

**TITLE OF REPORT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2007/2008**  
REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out guidance and information regarding Members' Allowances and proposes the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2007/2008, attached at Appendix A.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 This report contain a recommendation on a key decision and was first referred to in the Forward Plan published during November 2006.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Regulations made under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2000 require local authorities to make a scheme of allowances for their Members and to establish and maintain a panel to make recommendations about the scheme.

- 3.2 The allowances that may be included within a scheme are:

- a basic allowance;
- a special responsibility allowance;
- a childcare and dependent carers allowance;
- a travel and subsistence allowance;
- conference and meetings allowances.

**The Basic Allowance**

- 3.3 This allowance recognises the time commitment of all Members, including Council and Committee meetings, meetings with officers, constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes and private telephones. Some elements of the work should be voluntary and not remunerated. This however must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by Members despite the voluntary input required.

**The Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)**

- 3.4 This allowance recognises the commitment of those Members having significant additional responsibilities. This must include an allowance for at least one Member of a minority Group. Not every additional responsibility is so significant that it should attract an additional allowance. The additional roles of Members should be considered carefully both in terms of responsibility and real time commitment. The categories for which an SRA may be paid are:

- Membership of the Cabinet;
- Acting as Leader or Deputy Leader of a political group;
- Chairman of a Committee, Sub-Committee or Joint Committee;
- Representing the Council at meetings of other bodies;
- Membership of a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council which meets exceptionally frequently or for exceptionally long periods;

- Other such activities requiring equal or greater amount of time and effort, whether or not those activities are contained within the scheme.

#### **Childcare and Independent Carers Allowance**

3.5 This allowance is for those Members who incur costs whilst carrying out any of the following duties:

- Attending a meeting of the Council, Cabinet or any Committee, outside bodies which the Council has appointed a member to a meeting authorised by the Council to which members of more than one political group has been invited, or local authority associations;
- Opening tenders;
- Inspection of premises;
- Any other duty, authorised by the Council, in connection with discharging the duties of the Council.

#### **Travel and Subsistence Allowance**

3.6 This allowance may be paid for any of the functions set out in paragraph 3.5 above.

### **4. ISSUES**

4.1 There was no recent national data available to the Panel with which to make comparisons with other local authorities. However, a survey of local authorities within the "Audit Family" including NHDC and undertaken during October 2006 is attached at Appendix B. The recent survey of NHDC Members is attached at Appendix C

#### **Use of home based ICT equipment**

4.2 The Panel considered formulating recommendations in the light of the increased use, by Members, of home based ICT equipment and personal computers for carrying out Council duties and for general communications on Council business. The Panel defined this as being a home PC, with printing, Microsoft Office type applications and an internet connection. The Panel noted that the survey of NHDC Councillors revealed, that on average, up to 50% of home equipment is dedicated to Council business. When calculating a sum to be proposed the Panel identified the following annual costs in maintaining home computer equipment, based on the cost of suitable domestic equipment:

- £100 for equipment depreciation;
- £280 for provision of broadband internet access;
- £100 for maintenance;
- £120 for consumables (paper and ink cartridges);
- Total: £600.

4.3 In acknowledging the average usage figure of 50%, the Panel agreed to recommend that a sum of £300 per year be allowed for the use of home based ICT equipment. In addition the Panel considered the inclusion of an additional ICT equipment consideration in all Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's), in recognition of the increase in use of home based ICT equipment when fulfilling the duties required when holding a position meriting an SRA. The Panel considered that, as those in receipt of SRA's also received the basic allowance, it would only be appropriate to provide extra recompense for the purpose of replacing additional consumables used. Therefore the Panel agreed to recommend that an additional £100 be allowed to those in receipt of SRA's.

- 4.4 It was also agreed that as the ICT allowances had been based upon current retail prices, they should be applied prior to the Council giving consideration to any inflationary increase for 2007/8.

**The provision of a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Standards Committee**

- 4.5 The Panel considered a SRA for this role in light of the functions of the Standards Committee in dealing with conduct and propriety i.e:

- Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted Members;
- Assisting Councillors and co-opted Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- To monitor the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- To grant dispensations to Councillors and co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct;
- To deal with any reports from a case, tribunal or interim case or report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter which is referred by an Ethical Standards Officer to the Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Council;
- To provide advice and guidance to Councillors and co-opted Members and to make arrangements for training on any matter within these Terms of Reference.

