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# **Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and Recommendations for the Scheme of Allowances and Expenses from May 2021**

**November 2020**

## **Summary of Recommendations**

1. The Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations are:
  - a. Continue with the use of remote working and virtual meetings where feasible and effective (paragraph 12) and encourage greater use of the Horsham videoconferencing facility (paragraph 15)
  - b. Lobby central Government to extend the power of councils to use remote working facilities for formal meetings (paragraph 13)
  - c. Reduce the petrol/diesel mileage rate immediately if HMRC adjust the 'official' rate (paragraph 19)
  - d. Set a mileage rate for electric and other non-fossil fuel vehicles in line with HMRC rates (presently 45p per mile) (paragraph 20)
  - e. Publicise other opportunities for members to reduce carbon-intensive travel (paragraph 21)
  - f. An SRA should not be paid to CLC Chairmen (paragraph 25)
  - g. From May 2021, the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances should be set as shown in the table (paragraph 26)
  - h. Allowances in May 2021 should be continued at the amounts set in October 2020 (with the exceptions noted below) following the application of the 2.75% indexing increase (paragraph 27)
  - i. Apply the recommended allowances from May 2021 following County Council elections (paragraph 29)
  - j. Continue with indexing of allowances to reference officer salaries and expenses to CPI (paragraph 30), but
  - k. Forego any indexing of allowances that would otherwise be applied in 2021/2022 (paragraph 31)
  - l. From May 2021, the basic allowance should be £12,202 (0.0% increase) (paragraph 32). Should the Council decide to apply indexing in 2021/2022 contrary to our recommendation, the increase should be limited to no more than 1.0% (paragraph 33)
  - m. Consolidate the present Adviser and Senior Adviser roles into one Adviser role, and set a special responsibility allowance of £4,397 (paragraph 40)
  - n. Adviser roles should be defined by specific, time-limited terms of reference and their eligibility for a special responsibility allowance should be assessed by the Director of Law and Assurance, with the allowance being paid subject to this assessment (paragraph 42)
  - o. Cabinet Members and the Leader should consider the possibility of appointing a member from a different political group to an Adviser role (paragraph 44)
  - p. The present allowance for group leaders should be replaced with one which has a more logical and progressive structure (paragraph 53)

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- q. A suitable approach should be followed if the number of members in a group changes (paragraph 63)
  - r. Special responsibility allowances for the County Chairman and Vice-Chairman should be adjusted downwards to bring them back into line with the Panel's methodology (paragraph 66)
  - s. Payment of a special responsibility allowance while a member is on extended leave should be limited to a maximum of two months or until another member is appointed to the role (paragraph 70).

## **Introduction**

2. The last 'full' review of WSCC's Scheme of Allowances and Expenses was conducted by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP, the 'Panel') from late 2015 to late 2016, with a report and recommendations prepared for discussion at the Governance Committee in November 2016. That Committee put the Panel's report – with some amendments negotiated between political groups – to the Council meeting in December 2016 where it was approved.
3. The scheme has been running successfully since then. There have been two interim reviews conducted by the Panel which have confirmed the basic acceptability and success of the scheme and recommended minor refinements.
4. The Council is required to have the Independent Remuneration Panel review the scheme on a four-yearly cycle. Although disrupted by coronavirus pandemic measures, during 2020 the Panel has conducted a review of the scheme, with the intent that any recommendations for revision could be implemented at the time of the next Council elections in May 2021.
5. Given the importance and urgency of increased sustainability in all aspects of the Council's business, the Panel has specifically considered what might be done through the scheme of allowances and expenses to support this.

## **Review Method**

6. The Independent Remuneration Panel had intended to begin its review in February 2020, but this was delayed by the pandemic. Work began in May 2020.
7. Democratic Services reported in January 2020 that compliance with the scheme implemented in May 2017 is very good. Changes to roles are followed up with payroll by Democratic Services, to ensure that special responsibilities are accounted for. Travel expenses, which have to be claimed, are usually claimed correctly and in a timely manner. Since 2017, Democratic Services has received only around one query per annum from an elected member about the application of the scheme.
8. The Panel was asked to consider in its review two specific issues that have arisen:
  - The manner in which the group leaders' special responsibility allowance is adjusted when the number of members in the group changes
  - Whether a member in receipt of a special responsibility allowance should continue to receive this if they were to take (extended) parental leave or other special leave.

