage and inflation, travel costs should be reimbursed, District Councils should have a set rate level for the South East and should be paid on per meetings attended.



Answer Choices	Responses	
YES	64.29%	9
NO	35.71%	5
Total		14

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#	If NO, should it be HIGHER or LOWER? Please give a reason for your answer:	Date
1	I think it should be higher for members of the Planning Committee as we meet every three weeks - the only committee to do so. And recently we have been having meeting at least twice a month in two cases three per month.	12/14/2016 3:11 PM
2	Only to the agreed index	12/12/2016 11:29 AM
3	Yes but maybe should be linked to numbers of meetings they attend	12/12/2016 10:02 AM
4	Higher. It is less than the minimum wage	12/8/2016 11:35 AM
5	With travel costs on top of this amount.	12/5/2016 10:24 PM
6	Higher	12/2/2016 1:48 PM
7	But it should be inflation linked.	12/2/2016 10:50 AM
8	It should be the same for all district councils in the country.	12/2/2016 10:28 AM
9	Higher for numerous reasons, increasingly heavier workload especially related to planning matters, we need to attract councillors from all walks of life not just the retired (the average age of councillors across the country is to high) The South East has a high cost of living and there needs to be better pay to attract a good cross section of society.	12/1/2016 6:22 PM
10	Higher in order to attract those with less time on their hands	12/1/2016 4:20 PM

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

Answered: 6 Skipped: 8

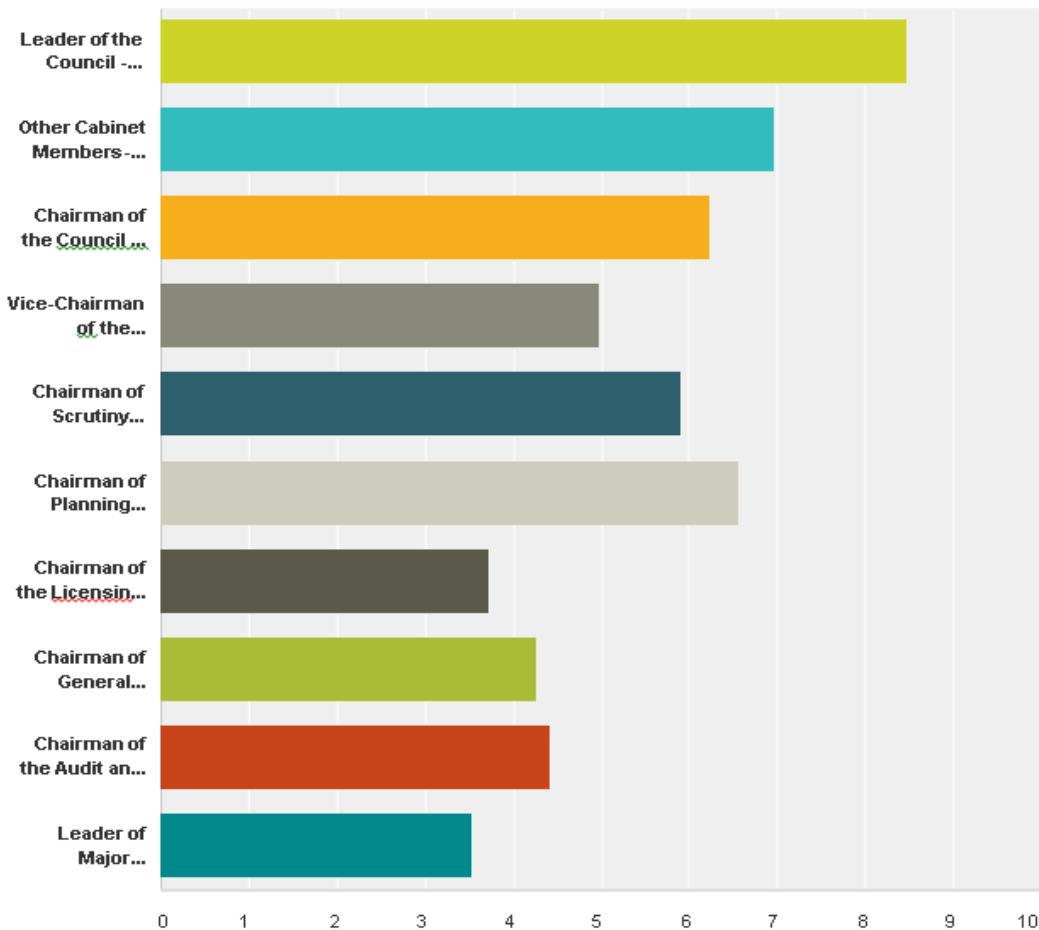
Q8. The question asked the Members to indicate what they felt was an appropriate level for the Basic Allowance to be. It resulted in only 42.1% of the Members answering and 57.1% skipping the question completely. The answers given ranged from the current level of £4575 up to £10,000.