- 4.6 The Panel considered that the duties and responsibilities of this position do not lend themselves to direct comparison with other positions attracting SRA's. There is no regular pattern of work or attendance at meetings or committees. There is however, the potential for short intense periods of activity, causing the Council to rely heavily upon this position (i.e. formal hearings). In addition the impact of Standards work upon the work of the Council can be significant. Since April 2005 the current Chairman has been engaged in:

- Preparing for and chairing meetings of the Standards Committee;
- Developing the Planning Code of Good Practice for Councillors;
- Delivering presentations to new Members of the Council and Parish Councils;
- Promoting training and good practice for Standards;
- A question time forum to promote Standards in the community;
- Launching the Code of Conduct;
- Promoting ethical standards.

- 4.7 It is predicted that this type of activity will continue and develop further. The Panel considered payments made within the other "Audit Family" local authorities and agreed to recommend to the Council an SRA of £1,000. The Panel felt that this sum should also provide adequate recompense for the use of home computer equipment. However, as the allowance had been calculated on the basis on current prices and allowances, the Panel would recommend to the Council that the allowance should be set prior to consideration being given to any general inflationary increase for 2007/8.

**The Special Responsibility Allowances for Opposition Group Leaders**

- 4.8 The Panel reviewed the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) paid to the Leaders of the Opposition Groups. These were currently paid at a flat rate, with a marked difference between the two Allowances. The Panel considered that the essential tasks of communication and the management and control of Group activity equate to the number of Members in a Group and that a more appropriate method of calculating the SRA's was required.

- 4.9 The Panel agreed that the most appropriate method was one employed by other authorities within the Council's "Audit Family", whereby Group Leaders received a sum for each Member of their Group, rather than a fixed total sum.
- 4.10 The Panel also considered these allowances in terms of the amount paid by other authorities within the "Audit Family" and agreed to recommend to Council that the Special Responsibility Allowances for the Leaders of Opposition Groups be calculated using the sum of £225 for each Member of the Group.

#### **The Basic Allowance**

- 4.11 When considering the level at which to recommend the Basic Allowance, the Panel noted the Council's inflation increase prediction of 2.5% for 2007/8. They also considered the Allowances paid at other Councils within the "Audit Family" (Appendix B), and the results of the NHDC Members' Survey (Appendix C).
- 4.12 In recognition of the increased amount of time that Members were spending discussing issues with constituents and officers, as demonstrated in the results of the Members' Survey, the Panel agreed that, following the addition of the ICT allowance, to recommend to Council an increase the Basic Allowance of 3% for the Civic Year 2007/2008.

#### **Calculating the Basic and SRA Allowances**

- 4.13 At the time of setting the first Scheme, after the abolition of attendance allowances, the Council set the basic and SRA allowances with reference to the total amount of attendance allowance claimed by Members during 1998/1999. The Council may wish to consider whether or not this base continues to be relevant as a calculator. An alternative would be to use the LGA daily rate calculator established at the time of the introduction of the Guidance on the Consolidated Regulations in 2003. However, the Panel considered that the Council should give consideration to changing the base calculator only after undertaking a detailed analysis of the pattern of Member activity over a period of time and in conjunction with a further annual Members survey.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has a duty, under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2000, to determine a Scheme of Allowances for each financial year and set up and maintain an Independent Panel for the purpose of making recommendations as to the Scheme of Allowances.

### **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A Scheme of Allowances may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances to be ascertained by reference to an index, specified by the Council. Where the only change made to a scheme is that caused by the annual impact of the index the Scheme shall not be deemed to be amended and thus the Council will not have to seek a recommendation from its Independent Panel.
- 6.2 Where annual adjustments are made in accordance with an agreed index, the index should not run for more than four years before a further recommendation is sought from an Independent Panel.
- 6.3 The total budget for the current year's scheme is £231,530. The total cost of the scheme for 2007/8 would be £257,580 should the recommendations of the Panel be agreed. This represents an increase of £26,050 over the current year's budget.

6.4 At its meeting held on 19 December 2006, the Cabinet resolved to support the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and noted that the increased cost of the scheme had been included in the draft Budget for 2007/8.

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None contained within this report.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 Consultation has taken place with the NHDC Group Leaders, the Chairman of the Standards Committee and other local authorities. A survey of all NHDC Members was undertaken during October 2006.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION**

9.1 That the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2007/8, recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in Appendix A, be agreed.