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9. During June 2020, the Panel conducted a programme of interviews with 15 members – representative of all member roles, and with a mix of newer and more experienced councillors. We are grateful to all who participated. Input from the interviewees has been important in informing the Panel’s recommendations.
  10. The Panel has received updated information on allowances and expenses paid at comparator County Councils, and on officer salaries which are used as reference points for the recommended basic and special responsibility allowances.
  11. The Panel shared its draft report with the Council Chairman and Group Leaders on 7 October 2020. It considered the feedback from these senior members and reconsidered several aspects of the report as a result:
    - The Panel considered a suggestion that County Local Committee chairmen should receive an SRA but did not support this (paragraph 25)
    - The Panel’s consideration of the minority group leaders’ allowance is referred to in paragraphs 54 to 62
    - The Panel agreed to amend the wording of the second bullet point in paragraph 63.

## **Sustainability**

12. The Panel notes that the response to the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in significant changes to the working methods of the Council. In particular, most if not all meetings have been conducted virtually. All members interviewed were generally positive about their experience of working remotely. Many expressed the view that the Council should seriously consider continuing with remote working where this is feasible and effective. The Panel endorses this and recommends that the Council continues the use of remote working, although the Panel is conscious of the value of personal face-to-face contact, especially in fostering effective working relationships.
13. We are conscious that the ability for the Council to undertake formal meetings remotely expires in 2021. We recommend that the Council lobbies central Government to extend these powers.
14. The Panel has undertaken the whole of its review, including the interview programme, remotely. Members of the Panel have had occasional difficulty with the Council’s chosen virtual technologies – to the extent of sometimes not being able to participate in a meeting. The Panel strongly encourages the Council to consider and carefully test their remote technology on a variety of different platforms with varying configurations.
15. The Council has been saving some £6,000 per month in reduced travel expense claims since March 2020 during the coronavirus restrictions. At a time of considerable financial difficulty, even these small savings are valuable. Even if virtual formal meetings are not allowed by central government, the Council should maintain its use of remote technology for other meetings where possible. Use of the videoconferencing facilities in the Horsham building should be encouraged, as we understand this is still considerably under-used. We encourage Democratic Services to question expense claims that involve travel that could perhaps have been avoided by the use of remote technology.

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16. It would be worthwhile for the Council to prepare good practice guidance for virtual meetings for distribution to chairs and to all members.
17. Not only has reduced travel saved the Council money, it has reduced the Council's carbon footprint. Overall, members have been driving (or at least claiming) some 13,000 fewer miles per month during the pandemic – equivalent to a saving of around 4 tons CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per month. There has also been a significant saving of members' travelling time, saving some members around two to three hours per saved journey to County Hall. The Panel is of the view that the Council should try to maintain this level of carbon saving and should, in fact, implement travel policies that substantially increase them and lead by example to the Council's Sustainable Strategy.
18. The Panel notes that the Council has issued its Electric Vehicle Strategy 2019–2030, with a firm commitment to build the infrastructure to allow at least 70% of new cars on the road in 2030 to be electric. Although disappointingly not mentioned in the Strategy document, we feel strongly that members should set an example of the change that they are encouraging residents to make; we would hope that by 2030, at least 70% of members' vehicles will be electric or other non-fossil-fuelled vehicles.
19. Accordingly, the Panel wishes to signal clearly now that at its next review in 2024, it is likely to recommend significantly reducing the rate paid per mile for travel in petrol/diesel vehicles. If HMRC lead the way by reducing the 'official' mileage rate in the meantime, the Council scheme should mirror this immediately.
20. The Panel recommends inclusion of a mileage rate for electric and other non-fossil-fuelled vehicles in the expenses scheme, set at the HMRC rate which is presently 45p per mile.
21. The Panel recommends that the Council:
- Publicises that councillors can obtain a free network card to allow electric vehicle charging (at a reduced rate) at County Hall and at other charging points operated by the same provider
  - Allows councillors to claim the cost of the local Easit railcard which is available to the County Council (bearing in mind that this is intended for travel on Council business)
  - Ensures relevant councillors are aware that they can travel on the U7 bus between Chichester and Bognor Regis free of charge.

