

**REPORT OF
MEDWAY INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL**

September 2019

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1. Summary of Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Basic Allowance paid to all Councillors should be £10,421 per year and be linked to the median Council staff hourly pay for the next four years. This will begin to address the current situation where Medway is the lowest of the comparator authorities.
- 1.2 That the levels of other special responsibility allowances should be as follows, and be linked to the basic allowance as shown by the benchmark % for the next four years. The basic allowance to be linked to the median Council staff hourly pay as described in 1.1 above.

POSITION	£	BENCHMARK AS % OF BASIC ALLOWANCE	
Leader of the Council	31263	300	
Deputy Leader	20842	200	
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (8)	15632	150	
Chairman of Planning Committee	12505	120	
Opposition Group Leader (more than 20% of members)	12505	120	
Chairman of Health & Wellbeing Board	12505	120	Only payable if held by Councillor who is not Cabinet member
Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Committee (4)	10421	100	
Chairman of Audit Committee	7295	70	
Deputy Opposition Group leader (more than 20% of members)	6253	60	
Overview & Scrutiny Spokespersons (group more than 20% of members) (4)	6253	60	
Opposition Group Leader (more than 10% of members)	6253	60	Not currently payable
Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee	5211	50	
Opposition Group Spokesperson for Planning Committee (>20% of members)	5211	50	
Chairman of Employment Matters Committee	3647	35	
Vice-Chairmen of Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3647	35	
Ruling Group Whip	1563	15	
Opposition Group Whip (>20% of members)	1042	10	

- 1.3 That the changes to the Basic Allowance and SRAs are backdated to 9 May 2019, but if, as a result of the changes, any Councillor has a net decrease in what they receive, that the Council does not seek repayment and the change, in those circumstances, takes effect 1 April 2020.
- 1.4 That the Allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be as follows: Mayor £13026 (125% of the basic allowance) and Deputy Mayor £6253 (60% of the basic allowance) and that they be linked to the basic allowance for the next four years which itself is linked to the median Council staff hourly pay.
- 1.5 That the changes to the allowances to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor come into effect from the date of the Annual Council meeting in 2020.
- 1.6 That the SRA to the Chairman of Licensing & Safety Committee and members of the Licensing Hearing Panel and Licensing 1982 Panel Hearings be at the rate of £40 per day and be index-linked to the median Council staff hourly pay for the next four years based on a 3 hour session and that the changes comes into effect from 9 May 2019;
- 1.7 That the current provisions in the Members Allowances Scheme for discounting a subsequent SRA (paragraph 7.1 Note 1) be amended so that Councillors are only entitled to receive one SRA at any one time, with the exception of those in receipt of an SRA from Medway and/or the Kent and Medway Police & Crime Panel or Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority who should have the second and any subsequent Medway SRA discounted as described in the current Scheme (paragraph 7.1 Note 2) and that this revision comes into effect from 1 April 2020.
- 1.8 That the Members' Allowance Scheme (paragraph 7.2) be amended (a) to provide two maximum hourly rates for dependent care costs- £9 an hour per child for child care index-linked against the Living Wage Foundation rate for the next four years and £16.06 per hour per person for adult care or children with special needs, index-linked against the Council's commissioned hourly home care rate for the next four years; (b) to show the revised maximum for child care and adult care relating to conference attendance; (c) to contain a provision that gives the Head of Elections and Member Services some flexibility to assist Councillors who need specialist care that costs more than the rates approved (d) to remove the requirement for any childcare to be provided by a childminder registered with Medway; the revisions to come into effect from date of the Council decision.
- 1.9 That the current provisions for payments to co-optees and members of Education Schools Admission and Exclusion Appeals Panels as set out in the Scheme (paragraph 7.3) are retained without amendment
- 1.10 That the provisions for subsistence allowance set out in paragraph 7.3.1 of the Members Allowances Scheme remain unaltered but that the rates of subsistence allowance claimable as set out in Appendix 3 be indexed against those payable to Council staff for a maximum of four years.
- 1.11 That the existing list of duties that qualify for travelling and subsistence allowances in Appendix 1 to the Members' Allowances Scheme remain unchanged.
- 1.12 That the rate for journeys by car for Councillors should be increased to 45p per mile for all engine sizes and indexed against the HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rate for the next four years (paragraph 7.3.2 of current Scheme). This brings the rate into line with the vast majority of other local authorities

- 1.13 That the travel allowances scheme is also amended as follows to bring it into line with the Council staff scheme against which the scheme provisions should be indexed (paragraph 7.3.2) and Appendix 3:
- No additional 1p per mile is paid for passengers
 - All journeys by car are paid at the same flat rate of 45p rather than a differential rate for the first 60 miles being paid at 40p and 20p per mile thereafter.
 - The rate for travel by motor cycles should be 21.3p per mile
 - Travel by bicycle should continue to be at 20p per mile
- 1.14 That the revisions to the travel allowances come into effect on the date of the Council decision.
- 1.15 That the other provisions in the Scheme relating to travel set out in existing paragraph 7.3.2 remain unchanged.
- 1.16 That paragraph 8 of the Members' Allowances Scheme relating to Conference expenses, duties for which allowances can and cannot be claimed and how to claim remain unchanged.
- 1.17 That paragraphs 6.6 to 6.10 in the current scheme be replaced with the provisions set out below to bring them into line with the relevant legislation:

“6.6 In the year of Local Council elections:

- (a) Councillors who had been appointed as Mayor and Deputy Mayor, prior to the elections, shall be entitled to receive payment of their allowances until the date of the Annual Council Meeting held after the election even if they are not re-elected as Councillors;
- (b) The Councillor who held the position of Leader of the Council prior to the elections shall continue to receive payment of his/her Special Responsibility Allowance until the day of the Annual Council meeting even if he/she is not re-elected unless he/she resigns from office, is disqualified or otherwise removed from office;
- (c))The Councillor who held the position of Deputy Leader of the Council prior to the elections shall continue to receive payment of his/her Special Responsibility Allowance until the day of the Annual Council meeting unless he/she is no longer a Councillor, resigns from office or is removed from office by the Leader ;
- (d) Any Councillor who had been appointed by the Leader as a Cabinet Member prior to the elections shall continue to receive payment of his/her Special Responsibility Allowance until the day of the Annual Council meeting unless he/she is no longer a Councillor, resigns from office or is removed from office by the Leader;
- (e) Special Responsibility Allowances payable to Councillors who were Opposition Group Leader(s) or Group Whip(s) prior to the election will cease to be payable from the day of retirement after the elections. Special Responsibility Allowances for Councillors appointed to these positions after the elections will be payable from the date on which formal notice of their appointment is received by the Chief Executive signed by all Members who wish to be treated as members of the relevant political group;

- (f) Councillors who had been entitled to any other Special Responsibility Allowances in the Scheme prior to the elections shall cease to be entitled to receive payment for the Special Responsibility Allowance from the date on which Councillors take up office after the election;
- (g) Those Councillors who are appointed to positions which are entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance after the elections, other than those provided for in paragraphs 6(a) to (e) above, shall be entitled to receive such payments from the day after which they are formally appointed to the relevant position of Special Responsibility either by the Leader, the Council or relevant Committee;
- (h) Where a Councillor is in receipt of both a Special Responsibility Allowance from Medway Council and a Special Responsibility Allowance from the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel or Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority, no deduction should be made to their Medway Special Responsibility Allowance until Medway Police and Crime Panel or Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority have formally agreed their appointment to the position for which the SRA is payable by them. If the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel or Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority Special Responsibility Allowance is backdated, the deduction from the Medway Special Responsibility Allowance shall be backdated to the same date.”

1.18 That the Members Allowance Scheme be amended to add the following provisions:

“Sickness, maternity, paternity and adoption absence

- All Councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full for a period up to 6 months in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence
- Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full for a period up to 6 months, in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence
- Where, for reasons connected with sickness, maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave or shared parental leave a Councillor is unable to attend a meeting of the Council for a period of 6 months, a dispensation by Full Council can be sought in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- If a replacement to cover the period of absence under these provisions is appointed by Council or the Leader (or in the case of party group position, the party group) the replacement will be entitled to claim an SRA pro rata for the period over which the cover is provided.
- If a Councillor stands down, or an election is held during the period when a Councillor is absent due to any of the above and the Councillor is not re-elected or decides not to stand for re-election, their basic allowance and any SRA will cease from the date they leave office”

1.19 That no allowance is paid to the Councillor representative on the Fostering or Adoptions Panels but that the Council look at the feasibility of more Councillors being appointed to the Adoption Panel to share the workload and time commitment.

2. Introduction

2.1 Medway Council has established this Independent Panel to make recommendations about the financial allowances to be paid to Councillors.

2.2 The Panel made initial recommendations for a scheme of allowances in August 2001 and the Council adopted these recommendations in September 2001.