## **10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 To assist the Council in determining a scheme of Members' Allowances for 2007/8.

## **11. APPENDICES**

11.1 Appendix A - Scheme of Allowances 2007/2008.

11.2 Appendix B - Comparative Information (Audit family).

11.3 Appendix C - Survey of NHDC Members, Oct 2006.

## **12. CONTACT OFFICERS**

12.1 David Miley (Democratic Services Manager)  
Tel. 01462 474208

12.2 Donna Levett (Committee & Member Services Officer)  
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## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

13.1 Guidance on Consolidated Regulations, ODPM 2003.

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## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### DRAFT MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2007/2008

#### 1. Definitions

In this scheme

"Council" means North Hertfordshire District Council

"Councillor" means a Member of the Council who is a Councillor

"year" means the 12 months ended 31 March.

#### 2. Commencement and Duration

This scheme shall have effect for the year commencing 1 April 2007 and for subsequent years, save that the Council may amend the scheme at any time subject to the provisions of paragraph 8 hereunder.

#### 3. Basic Allowance

Subject to paragraph 8, a basic allowance of £3,476 (£3,075\*) shall be paid to each Councillor for each year.

#### 4. Special Responsibility Allowance

For each year a special responsibility allowance in the amounts indicated below shall be paid to those Councillors who hold the following special responsibilities:-

Leader of the Council	£6,912 (£6,611)
Deputy Leader of the Council	£1,132 (£ 999)
Cabinet Portfolio Members	£4,189 (£3,967)
Chairman of Performance and Review Committee	£2,827 (£2,645)
Chairmen of Area Committees	£2,827 (£2,645)
Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee	£2,827 (£2,645)
Chairman, Highways Partnership Panel**	£1,465 (£1,322)
Leader of largest Opposition Group	£2,189 (£2,645)
Leader of second largest Opposition Group	£1,725 (£ 661)
Chairman of Standards Committee	£1,030 (£ 0)

Such allowances shall be subject to the requirements of Paragraph 8 hereunder.

\* Figures in brackets indicate the allowance for 2006/7

\*\* Where the Chairman is a Member of the North Hertfordshire District Council

#### 5. Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

Travelling and subsistence allowances are payable at the rates determined by the NJC for Council staff and in the following circumstances:

- (a) the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council when engaged on official Council business;

## **Appendix A**

- (b) the Chairman and Vice Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee for attending pre-agenda and briefing meetings and opening tenders;
- (c) Cabinet Portfolio Members for attending meetings with officers in connection with their official duties as Spokesman;
- (d) attendance by Councillors at a meeting of the Council or any Committee or Sub Committee appointed thereby in accordance with the provisions of Section 102(1)(a) and (c) of the Local Government Act 1972 (including informal meetings of such bodies which have been arranged at the behest of the appropriate Chairman and to which all Members therefore have been invited to attend), of which he/she is a Member, or has been specifically requested to attend by the Chairman and such is recorded in the minutes of the meeting;
- (e) attendance by Councillors at a meeting of any Working Party or Panel to which he/she has been appointed by any of the bodies referred to in (d) above and comprising representatives of more than one political group;
- (f) attendance by Councillors at Seminars and other similar meetings arranged formally for the purpose of informing and/or training to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited;
- (g) attendance at meetings of external bodies to which the Councillor claiming is the Council's appointed representative;
- (h) attendance by Councillors at conferences, courses, seminars, etc;

(No such allowance shall be payable in respect of attendance at any conference or meeting in relation to which the Councillor is entitled to a payment in the nature of an allowance under Section 175 of the Local Government Act 1972.

No such allowance shall be payable if such a payment would be contrary to a provision made by or under any enactment.)

### **6. Renunciation**

A Councillor may by notice in writing given to the Democratic Services Manager elect to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

### **7. Childcare and dependent Carers' Allowance**

A care allowance will be paid to any Member who incurs expenditure on the care of young children and or dependent relatives in order to perform their duties as a Councillor, subject to:

- (a) the duty being one for which Travelling and Subsistence Allowance is payable under this Scheme of Members' Allowances; and
- (b) that each individual claim shall not exceed the actual sum paid or £5.58 per hour, whichever is the lesser; and

**8. Part-Year Entitlements**

If during the course of the year the Council amends the amounts payable in respect of basic or special responsibility allowance, then the entitlement to such allowance shall be adjusted pro-rata to the proportion of the year that such allowance is payable.