#	Responses	Date
1	7K -10K	12/8/2016 11:35 AM
2	6,000	12/2/2016 1:48 PM
3	4575	12/2/2016 10:50 AM
4	N/a	12/2/2016 10:12 AM
5	£7350	12/1/2016 6:22 PM
6	£6K	12/1/2016 4:20 PM

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 10, with 1 being the most important, and 10 being the least important.]

Answered: 12 Skipped: 2

Q9. When asked which Member roles were the most important ranked in order of 1 – 10, the Leader of the Council role was ranked the most important by 83.33% whilst the Leader of the Major Opposition Group was ranked as the least important Member role.



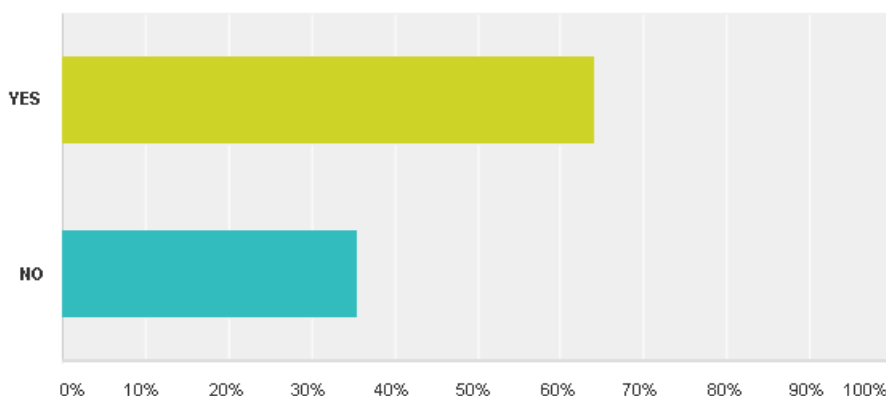
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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Score
Leader of the Council - £18,151	83.33% 10	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 2	12	8.50
Other Cabinet Members -	0.00% 0	54.55% 6	9.09% 1	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	11	7.00
Chairman of the Council -	0.00% 0	16.67% 2	16.67% 2	25.00% 3	16.67% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 2	8.33% 1	0.00% 0	12	6.25
Vice-Chairman of the Council -	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	30.00% 3	10.00% 1	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	10.00% 1	10	5.00
Chairman of Scrutiny Committee	0.00% 0	8.33% 1	8.33% 1	33.33% 4	8.33% 1	25.00% 3	8.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.33% 1	12	5.92
Chairman of Planning Committee - £4,840	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 6	8.33% 1	16.67% 2	0.00% 0	25.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12	6.58
Chairman of the Licensing Acts Committee - £510	9.09% 1	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	9.09% 1	36.36% 4	11	3.73
Chairman of General Licensing Committee - £2,040	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	9.09% 1	27.27% 3	18.18% 2	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	11	4.27
Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee - £1,210	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	9.09% 1	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	9.09% 1	36.36% 4	0.00% 0	11	4.45
Leader of Major Opposition Group £1,210	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	9.09% 1	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	27.27% 3	11	3.55

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

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

Q10. All participants answered this question as it gave the Members a chance to give their opinions on what changes that they would like implemented within the Council. There was a high response rate of 64.29% that they would like to see changes to the allowances whilst the other 35.71% of the Members that took part felt that they would not. Furthermore, 9 of the participants provided comments in the comment box with their opinions ranging from realistic increases to certain roles should receive more for the amount of work that they have to undertake within the role.