2.3 The Panel subsequently reviewed the scheme in October 2002, July 2003, March 2005, and March, April and May 2006 taking into account changes to the political management arrangements, new responsibilities and the evolution of the overview and scrutiny function.

2.4 The Panel reviewed some specific parts of the Scheme in November 2007, relating to Special Responsibility Allowances and in 2009 made recommendations to the Council about

- updating the Members Allowances scheme to reflect provisions that should have been included
- clarifying the Basic Allowance
- amendments to the Dependant Carers Allowance
- subsistence and travel allowance rates
- the introduction of a cycling allowance
- Councillors not being able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme
- the introduction of a provision for members of Schools Admission and Exclusion Appeals Panels to claim subsistence, travel and dependent carers' allowances
- members of Schools Admission and Exclusion Appeals Panels not being compensated for loss of earnings (or benefits)

2.5 The Panel's full review of Special Responsibility Allowances that was due to take place in 2009 was deferred due to the timing of the European Parliamentary and then General Election in 2010 and the next review was undertaken after the Local Elections in May 2011. At that Review the Panel made recommendations on Special Responsibility Allowances, the subsistence and travel allowances, the expenses for childcare or dependent care, the annual up rating index, an SRA to members of the newly-established 1982 Act Panel Hearings as well as options to save 5% or £39,000 on the existing members allowances budget.

2.6 In 2013 and 2014 the Panel were asked to make recommendations specifically about SRAs to the Chairmen of the Health & Wellbeing Board and Employment Matters Committees.

2.7 After the Local elections in May 2015 the Panel undertook the four-yearly review regarding the whole Members Allowances Scheme but, disappointingly, its' recommendations did not achieve the support of the Council and were not implemented.

3. Background

3.1 The Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent regulations require every local authority to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations about the financial allowances to be paid to Councillors. New regulations came into force in May 2003 that require the Panel to make recommendations on travel and subsistence allowances, pensions, and co-opted members' allowances.

3.2 Medway Council decides its own scheme of allowances for Councillors and the amounts to be paid under that scheme. However, it must first have regard to the advice of this Independent Remuneration Panel and must make the report and recommendations of the Panel available for public inspection.

4. Appointment of the Panel

4.1 Independent Remuneration Panels must have at least three members. In October 2013, Medway Council amended the composition of the Panel to comprise a Panel of 5 members from a broad range of experiences and backgrounds including the business community, not-for-profit sector, charity and HR with the support of South East Employers to Chair the Panel.

4.2 All members of the Panel have declared that they are not active members of a political party or associated with any Councillors serving on Medway Council or any of its Parishes through friendship or any other personal association.

4.3 The Panel members are as follows:

- Mark Palmer, Development Director, South East Employers (Chair)
- Marina Gleaves
- Norma Hastings
- Jackie Powell
- Natalie Wallace
- Christopher Webb

5. The work of the Panel

5.1 The Panel met 3 times in July 2019. Parts of two of the sessions were dedicated to interviews with Councillors. The Head of Elections & Member Services ensured that the Panel had appropriate advice and administrative support.

6. Terms of reference

6.1 The terms of reference of the Panel set by the Council are:

- to make recommendations to the authority as to the amount of basic allowance that should be payable to its elected Members
- to make recommendations to the authority about the roles and responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be payable and as to the amount of each such allowance
- to make recommendations as to whether the authority's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and, if such a recommendation is made, the amount of this allowance and the means by which it is determined
- to provide informal advice, as requested by the Council, on other allowances payable under the Local Government Act 1972 (i.e. travel and subsistence allowance and allowances for attendance at certain meetings and conferences)
- to make recommendations on travel and subsistence allowances, and allowances for co-opted members of committees.

6.2 As well as undertaking the four yearly review of the whole Members Allowance Scheme the Panel were particularly mindful to consider (1) the SRA rates payable to the Leader, Cabinet members and the Chair of Planning Committee as they stand in comparison to other posts that attract SRAs and in comparison to similar local authorities; and (2) the appropriateness of the allowances paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

7. The Panel's approach to its task

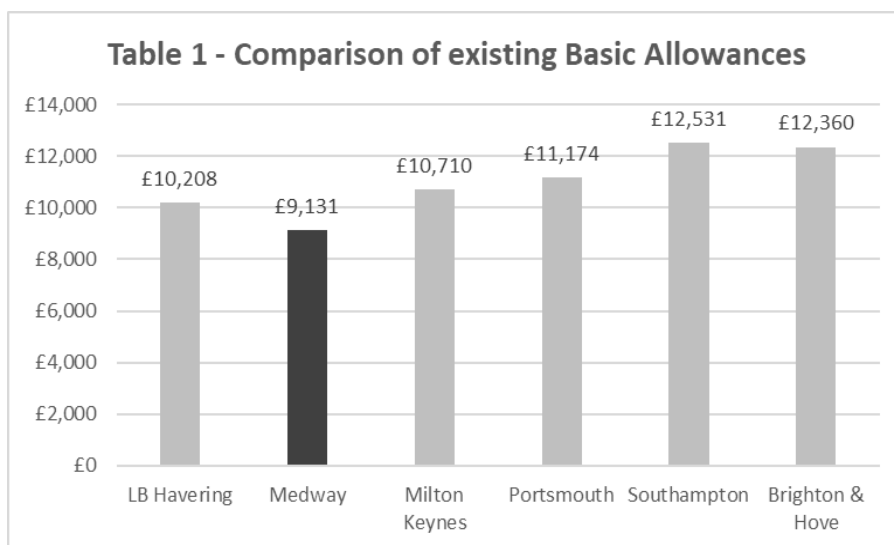
7.1 In formulating its recommendations the Panel has taken account of statutory guidance from the relevant government department.

7.2 In addition, the Panel considered comparative information relating to allowances paid by other local authorities, particularly other Unitary authorities in the South East, and London authorities. The panel also took into consideration a submission from the Labour and Cooperative Group of the Council. No other submissions were received.

7.3 The Panel also considered responses to a questionnaire it circulated to all Councillors to ascertain information about the number of hours spent on their ward work and other responsibilities and their views on other aspects of the members' allowances scheme. A total of 9 completed questionnaires were received. The Panel also had discussions with a broad range of Councillors to discuss these issues in more detail, including the Leader of the Council, a Cabinet member, a Chairman of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman of Planning Committee, the Leader of the main Opposition Group, Opposition Spokespersons and other SRA holders.

8 Benchmark baseline information

The tables below indicate Medway's current position amongst the comparator group in terms of the basic allowance and some key SRAs.



average £11,019
 median £10,942

Table 2 - Comparison of key SRAs

	Leader		Deputy Leader		Cabinet member	Chair of Planning Cttee	Chair of O&S Cttee	Opposition Group Ldr	Opposition Spokes persons	Mayor	Deputy Mayor
LB Havering	£45,048		£31,420		£28,780	£14,418	£14,418	£7,650	£0	£12,000	£4,000
Medway	£26,818	*	£21,071	*	£11,312	£7,692	£9,427	£9,427	£3,771	£13,656	£6,881
Milton Keynes	£30,600		£15,606		£11,220	£8,323	£4,590	£632 per Group member	£0	£11,220	£5,610
Portsmouth	£19,719		£0		£7,669	£3,911	£2,739	£6,573	£0	£7,669	£1,096
Southampton	£24,570		£0		£12,285	£6,265	£6,142	1/24th of basic x mbrs	£0	NA	NA
Brighton & Hove	£32,142		£22,949		£0	£12,459	£0	£11,250	£6,428	£13,082	£3,662
average	29,816		15,174		11,878	8,845	6,219	8,725	1,700	11,525	4,250
median	28,709		18,339		11,266	8,008	5,366	8,539	0	12,000	4,000

* Leader and Deputy Leader figures include 50% of Cabinet Member SRA

8.1 As can be seen, the current basic allowance is the lowest amongst the comparator group; the picture across the range of SRAs is more varied, with Medway paying at or below the average across the comparator group in respect of 3 SRAs and paying the highest in the case of 6 of the SRAs. The Medway SRAs for the Leader and Deputy Leader show the total they receive including 50% of the Cabinet Member SRA so that the comparisons were fair. The Panel took the general view that Medway's allowances should be brought more in line with the average of the comparator group. The Panel noted that none of the Members' Allowances Schemes of other authorities in the comparator group allow a councillor to receive more than one SRA at a time.

9. **Basic Allowance**

9.1 Each local authority must make provision in its scheme of allowances for a basic, flat rate allowance payable to all members. The allowance must be the same for each councillor and the Panel are firmly of the view that the level set should be sufficient to enable people of limited means to undertake the role whilst not acting as the only incentive to do so.

9.2 The formula for calculating the basic allowance usually comprises three elements – an average number of hours spent on ward work and responsibilities of a non-executive councillor, an hourly rate and an element of discount to reflect the amount of time expected to be provided unpaid (called the Public Service Discount – PSD).