### **Recommended Adjustments to Allowances**

22. The overall structure and 'hierarchy' of allowances is still fit for purpose and generally effective. There have been no changes to the 'job descriptions' of those roles which attract special responsibility allowances. Suggestions and concerns raised in interviews and by those officers who manage the scheme have been taken into account in our recommendations below.
23. The expenses scheme is effective and well-managed. The Panel sees no need to recommend changes to any aspects except those set out in the Sustainability section above.

24. A nationally negotiated pay award for Council employees has been agreed (2.75%) which has been applied, we understand, in October 2020 and backdated to April 2020. The Panel's method for assessing recommended allowances includes benchmarking against employee salaries. All allowance figures presented in this report are based on the reference salaries and allowances **after** application of the 2.75% increase.
25. The Panel was asked to consider whether a special responsibility allowance could be paid to members in the role of CLC Chairman. The Panel considered this question in its review in 2015/16 and decided that an SRA should not be paid. The Panel has reviewed and reconsidered this option and has decided again that an SRA should not be paid for the role of CLC Chair.
26. The Panel recommends that the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances should from May 2021 be as shown in the table below:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Allowance</b>	<b>Change from existing</b>
Basic Allowance	12,202	0.0%
As Leader	33,849	0.0%
County Chairman	20,162	(6.9%)
Deputy Leader	24,371	0.0%
Cabinet Member	21,663	0.0%
Committee Chairman	9,552	0.0%
County Vice-Chairman	8,450	(1.9%)
Adviser	4,397	n/a
Foster Panel	3,640	0.0%
Group Leader	variable	n/a

27. The Panel recommends that there should be no increase to any allowance from May 2021. The Panel believes this is appropriate in the present circumstances and taking into account the 2.75% increase applied during 2020. Using the expected number of members in each role, these recommended allowances result in an overall saving of £12,733 (1.0%).
28. The Panel's conclusions and recommendations on specific aspects of the scheme of allowances are set out in the sub-sections below.
29. We recommend that the adjustments recommended in this report are applied from May 2021 following the County Council elections.
30. The Panel recommends continuing with the present mechanisms of indexing for both allowances and expenses:
- Allowances are indexed in line with increases applied to reference officer salaries
  - Expense allowances are, where appropriate, adjusted in line with the Consumer Prices Index published by the Office of National Statistics.

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31. However, given the present economic environment in which Council services are being increasingly severely restricted, and constituents are suffering with furlough, loss of business income and possible looming unemployment, we recommend that members forego any indexing increase which would otherwise be applied in 2021/2022. Although the resulting saving on Council budgets will be modest, we believe this action would have symbolic importance after the relatively substantial increase of 2.75% in 2020.

### **The Basic Allowance**

32. From May 2021, the recommended basic allowance is £12,202. This is the same level as in 2020.

33. Should the Council decide to apply indexation in 2021/2022, contrary to our recommendation in paragraph 31, the increase in basic allowance should be capped at 1.0%, which would give an allowance of £12,324.

34. This recommended basic allowance is consistent with that paid by comparator County Councils, for which the average is £12,668 (minimum £10,719, maximum £15,562).

### **Advisers and Senior Advisers**

35. The Panel has devoted considerable attention to these roles and the special responsibility allowances associated with them.

36. During our interview programme a number of interviewees expressed concern about the roles, how they are filled, how they are fulfilled, and about the allowances associated with them.

37. The Panel therefore spoke with four members who presently fulfil one of the advisor roles, a few members who have previously been Advisers or Deputies, and several Cabinet Members with experience of appointing advisers.