Answer Choices	Responses	
YES	64.29%	9
NO	35.71%	5
Total		14

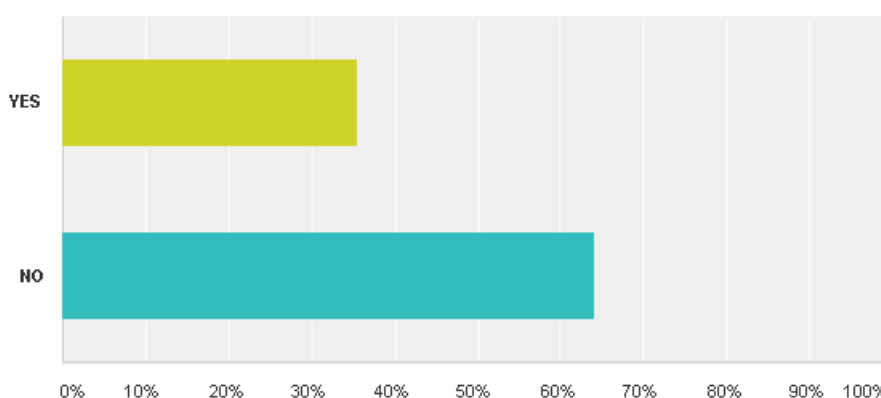
#	If YES, please provide details:	Date
1	The selections disappear in Q9. The Leader role is almost a full time job and I think this should be much higher remuneration, say, £30 000. Planning	12/14/2016 3:16 PM
2	Two Licensing Functions are combined and should be reflected	12/13/2016 11:38 AM
3	Leader needs increase	12/12/2016 11:38 AM
4	Leader and deputy leader	12/12/2016 10:05 AM
5	Vice Chairman of Planning should be a paid post and Chairman of Planning should be paid more given the workload	12/8/2016 11:43 AM
6	Some increase	12/2/2016 1:52 PM
7	Leader should receive more the workload is more than a full time job. Cabinet members should get slightly more, in my case I've had to go part-time to enable me to deal with the amount of work	12/2/2016 10:20 AM
8	Major Opposition Leader and Chairman of Planning and Scrutiny committees could be paid more given their workload	12/1/2016 6:23 PM

9	Realistic increases.	12/1/2016 4:23 PM
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Q11 Would you like to see any new SRAs introduced?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

Q11. This was another question that had a 100% response rate from all the Members that took part in the survey. The question asked the Members if they would like to see any new Special Responsibility Allowances introduced which resulted in two thirds of the Members voting that they did not want to see new Allowances introduced.



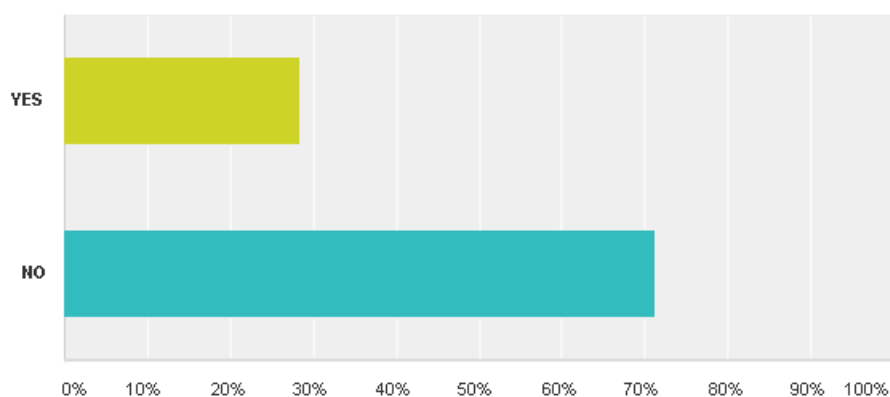
Answer Choices	Responses
YES	35.71% 5
NO	64.29% 9
Total	14

#	If YES, please provide details:	Date
1	Planning committee is minimum 3 hours plus travel with at least 7 or 8 hours preparation needed, often more on major projects. It meets three or four times more often than other committees. Members should receive an allowance.	12/14/2016 3:16 PM
2	Vice Chairman of Planning	12/8/2016 11:43 AM
3	Please avoid Mnemonics	12/2/2016 10:33 AM
4	Members of planning should receive an allowance	12/2/2016 10:20 AM
5	Vice Chairman for Planning	12/1/2016 6:23 PM
6	Deputy Leader	12/1/2016 4:23 PM

Q12 A carer’s allowance shall be paid where a councillor has necessarily incurred expenditure for the care of one or more children or a dependent relative while undertaking any of the approved duties specified in Schedule 1 to this scheme. This allowance shall be no more than the costs incurred up to the following hourly limits and include a reasonable time for travel and 15 minutes for hand-over: • Childcare - up to £7.20 per hour (in line with the national minimum wage) • Dependent Relative Care - up to £17 per hour Do you think these rates should be increased?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 0

Q12. All of the Members that took part in this survey answered this question. Whilst 71.43% of Members felt that this should not be raised the other 28.57% felt that it should be. When taking the comments in to consideration it appears that those who felt that there should be an increase raised concerns of the cost of childcare and carers.