9.3 The parameters used in the current formula have been in place for some time and it is not clear what hourly rate and PSD had been used. The Panel therefore wanted to identify a coherent and robust future proof and transparent formula that was seen to be fair from the perspective of Councillors and Council staff that could be easily explained to the public and could be readily updated as appropriate.

Average weekly hours on ward work

- 9.4 The Panel recognises that it is difficult to identify the average number of hours per week that Councillors spend on ward work; it will vary according to the type of ward the Councillor represents in terms of the issues that may be raised by constituents, how many Councillors represent the ward in question, and indeed the number of hours the councillor can make available due to other commitments. However, for the Panel to make its recommendations it needs to identify an average that adequately reflects the majority of councillors' experiences most of the time.
- 9.5 When the last full review was undertaken in 2015 the average number of hours was deemed to be 19 and the Panel were keen to ascertain if this had changed. This was one area that was addressed in the questionnaire sent to all Councillors and the meetings held with a variety of Councillors.
- 9.6 Out of the 9 responses received, 1 Councillor felt unable to identify an "average" because their workload varied considerably week to week. However, of the remaining 8 responses, the average hours varied between 10 and 30. This was discussed with the selection of Councillors who kindly agreed to talk to the Panel individually, and the average of 20 is deemed appropriate. This slight increase is likely to include a small element for any additional administrative and safeguarding work as a result of the introduction of GDPR, as suggested by the Labour and Co-operative Group submission, but the Panel were not provided with any evidence of this and would imagine the additional burden is minimal once privacy notices and processes for keeping data up-to-date are put in place.
- 9.7 The Panel has therefore determined to use the average hours of 20 per week in the formula for members' basic allowance.

Hourly rate

- 9.8 Currently, it is understood that the hourly rate applied is the average hourly pay for all full-time workers in Medway using Office for National Statistics figures (ONS). The current hourly rate for 2018 is £14.41. However, whilst this figure is adjusted annually it is only published each November which makes it unwieldy and administratively difficult to use as the annual index rate to uprate the basic allowance. The Panel was advised that the median hourly rate for Council staff is £13.36 and considers that this is a more transparent multiplier than the ONS rate, the latter which includes private sectors salaries. It will be simpler to use as it can be revised more readily than waiting for the ONS figure in November, and therefore be applied at or near the start of the new financial year. It also ensures that the rate of increase in Councillors' allowances remains firmly linked to Council staff pay increases and is again transparent.

Public Service Discount (PSD)

- 9.9 The Panel recognises that the recruitment of councillors should be drawn from across the social spectrum, and not just restricted to those people who can afford to give an open-ended time commitment in return for no more than honorary remuneration. A realistic scheme of allowances is needed to enable councillors to do their work effectively. Whilst a genuine concern for the welfare of the community and a commitment to public service has historically been one, if not the main, reason people seek election, and is one of the keystones of the effective local democracy, it is not enough in itself for people of limited means. However, it is expected that there is also a reciprocal obligation on councillors to do a proportion of their ward work without remuneration – this is called the Public Service Discount (PSD).

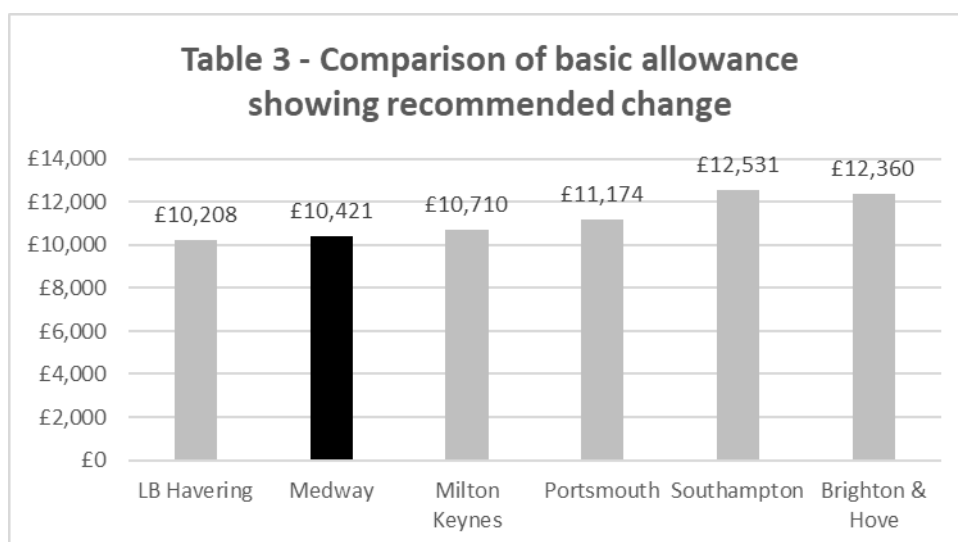
- 9.10 The level of PSD cannot, inevitably, be calculated scientifically. As referred to earlier in this report, the average number of hours incurred on ward work varies considerably between Councillors depending on their personal circumstances.
- 9.11 The responses from Councillors to the questionnaire and those who met the Panel about the level of a fair PSD varied but generally the consensus was that it should be around 25%.
- 9.12 The level of PSD in the comparator group was difficult to use as a benchmark as it varies considerably between none at all and 50% with the average being 21%. Medway's current PSD at 35% ranks well above the average.
- 9.13 Ultimately the Panel is minded to reduce the PSD to 25% as a fair reflection of the average amount of hours councillors should be expected to work as a voluntary contribution. This translates to 5 hours of the average 20 hours undertaken on ward work being deemed to be a voluntary contribution.

Calculation of Panels' recommended basic allowance

- 9.14 Using the different parameters discussed above, the Panel recommend a basic allowance of £10,421 calculated using the following formula:

20 hours per week x £13.36 hourly rate = £267.2 x 52 weeks a year = **£13894.4**
 PSD of 25% = £3474
 £13894 - £3474 = **£10421**

- 9.15 Whilst the Panel recognises the accuracy of some Councillors comments that the current level of basic allowance is low compared to others, they are also aware that neither the current economic situation nor the evidence from the questionnaire or discussions with Councillors, justifies a large increase in the basic allowance. However, the Panel feels that some increase is required in order to start to bring Medway into line with the comparator group. The revised formula, therefore, results in a modest increase that lifts Medway from being the bottom of the comparator group.



average £11,234
 median £10,942

Indexing of basic allowance

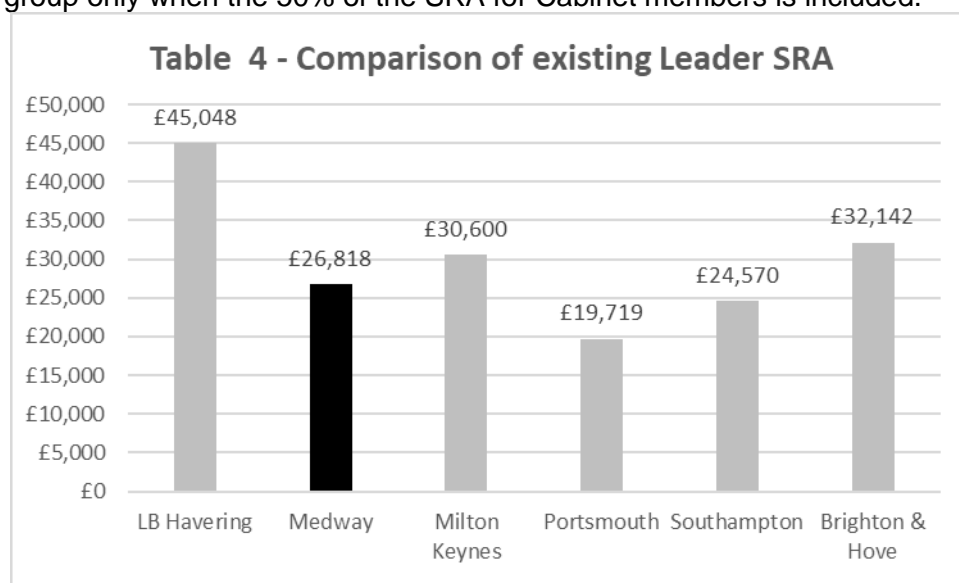
- 9.16 For the reasons set out in paragraph 9.8 the Panel recommends that the Basic Allowance is indexed annually against the median hourly rate for Council staff for a maximum of 4 years.

10. Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

- 10.1 The Panel noted that the Labour Group in its' submission re-stated it's view from 2015 that all SRAs should be reduced by 5% on the basis that the savings should go towards the paying of the Living Wage to the lowest paid Council Staff. The Panel took the view that whilst it might recommend reductions of 5% it could not be guaranteed that the savings would be applied where desired. Councillors had agreed a 5% reduction to allowances previously, which had now resulted in many of the rates falling to below the average of the comparator group, particularly the basic allowance.
- 10.2 In turning its' attention to the SRAs the Panel was mindful that, considering the rates paid to the Leader, Cabinet members and the Chair of Planning Committee meant that the budget impact of its' recommendations were unlikely to be neutral.
- 10.3 The Panel were firmly of the view that the SRAs should be rationalised and simplified whilst recognising the responsibility and complexity of the different roles.
- 10.4 After some consideration of a variety of ways to calculate the SRAs, the Panel concluded that the fairest, most transparent way was to set them as a multiplier of the basic allowance which mirrors the method used by a broad range of other local authorities. The Panel understands that the current Leader's SRA was originally calculated at 110% of the Basic Allowance but that since then, the various index-links that have been applied have resulted in that and all other SRAs not being a recognisable percentage of the basic allowance, leading to the schedule being confusing and not transparent.

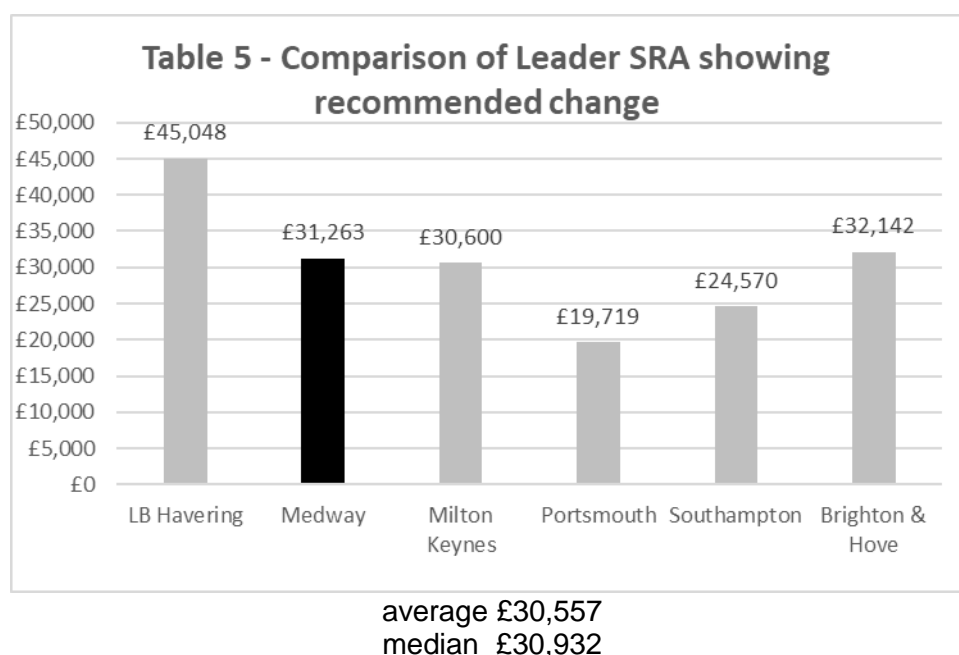
Leader's SRA

- 10.5 Table 4 shows the current situation against the comparator group. The average SRA is £29,816 with Medway falling around the middle bracket of the comparator group only when the 50% of the SRA for Cabinet members is included.



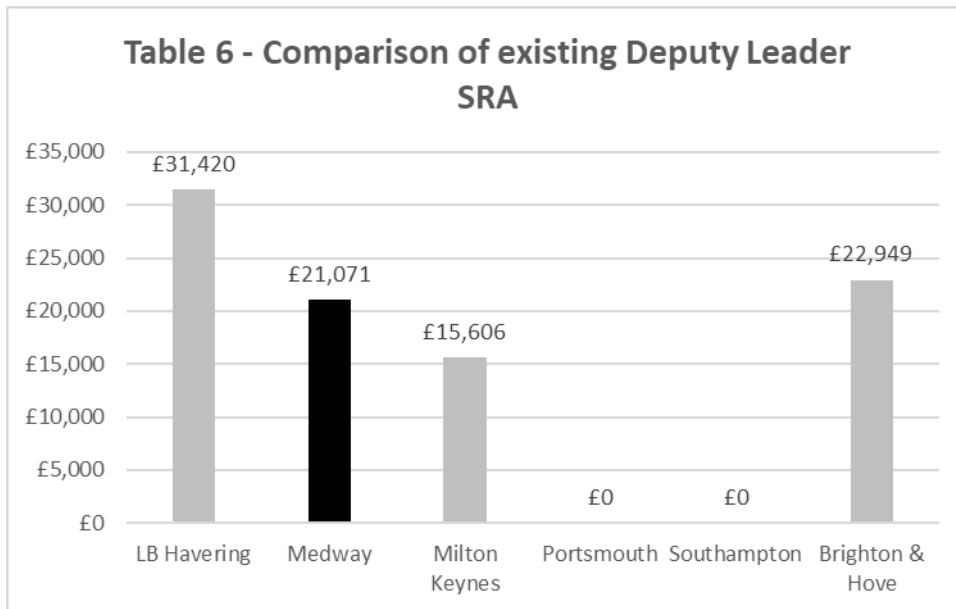
Medway figure includes the 50% Cabinet Members SRA
average £29,816 median £28,709

- 10.6 After receiving evidence from Councillors' responses to the questionnaire and those who spoke to the Panel individually, and looking at the comparator information, the Panel concluded that the current level of the Leader's SRA, even when the 50% for a Cabinet member is added, does not adequately reflect the level and complexity of work involved in managing and giving political direction to a complex organisation, particularly in the light of developments such as the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and Thames Gateway Group which has enhanced the regional/national role of the Leader that is not replicated in all unitary authorities.
- 10.7 Therefore the Panel recommends that the Leader's SRA is calculated as a factor of 300% of the basic allowance to reach a sum that more adequately reflects the complexity of the role. This would see the Leader's SRA change to £31,263 which brings it within the average range of the comparator group. The Panel's desire to rationalise and simplify the Scheme of Allowances, however, leads it to also recommend that the Leader does **not** receive an additional 50% of the Cabinet members SRA in future. The Panel feels that the level of the revised amount being recommended is more transparent and will be more easily understood by the public. Table 5 shows the recommended SRA against the comparator group.



Deputy Leader's SRA

- 10.8 The Panel considered the role of the Deputy Leader and concluded that, historically, the majority of the role comprised having a specific, albeit complex and wide ranging Cabinet portfolio rather than any significant deputising role, which the SRA reflected. Amongst the comparator group only 4 of the 6 authorities paid a specific SRA to the Deputy Leader and the average was £15,174 although as can be seen from Table 6 below, they range from zero to £31,420. Medway's current SRA at £21,071 (including the 50% of the SRA for Cabinet members) is clearly higher than the average but lower than the maximum.

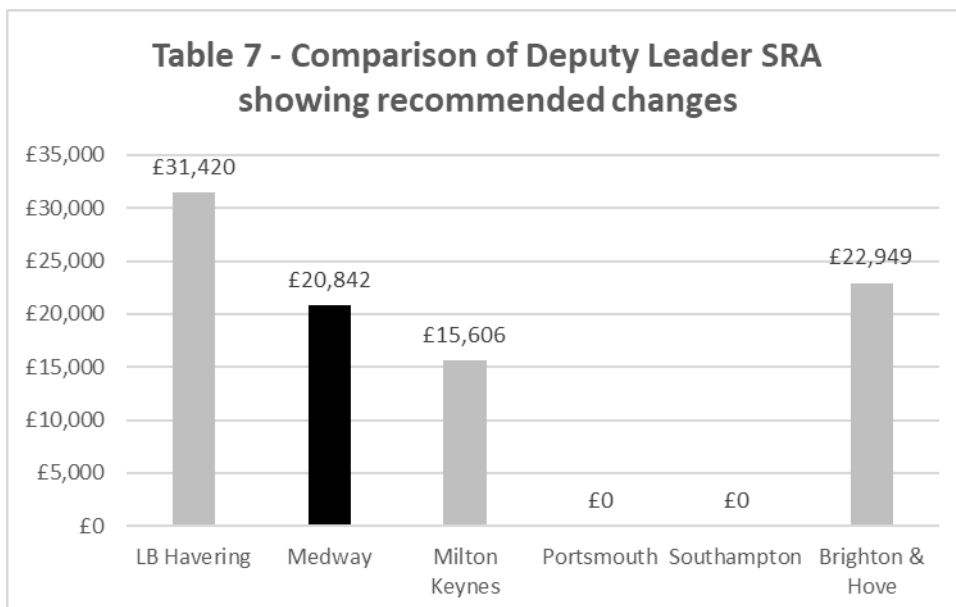


Medway figure includes 50% of Cabinet Members SRA

Average £15,174

Median £18,339

- 10.9 Consequently, the Panel recommends that the Deputy Leader's SRA should be calculated as a factor of 200% of the basic allowance which would change it to £20,842. The Panel feel that although it represents a slight decrease it more accurately and fairly reflects the role of the Deputy Leader but still recognises its relative seniority to other Cabinet members particularly. The Panel also feel that in keeping with its wish to rationalise and simplify the Scheme of Allowances it is also recommending that the Deputy Leader does **not** receive 50% of the Cabinet members SRA in addition to the SRA as Deputy Leader.