Where a Councillor (a) is not a Councillor for the whole of the year; or (b) during the course of the year takes up or relinquishes a position in respect of which a special responsibility allowance is payable, then the entitlement to basic or special responsibility allowance shall be adjusted pro-rata to the proportion of the year during which he/she was a Councillor or held such position.

**9. Claims**

A claim for travelling and/or subsistence allowance under this Scheme shall (a) be made in writing within three months of the date of the meeting in respect of which the entitlement to the allowances arises; and (b) include or be accompanied by, a statement by the Councillor claiming the allowance that he or she is not entitled to receive remuneration in respect of the matter to which the claim relates otherwise than under the Scheme.

Claims submitted later than three months after the relevant date shall be paid only in such exceptional circumstances as are approved by the Director of Finance.

**10. Payments**

Subject to the provisions of paragraph 8 payments of basic and special responsibility allowances shall be made in monthly instalments.

Payments in respect of travelling and subsistence allowance shall be made as soon as is practicable after submission of a claim.

**11. External Conferences, Seminars, etc.**

Travelling and subsistence Allowance at the same rate as that applying under the Members' Allowances Scheme are payable to those Members attending conferences, seminars, courses, etc., falling within the criteria specified in Section 175 of the Local Government Act, 1972 where such attendance has been previously approved by the Council or the appropriate Committee etc.

David Miley  
Democratic Services Manager  
North Hertfordshire District Council

## Audit Family Comparisons

Name of Authority	Basic Allowance	Leader of Council	Deputy Leader of Council	Cabinet Portfolio Members	PARC Chairman (Policy / Audit)	Area Committee Chairman (Planning)	Scrutiny & Overview Chairman	Highways Partnership Chairman	Largest Opposition Group Leader
Ashford Borough Council	£4,125.50	£13,494.98	£8,906.76	£6,479.72	£2,698.48	£5,398.00	£5,398.00	£1,349.76	£211.56 per member
Braintree District Council	£4,224.00	£12,672.00	£10,560.00	£8,448.00	£4,224.00	£4,224.00	£4,224.00	-	£4,224.00
Colchester Borough Council	£5,012.75	£13,791.70	£8,688.80	£8,275.00	-	£4,827.00	£5,356.00	-	£5,516.70
East Hants District Council	£3,000.00	£6,000.00	£2,000.00	£3,000.00	£1,000.00	£2000 (£3000)	£2,000.00	-	£2,000.00
Maidstone Borough Council	£4,461.00	£22,308.00	-	£11,154.00	£6,692.00	£4,461.00	£6,692.00	-	£11,154 shared between all Group Leaders on the basis on the number of Councillors in each particular group as a proportion of the total number of Councillors on the Council
Mid Sussex District Council	£4,370.00	£20,000.00	-	£10,000.00	£5,000.00	£4,370.00	£5,000.00	-	1/54 of a Cabinet Members allowance per Member of their group, with a minimum level of £500
<b>North Herts District Council</b>	<b>£3,075.00</b>	<b>£6,611.00</b>	<b>£999.00</b>	<b>£3,967.00</b>	<b>£2,645.00</b>	<b>£2,645.00</b>	<b>£2,645.00</b>	<b>£1,322.00</b>	<b>£2,645.00</b>
Salisbury District Council	£4,000.00	£16,000.00	£12,000.00	£12,000.00	£500.00	£4,000.00	£4,000.00	-	£500 (up to 5 Members) + £100 for every additional Member in group
South Beds District Council	£2,997.00	£8,991.00	-	£4,496.00	£1,498.00	£4,341.00	£2,997.00	-	£2,637.00
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	£4,341.00	£8,682.00	-	£6,513.00	£5,427.00	£4,341.00	£5,427.00	-	£543 plus £54 per member of Group
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	£3,480.00	£6,960.00	-	£5,220.00	£522.00	£1,740.00	£5,220.00	£870.00	£516 plus £50 per member