Answer Choices	Responses
YES	28.57% 4
NO	71.43% 10
Total	14

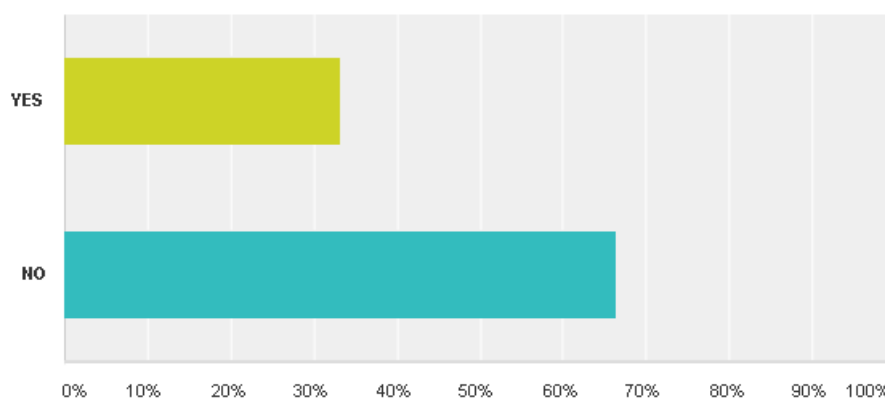
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#	If YES, please indicate rate and season:	Date
1	I think minimum wage has risen.	12/14/2016 3:16 PM
2	Hard to get this price for a babysitter	12/12/2016 10:05 AM
3	Childcare should be linked to living wage	12/2/2016 10:51 AM
4	Because it is difficult to get a carer for just 2 or 3 hours	12/1/2016 6:23 PM

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

Answered: 12 Skipped: 2

Q13. Members were asked if they had any comments regarding the travel allowance levels set by HMRC. The majority either voted that they did not or skipped the question entirely whilst a third of Members raised a number of issues. The main factor appeared to be due to the increasing cost of fuel and that the HMRC rate was not particularly accommodating for those that lived in more rural areas.



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

#	If YES, please provide details:	Date
1	Fuel cost are increasing	12/12/2016 11:40 AM
2	Claiming subsistence due to afternoon and evening meetings needs to be better publised. I was not aware I could claim for subsistence ie food and never have done in 17 years as a councillor.	12/8/2016 11:48 AM
3	SODC rate was 55p per mile, this was reduced to 45p per mile when petrol prices went down. Since then petrol process have risen but not the allowance.	12/2/2016 10:35 AM
4	With the cost of fuel in the countryside varying so much I'm not sure if the recommended level is accurate enough specifically for our district	12/1/2016 6:20 PM
5	Wider definitive of "council activities" to include conferences and case work travel.	12/1/2016 4:25 PM

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

Answered: 3 Skipped: 11

Q14. The Members were asked if they had any further comments on Allowances and only 3 Members responded. These comments raised points that there should be a smaller Basic Allowance overall and that you should earn more upon the number of meetings attended and increases made where appropriate, as well as HMRC given access to see the amount of hours worked by each Member.

#	Responses	Date
1	Maybe be member allowances should be linked to a smaller basic and then so much per meeting attended. Planning in particular should be reviewed as they have so many meetings to attend long with site visits. Also the leader responsibility should be increased as nearly. Full time role with much happening during the day	12/12/2016 10:07 AM
2	There is certainly a need to review allowances and I hope there are increases made where appropriate.	12/8/2016 11:48 AM
3	It should be easier for HMRC to see hours worked by Members.	12/1/2016 6:20 PM

Q15 Name:

Answered: 12 Skipped: 2

Q15. Before submission, Members were given the opportunity to provide their name along with their survey data. Out of the 14 that took part a grand total of 12 provided their names.

#	Responses	Date
1	Jeannette Matelot	12/14/2016 3:17 PM
2	Nigel Champken-Woods	12/13/2016 5:12 PM
3	David Dodds	12/13/2016 11:39 AM
4	Anonymous	12/13/2016 4:33 AM
5	Richard Pullen	12/12/2016 11:40 AM
6	Jane murphy	12/12/2016 10:07 AM
7	Cllr Felix Bloomfield	12/8/2016 11:48 AM
8	Lynn Lloyd	12/5/2016 10:26 PM
9	John Walsh	12/2/2016 1:53 PM
10	Paul Harrison	12/2/2016 10:35 AM
11	Tony Harbour	12/2/2016 10:21 AM
12	John Cotton	12/1/2016 4:25 PM