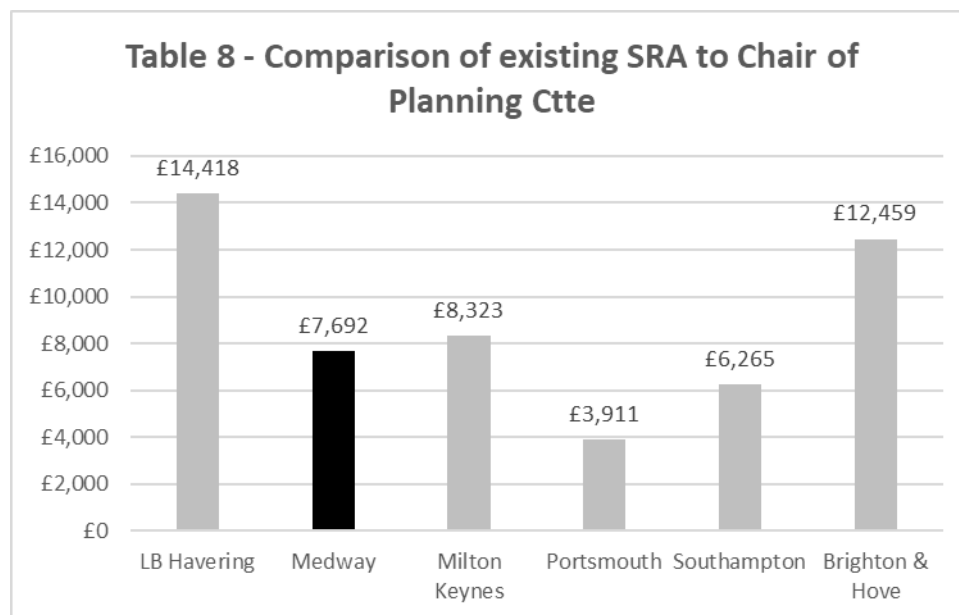


average £15,136

median £18,224

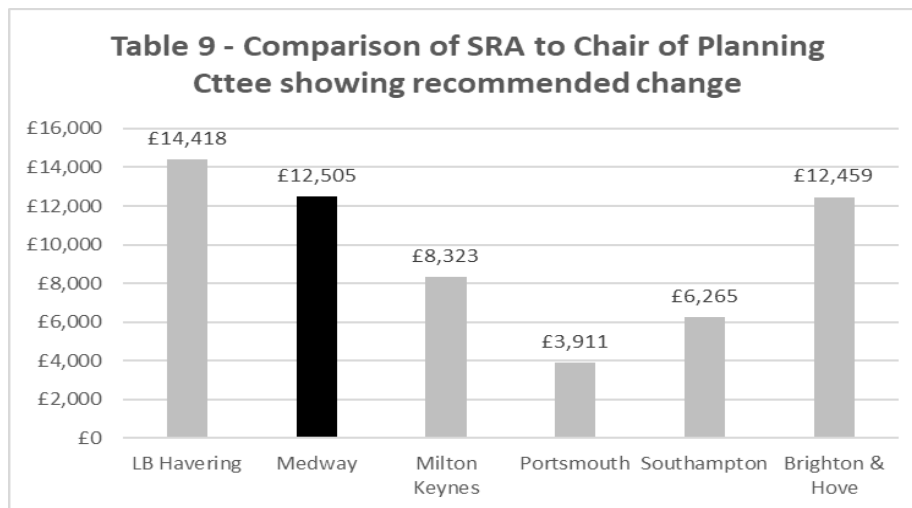
SRA to Chair of Planning Committee

- 10.10 Having come to conclusions about the Leader and Deputy Leader SRAs the Panel then considered, in particular, the position of Chairman of Planning Committee.
- 10.11 From the discussions with Councillors, the Panel developed an understanding that the role and workload of the Chairman of the Planning Committee was inadequately reflected in the current SRA and in its comparison with the other SRAs, particularly those of the Chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees which currently receive a higher SRA.
- 10.12 Amongst the comparator group of authorities, the Medway SRA to the Chair of Planning committee is low. It is well below the average and does not appear to reflect the increased workload of monthly committee meetings and the level and importance of the planning function in Medway.



average £8,845
median £8,008

- 10.13 The Panel is recommending that to achieve its aim of rationalisation and simplification of the Scheme whilst recognising the responsibility and complexity of the Chair of Planning Committee role in particular, that the position attracts an SRA which represents 120% of the basic allowance which results in an increase but a reasonable comparison with other local authorities.



Average £9,647
Median £10,391

Determining the scope and numbers of other SRAs

- 10.14 A concern of the Panel was the number of positions that attract an SRA at present. In particular, the Panel was cognisant that while the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations do not specifically limit the numbers of SRAs that are payable in an authority the statutory guidance (May 2006, 2003 paragraphs 72 - 73) states that in relation to recommending SRAs:

If the majority of members of a council receive a special responsibility allowance the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified. Local authorities will wish to consider very carefully the additional roles of members and the significance of these roles, both in terms of responsibility and real time commitment before deciding which will warrant the payment of a special responsibility allowance.

It does not necessarily follow that a particular responsibility which is vested to a particular member is a significant additional responsibility for which a special responsibility allowance should be paid. Local authorities will need to consider such particular responsibilities very carefully. Whilst such responsibilities may be unique to a particular member it may be that all or most members have some such responsibility to varying degrees. Such duties may not lead to a significant extra workload for any one particular member above another. These sorts of responsibilities should be recognised as a time commitment to council work which is acknowledged within the basic allowance and not responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be recommended.

- 10.15 Under the current arrangements, there is a total of 32 positions which attract an SRA and 26 Councillors in receipt of an SRA (excluding the Mayor and Deputy Mayor). Thus 47% of all Councillors are in receipt of an SRA. Of the 26 Councillors, 7 are currently also receiving 50% of a second SRA. If these second SRAs were payable to different Councillors, this would bring the total Councillors in receipt of an SRA up to 33 which represents 60%.
- 10.16 The Panel acknowledges that having a range of positions that attract an SRA provides the Leader with opportunities to put in place succession planning arrangements as well as rewarding Councillors who are successfully undertaking important work. However, the Council may want to give some thought to the public

perception that the skills and abilities of all Councillors might not be recognised and, if some are receiving 2 SRAs, that some roles that attract an SRA are not necessarily being shared amongst all Councillors.

10.17 The responses to the questionnaire and discussion with Councillors showed that there was more or less common agreement amongst Councillors about the ranking of SRAs. The Panel has tried to simplify the Scheme so that there are fewer different benchmark figures used and recommends that each of the positions is calculated as a multiplier of the basic allowance rather than derived from the Leader's SRA as is current practice. This should improve transparency and make the Scheme clearer to understand. After considering the relative complexities of each of the roles, the Panel recommends that the levels of all the Special Responsibility Allowances should be as follows:

Table 10 – Panel recommendations on SRAs

POSITION	Current 2018-19 SRA £	Proposed SRA 2019 £	Benchmark as % of Basic Allowance	
Leader of the Council	26,818	31,263	300	
Deputy Leader	21,071	20,842	200	
Cabinet Portfolio Holder	11,493	15,632	150	
Chairman of Planning Committee	7,662	12,505	120	
Opposition Group Leader (more than 20% of members)	9,578	12,505	120	
Chairman of Health & Wellbeing Board	7,662	12,505	120	Only payable if the post holder is not a Cabinet member
Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9,578	10,421	100	
Chairman of Audit Committee	5,747	7,295	70	
Opposition Group Leader (more than 10% of members)	4,789	6,253	60	
Overview & Scrutiny Spokespersons (group more than 20% of members)	5,747	6,253	60	
Deputy Opposition Group leader (more than 20% of members)	3,831	6,253	60	
Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee	3,831	5,211	50	
Opposition Group Spokesperson for Planning Committee (>20% of members)	3,831	5,211	50	
Chairman of Employment Matters Committee	3,831	3,647	35	
Vice-Chairmen of Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3,831	3,647	35	
Ruling Group Whip	1,916	1,563	15	
Opposition Group Whip (>20% of members)	958	1,042	10	Not currently payable

- 10.18 Whilst the Panel is conscious that the position of Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Board is a particularly complex role, it notes that this is now included in the role of the Portfolio holder responsible for Adult Care. As and when the Chairman position is held by a Councillor who is not a Cabinet Member, the Panel has included an SRA in the Scheme to save the Council having to seek their views on it separately.
- 10.19 The Labour and Co-operative Group submission asked the Panel to consider the recognition of the workload of the Opposition Spokespersons on the Audit and Employment Matters Committees. However, the Panels view is that they heard no evidence of the justification for this and that it would unnecessarily increase the number of positions that attract an SRA.