## Audit Family Comparisons

Second Largest Opposition Group Leader	Chairman of the Council	Vice-Chairman of the Council	Chairman of Standards Committee	Licensing Chairman
£211.56 per member	separate	separate	£1,349.76	£263.34
£1,056.00	£4,224.00	separate	£0 though independent members (inc. Chair get £264)	£4,224.00
£3,310.00	separate	separate	£0 though co-opted members (inc. Chair) get £271.92	£4,827.00
-	£2000 + civic duties allowance	separate	£1,000.00	-
£11,154 shared between all Group Leaders on the basis on the number of Councillors in each particular group as a proportion of the total number of Councillors on the Council	separate	separate	£1,116.00	£4,461.00
1/54 of a Cabinet Members allowance per Member of their group, with a minimum level of £500	£6,555.00	separate	£1,250.00	£500.00
<b>£661.00</b>	<b>separate</b>	<b>separate</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>-</b>
£500 (up to 5 Members) + £100 for every additional Member in group	£2,000.00	£650.00	£500.00	£500.00
£959.00	£7,493.00	£2,810.00	£749.00	£4,496.00
£543 plus £54 per member of Group	separate	separate	£1,086.00	£1,086.00
£516 plus £50 per member	separate	separate	£1,000.00	£1,740.00

## **Audit Family Group – ICT Allowance Arrangements**

### **Ashford Borough Council**

(From Constitution)

#### **6. ICT Allowance**

*An ICT Allowance is available to Members to support their use of Information Technology.*

*The Allowance is currently set at £250 per year, although arrangements can be made to make advance payment of up to £1,000, subject to the signing of a Legal Agreement.*

*This means that a Councillor has three choices:-*

- To claim an ICT Allowance of £250 for the current Municipal Year.*
- To claim an Allowance of £1,000, subject to signing the Agreement mentioned above.*
- To request that the Allowance be used to provide that Member with a “remote access solution” comprising terminal, software and security devices to facilitate connection to the corporate network via the internet.*

*To receive this Allowance, Members must meet the following requirements:-*

- Members must have an e-mail address (either an ashford.gov.uk address or one supplied by their own ISP to qualify for payment).*
- Those Members who wish to take up the option of remote access to the Council’s Extranet will be given an ashford.gov.uk email address.*
- The Members’ Basic Allowance is intended to fund the purchase of consumables etc, purchase of such items is not an appropriate use of the ICT Allowance.*
- Equipment purchased (or part funded) by Ashford Borough Council is intended to be used in whole or in part for Council business, and as such will be subject to an “acceptable use” Agreement.*

*Members should be mindful of the Council’s information security and data protection policies which aim to protect both individuals and the Council from the misuse of information.*

### **Braintree District Council**

Do not have scheme of ICT allowances for Members.

### **Colchester Borough Council**

No separate IT Allowance, although currently reviewing. Provide replacement ink cartridges and printer paper to Members on request, any other costs to be met through basic allowance.

### **East Hants District Council**

Members can claim for consumables (printer cartridges, ink etc) through stationary orders. To review IT provision in 2007.

### **Maidstone Borough Council**

Provide each Councillor with ICT equipment and have broadband internet access set up. Council pays broadband costs and replace ink cartridges for their printers. Councillors have the option of using their own equipment, and if they do they can claim an allowance of £300 per annum.

### **Mid Sussex District Council**

Review Panel’s suggested Scheme for 06/07 said: Basic Allowance = “£4,500 (of which £350 is considered a reasonable amount to put towards IT expenditure). Council meeting refused to adopt this paragraph (reference to IT expenditure).

### **Salisbury District Council**

All Councillors provided with IT equipment from a separate budget. All then receive £400 annual allowance to pay for ink, paper etc.

**South Beds District Council**

All Councillors provided with IT equipment from a separate budget. All then receive £400 annual allowance to pay for ink, paper etc.

**Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council**

No reference in their Members Allowances Scheme and no response to enquiries to department.

**Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**

Members reimbursed for internet access for Council business, up to maximum of £500 (from Members Allowances Scheme):

## Key findings from the Members Allowances Consultation Exercise

### Methodology

A questionnaire methodology was used for the Members Allowances Consultation exercise. In line with the consultation policy at the Council, the questionnaire was produced using SNAP software and was made available to Members in both paper and electronic format. All Members received a hard copy of the questionnaire in their pigeon holes which also included a link to the electronic version of the survey. Members were given 2 weeks to complete and return the questionnaire.

### Response rate

After the 2 week fieldwork period for the Members Allowances Questionnaire, 41 responses had been received. This equates to a response rate of 84%. This is an extremely high response rate which was achieved without the need for a reminder. This clearly illustrates the importance and interest Members have on this issue.

### Question 1 - Amount of time spent on activities in an average week

The table below shows the time spent on activities by Members in an average week.