38. Democratic Services conducted an additional 'survey' across all of the advisers and senior advisers, to help the Panel understand what the role comprises in practice. We are grateful to all the Advisers and Senior Advisers who took part.

39. The Panel is aware that under the previous Leader these roles were used flexibly. We find it difficult to identify a clear dividing line between the two roles. We can see little value, and a significant potential for confusion and dissatisfaction, in continuing with the two roles.

40. Accordingly, from May 2021 we recommend consolidating the two present roles into one Adviser role. We recommend that the allowance for the 'new' Adviser role be set at about the midpoint of the two present allowances, with an amount of £4,397.

41. In reviewing the information gained from the interview programme and the adviser survey, the Panel came to the conclusion that while there are aspects of the role which merit payment of a special responsibility allowance, there are some other aspects of the role, as presently performed, which we consider do not merit the payment of a special responsibility allowance. Examples include acting as a point of contact with the relevant political group, activities which amount to

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'shadowing' the Cabinet Member, or only attending internal or external meetings alongside the Cabinet Member.

42. We recommend that:

- Specific, time-limited terms of reference (ie not the generic role description) should be written for each individual Adviser (for example for a particular project) and each time a new Adviser role is being considered, with an annual review
- This should be written by the Cabinet Member in conjunction with Democratic Services and approved by the Leader. In the event that the Leader wishes to appoint an Adviser, the role terms of reference should be reviewed by another Cabinet Member, not including the Deputy Leader
- A special responsibility allowance will be paid to the role holder to the extent that the specific role terms of reference involve actually providing policy advice, resolving policy/service issues, with delegated responsibility for specific areas, and presenting and representing Council policy and answering questions at either WSCC or external meetings
- The Director of Law and Assurance should assess the degree to which the defined role fits the criteria above, using a simple 0% - 50% - 100% scale. Should the role holder, Cabinet Member or Leader be unhappy with the assessment, they can of course revise the terms of reference appropriately
- The special responsibility allowance will be paid if at least 50% of the role fits the criteria.

43. The Panel expects that appointment to an Adviser role will be made by competency-based interview.

44. Since we believe that the Adviser role is most valuably performed by an individual who has specific knowledge or skills relevant to the subject matter, we additionally recommend that the Cabinet Member and Leader should consider seriously the option of appointing a member(s) from another political party if that person is best qualified.

### **Committee Vice-Chairs**

45. The Panel was asked during the interview programme by a couple of interviewees to consider payment of a special responsibility allowance to Committee Vice-Chairs.

46. This suggestion was considered in prior IRP reviews, when the Panel decided not to recommend such payment. The Panel continues in its view that payment of a special responsibility allowance for Committee Vice-Chairs is not appropriate.

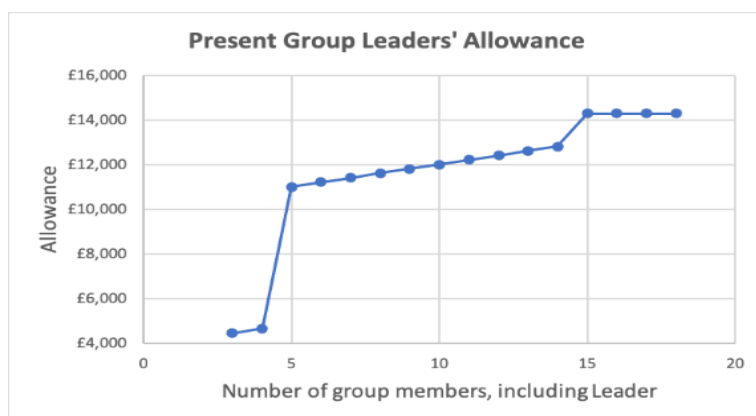
47. No comparator County Council pays a special responsibility allowance to Committee Vice-Chairs.

48. If for some reason the situation arises where the Vice-Chair is in fact conducting most of the Chair's business, then the Panel would consider that to be a performance management issue, with appropriate action to be taken by the group leader.