Indexing of SRAs

- 10.20 With the introduction of a more transparent and straightforward method of calculating the rates of SRA as percentages of the Basic Allowance, which will be annually indexed against the median Councils staff hourly pay, SRAs will be uprated annually as well, and the Panel recommends this is done for a maximum of 4 years.

11. Licensing Hearing Panels and 1982 Licensing Hearing Panel

- 11.1 No specific comments were made by Councillors about the current session rates paid to those who sit on these Licensing Panels but the Panel is advised that the regularity and workload has now settled and is fairly well-established and are of the opinion that the current allowance fairly reflects the time commitment and workload involved.
- 11.2 The current rate is £33.23 which breaks down to £11.07 per hour on the basis that most Hearings last no more than 3 hours. As the Panel are recommending that the basic allowance is calculated using the median hourly rate for Council staff (£13.36), the Panel also recommends that the two Licensing Hearing Panels day rates are also based on this hourly rate and, therefore should be increased to £40 to make them equitable. The Panel understands that the annual spend on this is relatively low so this would not have a huge impact on overall spend on members' allowances.
- 11.3 The Panel also recommends that the amount be linked to the median Council staff hourly pay for four years.

12. Discounts for more than one SRA

- 12.1 The Panel considers the existing provisions in the Members Allowances Scheme about the discounting of SRAs for those in receipt of more than one SRA from Medway and/or the Kent and Medway Police and Crime panel or Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, are adequate and should not be amended.
- 12.2 The Panel noted that none of the other 5 authorities in the comparator group provides for any one Member to be in receipt of more than one SRA at any one time. The Panel is mindful that public perception could be that this is a system whereby Councillors sought additional duties simply to receive an SRA. Therefore, the Panel strongly recommends that the existing provisions in the Scheme are amended so that it is clear that no Councillor should receive more than one SRA in relation to the Medway Scheme of Allowances at any one time. For these purposes the Panel is of the view that the allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not included in this provision as they are not covered by the Regulations governing members' allowances. The level of SRAs recommended by the Panel have been formulated on the basis that the resulting allowance levels should ensure that Councillors are adequately recompensed for their work so as not to require more than one SRA .

13. Dependant carer's Allowance

- 13.1 The Regulations authorise the payment to councillors of an allowance ('the Dependants' Carers' Allowance') in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children or dependants when the councillor attends meetings or is engaged in other official duties.
- 13.2 Several Councillors made the point, and the Panel would support the view, that access to dependant carers' allowances can make it possible for a wider range of people to serve on councils. Specifically by payment of dependant carers' allowance, Councils can attract some who would not normally expect to become councillors. Also these allowances can reverse any disadvantage to those Councillors who have caring responsibilities that impact on their ability to engage in the full range of activities. This is explained in more detail in paragraph 9.9.
- 13.3 The Panel is strongly of the view that the maximum that can be claimed for childcare cover under this provision should be not less than the Real Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation. The current maximum hourly rate claimable by Councillors is £3.87 per hour, and it has been index-linked for the past four years to the average rate for registered childminder's paid across Medway.
- 13.4 However the Panel is conscious that this does not reflect the actual rate for an ad hoc childminder or those with caring responsibilities who may need specialist care, for example if their dependent has special needs. It is therefore recommending two maximum hourly rates - £9 an hour per child for child care (Real Living Wage) and £16.06 per hour per person for adult care or for children with special needs. The latter is based on the Council's current commissioning hourly home care rate.
- 13.5 The current Scheme sets out the eligibility arrangements for claiming as well as the maximum that can be claimed in any one 24 hour period while attending a conference. This section of the Scheme will need to be amended to show the revised maximum for child care, adult care and children with special needs and to reflect the new recommended hourly rates. It is also recommended that the Scheme is amended so that childminders do not need to be registered childminders with Medway as this is clearly a difficult criterion to meet for evening care.

- 13.6 The Panel also recommends that the Members' Allowances Scheme contains a provision that gives the Head of Elections and Member Services some flexibility to assist Councillors who need specialist care that costs more than the rates approved.
- 13.7 The Panel recommends that the maximum child care rate is indexed to the Real Living Wage that is upgraded during the first week of November each year and the adult care rate to the commissioning hourly home care rate both for a maximum of four years. The revised rates to be implemented from the following April.

14. Subsistence, travelling and other allowances

Payments to co-optees and members of Education Schools Admission and Exclusion Appeals Panels

- 14.1 The Panel recommends that the current provisions for payments to co-optees and members of Education Schools Admission and Exclusion Appeals Panels as set out in the Scheme are retained without amendment.

Duties for which subsistence and travelling allowances can be claimed

- 14.2 The Panel considered the existing list of duties that qualify for travelling and subsistence allowances in Appendix 1 to the Members' Allowances Scheme and would not recommend any changes to it.

Travel allowances

- 14.3 The Labour and Co-operative Group in their submission suggested that all Councillors be given a flat fee to cover car or public transport journeys to minimise the administrative burden of processing claims. The Panel can see several reasons why this would not be suitable:
- It is clear that the level of work undertaken by Councillors that would attract a travel allowance varies significantly depending on their roles and amount of time they can devote to their work as a Councillor
 - Attempting to identify a suitable flat rate payable to all Councillors that was fair, would be almost impossible with the likelihood that some Councillors who currently claim receiving a flat fee lower than their actual costs and others receiving a flat fee when they would not otherwise have claimed a travel allowance
 - It is a much more transparent and auditable system if Councillors submit claims based on the actual costs incurred and likely meet favour with the public on that basis.
- The Panel are therefore not recommending the payment of such a flat rate travel allowance.
- 14.4 The Panel is aware that, although the Government had increased the Approved Mileage Allowance Payment ("AMAP") rate for the first 10,000 miles to 45p per mile with effect from 6th April 2011, Councillors had previously taken the decision to retain their rate at 40p to reflect the economic situation. In 2015 the Council decided to retain the existing Scheme so there has been no increase to the 40p rate for a number of years. About half of the Councillors who responded to the points in the questionnaire relating to the travel scheme and those individual Councillors who met the Panel thought that the current 40p rate was adequate but comments were made by others that it should be increased to the AMAP rate (2 respondees), a fee should be paid once a certain mileage was incurred (1 respondee) and that the rate should cover the actual direct cost so no Councillor is out of pocket (1 respondee).

- 14.5 The Panel is of the view that the travel allowances for Councillors should be increased to 45p per mile for all engine sizes and indexed against the AMAP rate for the next four years.
- 14.6 The Panel recommends that the travel allowances scheme is also amended as follows to bring it into line with the Council staff scheme:
- No additional 1p per mile is paid for passengers
 - All journeys by car (whether in Medway, Kent, London or elsewhere) are paid at the same flat rate of 45p rather than the current differential rate whereby the first 60 miles are paid at 40p and 20p per mile thereafter. This is a confusing provision and is not mirrored in the Council staff scheme. The rate should be paid regardless of engine size.
 - The rate for travel by motor cycles should mirror that paid to Council staff (currently 21.3p per mile)
 - Travel by bicycle should continue to mirror the rate paid to Council staff (currently 20p per mile)
- 14.7 The Panel considered the other provisions in the Scheme relating to travel set out in existing paragraph 7.3.2 of the Scheme and confirms that they do not require any amendments apart from those indicated above.
15. **Conference expenses, duties for which allowances can and cannot be claimed and how to claim**
- 15.1 The Panel could see no reason why any of these provisions in the current Scheme (paragraphs 8-10) require amendment and recommend that they stand unchanged.
16. **Sickness, maternity, paternity and adoption absence**
- 16.1 On reviewing the Scheme, the Panel noted that there are currently no provisions setting out the entitlement to the Basic allowance or Special Responsibilities Allowances on the occasion that Councillors are absent from their duties due to sickness or due to maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave. Separately, the Labour and Co-operative Group in their submission advocated the Local Government Association Labour Parental Leave Policy. There is at present no legal right to parental leave of any kind for people in elected public office. However, as a way of improving the diversity of Councillors the Panel would recommend that the Scheme is amended to include provisions that clarify that:
- All Councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full for a period up to 6 months in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence
 - Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full for a period up to 6 months, in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence
 - Where, for reasons connected with sickness, maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave or shared parental leave a Councillor is unable to attend a meeting of the Council for a period of 6 months, a dispensation by Full Council can be sought in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.
 - If a replacement to cover the period of absence under these provisions is appointed by Council or the Leader (or in the case of party group position, the party group) the replacement will be entitled to claim an SRA pro rata for the period over which the cover is provided.

- If a Councillor stands down, or an election is held during the period when a Councillor is absent due to any of the above and the Councillor is not re-elected or decides not to stand for re-election, their basic allowance and any SRA will cease from the date they leave office

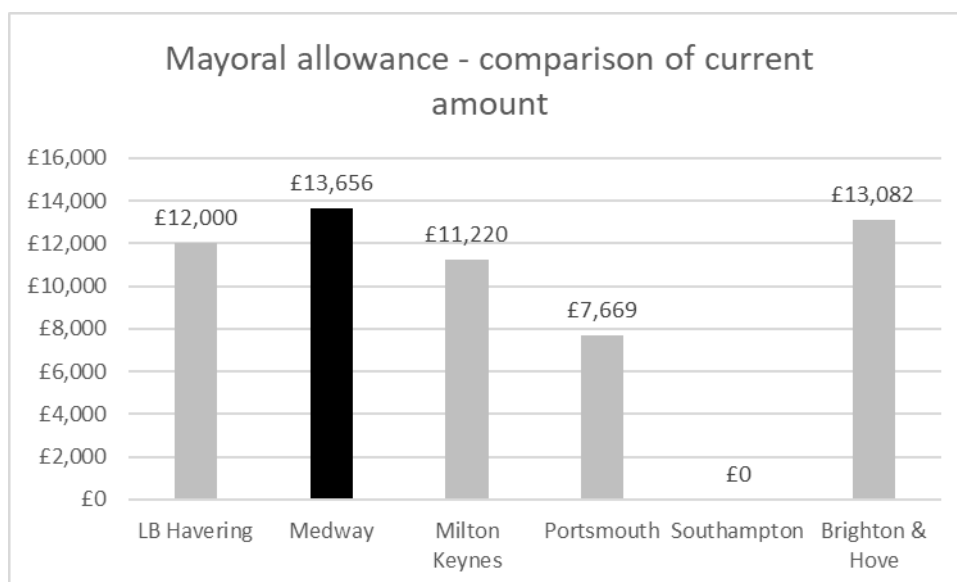
16.2 The Panel is conscious that these provisions do not replicate the LGA Labour Group policy but that policy introduces elements that are more akin to employees which in terms of employment legislation does not include Councillors. The Panel feel that their recommended provisions more simply and adequately reflect the situation relating to Councillors and clarify for them what they can expect.

17. **Mayor and Deputy Mayor allowances**

17.1 The Council asked the Panel to consider the allowances paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor although they are not technically part of the Members' Allowances Scheme because they are not provided for in the The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Labour Group, in their submission suggested the Panel consider the total cost of the mayoralty for tax payers but this is not within the remit of the Panel so it has limited its' consideration to the allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

17.2 Of the 6 comparator authorities (including Medway), the average Mayoral allowance is £9,605, with Medway's current allowance at £13,656 being the highest. The lowest allowance paid is £7669. One authority in the comparator group would appear not to pay an allowance at all although there was no public information available. The table below shows this more clearly:

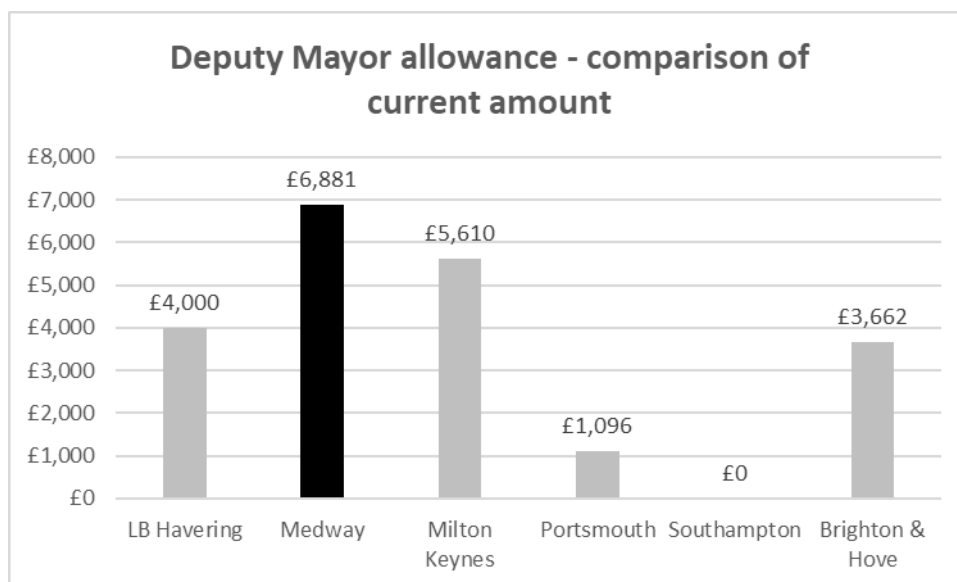
Table 11 – Comparison of current Mayors allowance



Average £9,605
Median £11,610

17.3 In terms of the Deputy Mayors allowance, amongst the comparator authorities Medway is also paying nearly double the average of £3542 with the minimum being £1096. One authority in the comparator group would appear not to pay an allowance at all although there was no public information available. The table below shows this:

Table 12 – Comparison of current Deputy Mayor’s allowance

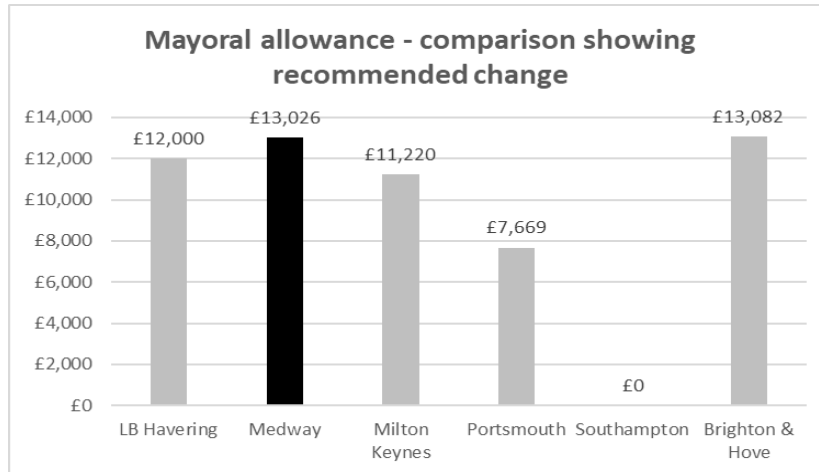


Average £3,542

Median £3,831

- 17.4 The Panel was advised that Medway continues to fund two Mayoral vehicles and 1.5 Civic and Ceremonial Officers/chauffeurs which means that the Deputy Mayor is often able to attend engagements at the same time as the Mayor, rather than merely deputising for the Mayor when he is not available. The Panel notes that as many as 370 engagements were attended in 2018-19 with another 176 invitations declined and that the level of Mayoral support was reduced due to budgetary pressures in 2015-16.
- 17.5 The Panel is mindful of the importance of the role as the First Citizen of Medway and how time-consuming it is, with lots of anti-social hours involved. It was also aware that the allowances paid are intended to cover additional costs incurred on suitable clothing and out of pocket expenses such as raffle tickets when attending other charity events. However, it also has to acknowledge that the Mayoral allowance is currently higher than the SRA paid to Cabinet members who have significant responsibilities and that similarly the Deputy’s allowance is more than the SRA for the Chairmen of the Audit Committee. On that basis the Panel recommends that both allowances are only adjusted to a minor degree to more adequately reflect their level of responsibility in comparison to posts that attract an SRA.
- 17.6 The Panel could not identify the rationale previously used for the setting of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor’s allowances and so took the view that, like the other SRAs, they should be a multiplier of the basic allowance to make the calculation more transparent and easier to administer.
- 17.7 The Panel is, therefore, recommending that the Mayoral allowance should be set at £13,026 that is 125% of the basic allowance, placing it in the same range as the SRAs for the Chairman of Planning Committee, Leader of the Opposition Group, and Chairman of the Health & well Being Board. This also brings the allowance in line when compared to others in the comparator group although still amongst the highest.