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## Minority Group Leaders

49. The present special responsibility allowance for group leaders is a mix of a stepped allowance depending on size of the group plus a small *per capita* amount for each member. This scheme was proposed in 2016 at the last minute by a combination of political group leaders and the then County Chairman. The graph below shows how the allowance varies with group size.



50. The illogicality of this allowance is highlighted by the recent experience of one group leader, whose group reduced from 5 to 4 members, resulting in his allowance reducing by over £6,300.

51. The Panel recognises the importance of scrutiny and challenge of Council policy and performance by members of the minority political groups. This was a factor in the Panel's decision (see paragraph 44) to encourage the majority group to consider whether Advisers could be drawn from minority groups. The Panel acknowledges that the special responsibility allowance paid to minority group leaders is partly to recognise the importance of their group's scrutiny and challenge to ensure democratic accountability.

52. The Panel agrees with the principle that the responsibility and workload of a group leader changes with the size of her/his group. We acknowledge that in a small group, the leader is likely to be spread quite thin if she/he is to be effective in providing minority scrutiny. Equally, we acknowledge that the task of maintaining consistency across a larger group rapidly becomes more onerous as group numbers grow.

53. We recommend that from May 2021 the present group leaders' allowance is replaced with one which rationalises the *per capita* element and removes the underlying stepped allowance. We recommend an allowance of £5,000 is paid to the leader of a group of three members (including the leader), with an extra £500 for each additional member in the group, to a maximum of £14,500 (which would be achieved at 22 members). The graph below shows how the allowance varies with group size, and specific amounts for each size of group are shown in the table in Annex A.





54. In response to the first draft of this report, the leaders of two minority groups argued that the allowances for group leaders should be higher than those recommended.
55. They argued for a starting point of £9,552 for a group of three plus an additional £350 for each member above this up to a maximum of £14,500, and argued that:
- "... minority group leader posts are fundamental to the representational and democratic relevance and smooth working of the Council ..."
  - "... the fairest comparison would be to the SRA for Committee Chairman on the basis that the level of accountability ... is similar"
  - "These requirements are all there whatever the size of a group is and represent a heavy baseline workload. Additional members in a group do mean more work and effort in liaising and co-ordinating ..."
  - "... to reduce [the allowance] in the way proposed would actually undermine the ability of opposition groups to challenge and scrutinise the council ...".
  - "It is already becoming more difficult to attract younger candidates for election to the County Council ... and reducing this allowance will only exacerbate the problem."
56. To give due consideration to these representations, the Panel has researched the allowances granted to group leaders in comparator county councils and has met to discuss and consider the arguments. Comparator information has been included in Annex B, along with the conclusions drawn from this.
57. The Panel agrees that minority groups are important to the operation of representative local government and the scrutiny they provide is a crucial part of this. By contrast with some county councils which pay allowances only to the largest minority group, the Panel believes that in WSCC all minority groups above a minimum size are important to the democratic operation of the council. The role of minority group leader in coordinating and directing their group's contributions merits payment of a special responsibility allowance. Accordingly, the Panel continues to recommend that an allowance is paid to the leader of each minority group with three or more members.
58. Since 2015, the Panel has used a structured method to compare responsibility, accountability and workload between roles that attract a special responsibility allowance. This method has been proven through the overall success of the allowances recommended and then accepted by vote in Council. This method places the level of responsibility, accountability and workload of the leader of a

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small minority group slightly above that of a 'new' Adviser role. The level of responsibility, accountability and workload of the leader of a large minority group is placed roughly halfway between that of a Committee Chairman and a Cabinet Member. Thus, the recommended starting point of £5,000 for a group of three members compares with the recommended £4,397 for an Adviser. Similarly, the recommended maximum minority group leaders' allowance of £14,500 compares with that of a Committee Chairman (£9,552) and a Cabinet Member (£21,663).