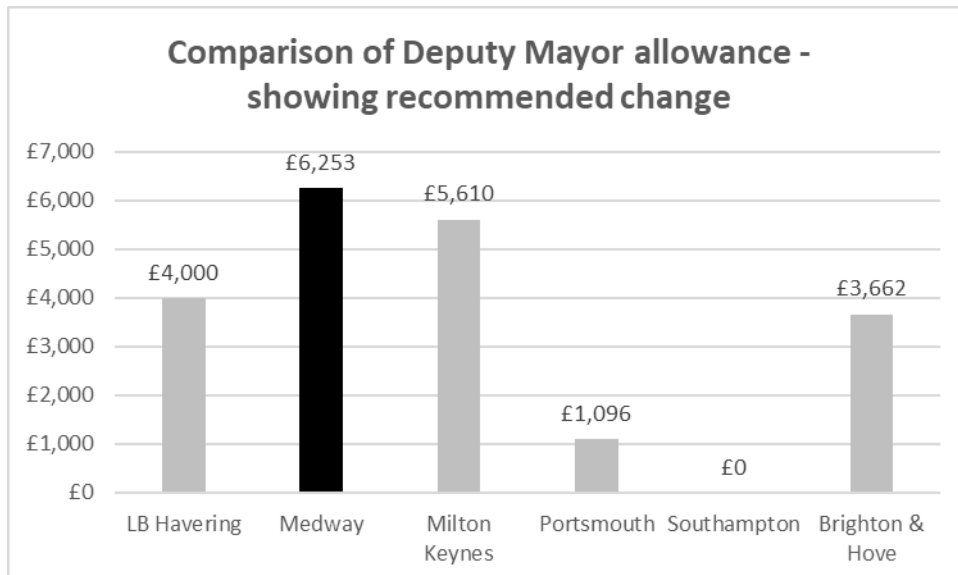
Table 13 – comparison of Mayoral allowance showing recommended change



Average £9,500
Median £11,610

- 17.8 The Panel recommends that the Deputy Mayor allowance is set at £6253 that is 60% of the basic allowance, matching it to the SRAs for the Overview & Scrutiny opposition spokespersons and the Minority Opposition Group Leader.

Table 14 – Comparison of Deputy Mayor allowance showing recommended change



Average £3,437
Median £3,831

- 17.9 With the introduction of a more transparent and straightforward method of calculating the rates of SRA as percentages of the Basic Allowance, which will be annually indexed against the median Councils staff hourly pay, the Panel recommends that the Mayor and Deputy Mayors allowances are also uprated annually, for a maximum of 4 years against the uprated Basic Allowance.

18. Adoption and Fostering Panels

- 18.1 One Councillor asked the Panel to consider introducing an SRA for the Councillor representatives on the Adoption and Fostering Panels. The Council nominates one Councillor to sit on the Adoption Panel and 4 Councillors to sit on the Fostering Panel.
- 18.2 The Councillor mentioned that it is difficult to arrange for anyone to substitute on the Adoption Panel in particular because it meets during the day and there is a high volume of case papers to read for each meeting. The Remuneration Panel understands that currently the chair, vice-chair and other members of the Panels who are not Councillors or Council employees, receive a payment per session, paid for by the relevant service department, but the Members' Allowances Scheme does not have a provision for the Councillor representative to receive any payment in recognition of the responsibility or time commitment involved.
- 18.3 It is clearly easier for the workload of the Fostering Panel to be shared amongst four Councillors but the Remuneration Panel understands that it is possible for a named substitute to be nominated to attend meetings of the Adoption Panel.
- 18.4 Whilst accepting the practical difficulties of attending day time meetings and the volume of paperwork that goes with this role, the Panel is not convinced that the complexity or volume warrants a specific allowance for the Councillor representatives on the Adoption or Fostering Panels. Also, such allowances would run counter to the intention to reduce the number of SRAs. Such workload should be considered part of the normal work of a Councillor for which financial recompense is not expected.
- 18.5 To ease the burden on the current Councillor representative on the Adoption Panel the Remuneration Panel suggests that the Council consider the feasibility for more Councillors to be appointed to the Adoption Panel to share the workload and time commitment.

19. Foregoing and suspension of allowances and part-year entitlement

- 19.1 Members Allowances Schemes must contain provisions regarding (a) the option for Councillors to forego all or part of their allowances; (b) the circumstances under which the payment of allowances can be suspended; and (c) the arrangements for part-year entitlements if a Councillor's term of office begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year.
- 19.2 The Panel has noticed that the provisions for the payment of allowances in Local election years do not quite reflect the legal position and would suggest that the provisions 6.6 to 6.10 in the current Scheme are replaced with the following:

“6.6 In the year of Local Council elections:

- (a) Councillors who had been appointed as Mayor and Deputy Mayor, prior to the elections, shall be entitled to receive payment of their allowances until the date of the Annual Council Meeting held after the election even if they are not re-elected as Councillors;
- (b) The Councillor who held the position of Leader of the Council prior to the elections shall continue to receive payment of his/her Special Responsibility Allowance until the day of the Annual Council meeting even if he/she is not re-elected unless he/she resigns from office, is disqualified or otherwise removed from office;

- (c) The Councillor who held the position of Deputy Leader of the Council prior to the elections shall continue to receive payment of his/her Special Responsibility Allowance until the day of the Annual Council meeting unless he/she is no longer a Councillor, resigns from office or is removed from office by the Leader ;
- (d) Any Councillor who had been appointed by the Leader as a Cabinet Member prior to the elections shall continue to receive payment of his/her Special Responsibility Allowance until the day of the Annual Council meeting unless he/she is no longer a Councillor, resigns from office or is removed from office by the Leader;
- (e) Special Responsibility Allowances payable to Councillors who were Opposition Group Leader(s) or Group Whip(s) prior to the election will cease to be payable from the day of retirement after the elections. Special Responsibility Allowances for Councillors appointed to these positions after the elections will be payable from the date on which formal notice of their appointment is received by the Chief Executive signed by all Members who wish to be treated as members of the relevant political group;
- (f) Councillors who had been entitled to any other Special Responsibility Allowances in the Scheme prior to the elections shall cease to be entitled to receive payment for the Special Responsibility Allowance from the date on which Councillors take up office after the election;
- (g) Those Councillors who are appointed to positions which are entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance after the elections, other than those provided for in paragraphs 6(a) to (e) above, shall be entitled to receive such payments from the day after which they are formally appointed to the relevant position of Special Responsibility either by the Leader, the Council or relevant Committee;
- (h) Where a Councillor is in receipt of both a Special Responsibility Allowance from Medway Council and a Special Responsibility Allowance from the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel or Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority, no deduction should be made to their Medway Special Responsibility Allowance until Medway Police and Crime Panel or Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority have formally agreed their appointment to the position for which the SRA is payable by them. If the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel or Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority Special Responsibility Allowance is backdated, the deduction from the Medway Special Responsibility Allowance shall be backdated to the same date."

20. Miscellaneous matters

- 20.1 The Panel wish to acknowledge that the submission from the Labour and Co-operative Group included a couple of matters which are not within its remit and suggest that they are raised directly with the relevant Director by the Leader of the Labour Group:
- A specific budget be identified from which the Council would pay to provide members with ICT sundries such as mobile phones
 - A review of the total cost of the Mayoralty in the light of current budget pressures on local government
 - A specific budget be identified from which the Council would pay for the provision of rented space to enable members to hold regular surgeries

21. Conclusions

- 21.1 In approaching this review, the Independent Remuneration Panel has taken due account of statutory guidance, the current financial climate, and the need to ensure that Councillors are fairly compensated for the significant contribution they make. At the same time, it has sought to ensure that compensation should be at a level that would encourage a broad cross section of the local population to stand for election. The Panel has also taken into account the need to ensure that stakeholders (Council staff and the public) can be confident that the scheme is transparent and making sensible use of public money, and that the scheme is aligned with those of similar local authorities in the South East of England.
- 21.2 The Panel has, therefore, made recommendations that seek to produce a rational formula for the calculation of the basic allowance using the median hourly pay of council staff that provides adequate recompense for front line council activities. This basic allowance has been used as the foundation for the SRA scheme that is intended to reflect the considerable responsibilities of key roles in a unitary authority of the size of Medway Council.
- 21.3 Furthermore, the Panel has made recommendations to increase the Dependent Carer's Allowances and introduce a separate rate for those with adult dependent or special needs caring responsibilities to maximize the ability of those with caring responsibilities to engage in council duties and to align other expenses and allowances to those payable to council staff.
- 21.4 Finally, in order to ensure that, over time, Councillor's allowances do not drift from the remuneration of council staff, the panel recommends that all allowances for Councillors are indexed to the median Council staff hourly pay which will always reflect the annual pay award.
- 21.5 The Panel would like to extend their thanks to the Councillors who responded to the questionnaire and those who agreed to meet the Panel. We are conscious that Councillors are committed to providing the best service they can to their constituents and are giving a lot of their time.

22. Background Papers

- South East Employers (SEE) Members' Allowances Survey November 2018
- New Council Constitution: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances (OPDM)– extract of sections 70-76 re: Special Responsibility Allowances
- Schedules showing Medway current SRA's and basic allowances
- Elected Member Profiles
- Submission from the Labour and Co-operative Group dated June 2019
- Questionnaire responses from Councillors
- Information obtained from discussions with Councillors