59. It should be noted that both the recommended starting point of £5,000 and the maximum of £14,500 are significantly generous when compared with other county councils' allowances.
60. The Panel does not understand why changing the minority group leaders' allowance as recommended will "undermine the ability of opposition groups to challenge and scrutinise the council" as all members we have spoken with indicate that financial reward is not why they undertake the role; instead they do it because of the importance of the contribution they can make as a councillor.
61. The Panel acknowledges the continuing difficulty of attracting council members of working age, which has been a topic of discussion among Panel members on a number of occasions. The Panel continues in its view, as originally expressed in its 2016 report, that there is little that the Scheme of Allowances can do itself to address this issue. Increasing the minority group leaders' allowances as requested would have, we believe, minimal impact on this issue.
62. Having considered the representations made by the two minority group leaders, the Panel continues to believe that its recommended allowance for minority group leaders (paragraph 53 above) is appropriate.
63. The Panel recommends the following approach when the number of members in a group changes:
- If a member joins or leaves a group, the group leader's allowance should be amended appropriately at the first opportunity
  - If a member ceases to be a member and a by-election is arranged within a reasonable time of the leaving date (in the opinion of the Director of Law and Assurance), then the group leader's allowance should continue unchanged until the result of the by-election is known, at which stage it should be reduced appropriately if necessary. The Panel considers it to be inappropriate to pay the allowance over a long period of time
  - If a member ceases to be a member and it is not possible or not appropriate to arrange a by-election within a reasonable time, then the group leader's allowance should be reduced appropriately at the first opportunity.

### **County Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

64. The Panel believes that the special responsibility allowance paid to the County Chairman, and to a lesser extent the County Vice-Chairman, is anomalously high. This was a result of the scheme proposed in 2016 at the last minute by political group leaders and the then County Chairman which amended the recommended group leaders' allowance and increased the Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's allowances. The Panel believes this change should now be reversed, bringing

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these allowances back into line with the structured and logical mechanism used by the Panel to set the level of recommended special responsibility allowances.

65. The present allowance for the County Chairman (£21,663) is considerably higher than the allowance paid in any comparator County Council (where the average is £15,058 and the highest £19,127). While the Panel acknowledges that the Chairman's role in WSCC is broader than elsewhere, we consider the present differential unjustified.
66. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that from May 2021 the County Chairman's allowance should be £20,162 and the Vice-Chairman's £8,450.

### **Periods of Extended Leave**

67. The Panel was asked to consider what should be done in the event that a member who is in receipt of a special responsibility allowance takes an extended period of leave. This might occur in a planned fashion or might be necessary at short notice. Equally, a short, planned period of leave might need to be extended due to unforeseen circumstances.
68. Ultimately, if a member is unable to fulfil a role, then someone else will need to be appointed to carry out the duties. In this case, the replacement member would be right to expect to receive the relevant special responsibility allowance.
69. The Panel believes that the basic principle should be that if another member takes up the duties of the role, they should be paid the allowance from the time at which they begin to perform the role **and** that the Council should not pay an allowance to two members simultaneously for the same role.
70. Based on this principle, the Panel recommends that the following paragraph is added to the Member Allowance Scheme:

If a member notifies the Council that they are taking an extended period of leave of more than two months, then the entitlement to a special responsibility allowance will cease at the two-month point. If a member takes leave of an uncertain duration that eventually becomes a period longer than two months, then any special responsibility allowance will cease at the two-month point. If at any time another 'replacement' member is appointed to the role, then the special responsibility allowance for the original member will cease at the time that the replacement member begins to perform the role.

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## **Annex A – Minority Group Leaders’ Allowance**

71. Specific allowance amounts for each size of group are shown in the table below. These are shown graphically in paragraph 53.

<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Allowance</b>
3	£5,000
4	£5,500
5	£6,000
6	£6,500
7	£7,000
8	£7,500
9	£8,000
10	£8,500
11	£9,000
12	£9,500
13	£10,000
14	£10,500
15	£11,000
16	£11,500
17	£12,000
18	£12,500
19	£13,000
20	£13,500
21	£14,000
22	£14,500
23	£14,500
24	£14,500
25	£14,500
34	£14,500

(34 is the largest possible minority group)

## Annex B – Allowances for Group Leaders in Comparator Counties

72. This table shows information from the most recent Scheme of Allowances from a number of comparator County Councils.

County	Minority Leaders Allowances	WSCC Equivalent
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	£17,000 to be shared among group leaders, probably not including the majority group leader(?) in proportion to the size of their group.	LD £ 9,067 L £ 4,533 IC £ 2,267 I £ 1,133
<b>East Sussex</b>	£12,554 to leader of the largest minority group. £3,262 to deputy leader of the largest minority group. £5,026 to leader of the second largest minority group.	LD £ 12,554 L £ 5,026 IC £ nil I £ nil
<b>Essex</b>	30% of the SRA for the Leader of the Council to the leader of the largest minority group. To be split equally if two equally sized groups. Leader's SRA = £54,000.	LD £ 10,155 L £ nil IC £ nil I £ nil
<b>Hampshire</b>	£12,708 to leader of LD group (presumably the largest minority group). £5,612 to each of 6 LD spokespersons (aligned to committees).	LD £ 12,708 L £ nil IC £ nil I £ nil
<b>Hertfordshire</b>	(3.5 * basic allowance * no. group members / no. councillors) to: - leader of majority group - leader of main minority group, with minimum of 75% of basic allowance - leaders of each smaller minority group, with minimum of 50% of basic allowance. 50% of basic allowance to each spokesperson from a minority group. Basic allowance = £10,382.	LD £ 9,151 L £ 6,101 IC £ 6,101 I £ 6,101
<b>Kent</b>	Minimum group size = 5. £7,999.44 for each minority group leader plus £633.23 for each additional group member which may be allocated among the group (not clear if leader can retain themselves).	LD £ 12,432 L £ nil IC £ nil I £ nil
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	£8,810.81 to leader of the largest minority group.	LD £8,811 L £ nil IC £ nil I £ nil

County	Minority Leaders Allowances	WSCC Equivalent
<b>Suffolk</b>	Minimum group size = 5. 5% of basic allowance * no. of group members to leader of the largest minority group. 75% of group leader's SRA to deputy leader of the largest minority group. 30% of basic allowance to up to 6 spokespeople from the largest minority group. 5% of basic allowance * no. of group members to leader of the second largest minority group. 75% of the group leader's SRA to the deputy leader of the second largest minority group. Basic allowance = £10,688.79.	LD    £ 4,881 L        £ nil IC       £ nil I        £ nil
<b>Surrey</b>	£12,024 to be shared among minority group leaders in proportion to the size of their groups. £170.34 per capita "political group allowance" to each group leader to be used for office holders.	LD    £ 7,776 L       £ 3,887 IC     £ 1,943 I       £ 972

**WSCC Equivalent** shows Group Leaders' allowances in WSCC if the county's scheme were implemented here.

LD = Liberal Democrats = 8 members; L = Labour = 4 members;

IC = Independent Conservatives = 2 members; I = Independent = 1 member

73. The positions in comparator counties on minority group leaders' allowances are varied. The extremes are:

- Substantial flat rate amount to the leader of only the largest minority party, apparently regardless of the size of the group
- Significant flat rate amount to the leader of any minority group no matter how small, plus a per capita amount as well.

74. No county pays more than about £13,000, and most pay nothing or only small amounts to the leaders of smaller minority groups. A few pay a small amount to members of minority parties who are spokespeople on particular portfolios.

75. Two specify a minimum group size (of 5 members).

76. The Panel draws the following conclusions from this information:

- Roughly half of comparators pay an SRA to leaders of all minority groups; the other half to only the largest or two largest
- Setting a minimum group size is not unprecedented, and it might exclude from the SRA the smallest groups (like the two independent groups at present)

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- The maximum of £14,500 proposed in this report is significantly greater than any comparator council
  - A linear increase with group size is sensible – comparators that pay flat rates regardless of size can seem illogical (especially for very small groups)
  - The minimum of £5,000 for the leader of a group of three or more members proposed in this report is very generous when compared to the comparator councils.

**Dr Neil Beer (Chairman)**

**Mr Steve Cooper**

**Mr John Donaldson**

**Mrs Charlotte Pexton**

**Mr Kevin Scutt**