Note: The term "Base" in the table below and all other tables in this appendix refers to the number of Members who responded to a survey question.

Absolute Analysis % Respondents	Base	Missing					
		No reply	0-1 hours	2-4 hours	5-8 hours	9-11 hours	more than 11...
<b>Base</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>10</b> <b>3.1%</b>	<b>131</b> <b>40.9%</b>	<b>132</b> <b>41.3%</b>	<b>42</b> <b>13.1%</b>	<b>2</b> <b>0.6%</b>	<b>3</b> <b>0.9%</b>
<b>Attending Council &amp; Committee meetings</b>	<b>40</b>	-	-	20 50.0%	17 42.5%	1 2.5%	2 5.0%
<b>Attending political group meetings</b>	<b>40</b>	-	27 67.5%	12 30.0%	1 2.5%	-	-
<b>Discussing issues with constituents</b>	<b>40</b>	-	6 15.0%	27 67.5%	6 15.0%	1 2.5%	-
<b>Discussing issues with other Members</b>	<b>40</b>	2 5.0%	15 37.5%	20 50.0%	3 7.5%	-	-
<b>Discussing issues with Council staff</b>	<b>40</b>	-	15 37.5%	16 40.0%	9 22.5%	-	-
<b>Preparing for Committee meetings</b>	<b>40</b>	-	8 20.0%	25 62.5%	6 15.0%	-	1 2.5%
<b>Preparing to chair meetings</b>	<b>40</b>	7 17.5%	24 60.0%	9 22.5%	-	-	-
<b>Attending training courses</b>	<b>40</b>	1 2.5%	36 90.0%	3 7.5%	-	-	-

### **Question 2 - Has time spent on activities stayed the same, increased or decreased in the last year**

The table below shows how Member time on activities has changed over the last year.

Absolute Analysis % Respondents	Base	Missi...			
		No reply	Stayed the s...	Increased	Decreased
<b>Base</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>31</b> 9.7%	<b>184</b> 57.5%	<b>98</b> 30.6%	<b>7</b> 2.2%
<b>Attending Council &amp; Committee meetings</b>	<b>40</b>	3 7.5%	20 50.0%	15 37.5%	2 5.0%
<b>Attending political group meetings</b>	<b>40</b>	3 7.5%	29 72.5%	6 15.0%	2 5.0%
<b>Discussing issues with constituents</b>	<b>40</b>	3 7.5%	15 37.5%	21 52.5%	1 2.5%
<b>Discussing issues with other Members</b>	<b>40</b>	3 7.5%	22 55.0%	15 37.5%	- -
<b>Discussing issues with Council staff</b>	<b>40</b>	3 7.5%	17 42.5%	20 50.0%	- -
<b>Preparing for Committee meetings</b>	<b>40</b>	3 7.5%	26 65.0%	11 27.5%	- -
<b>Preparing to chair meetings</b>	<b>40</b>	8 20.0%	22 55.0%	8 20.0%	2 5.0%
<b>Attending training courses</b>	<b>40</b>	5 12.5%	33 82.5%	2 5.0%	- -

In terms of the change in Member activity patterns the most significant change was for discussing issues with constituents. 53% of Members (21 respondents) said that this had increased during the last 12 months. This is the key area that respondents to the latest District Wide Survey identified as being an activity that they would like their Councillor to do in the future. The other activities showing significant increases in terms of Members' time were discussing issues with Council staff, attending Council & Committee meetings and discussing issues with other Members. 50% of Members (20 respondents) felt time spent on discussing issues with Council staff had increased while 37.5% of Members (15 respondents) felt time spent on attending Council and Committee meetings and discussing issues with other Members had increased.

### **Question 3 - Incidental costs incurred by Members**

Members were then asked to select from a prompted list the additional monthly outgoing they incur as part of their role as Members of North Hertfordshire District Council. All Members who completed this question identified calls from their home telephone as being the major additional monthly outgoing. 15% of Members (6 respondents) identified childcare as an additional monthly outgoing while 50% of Members (20 respondents) cited out of pocket expenses such as car parking tickets, working lunches etc. 75% of Members (30 respondents) provided examples of other incidental costs.

Other incidental costs included:

- Mobile phone costs
- Purchase of stationery including paper, envelopes and stamps
- Buying computer accessories including printer cartridges, broadband connection fees, printer toners and computer maintenance costs
- Days off work to attend regional and representative meetings
- Loss of earning to attend training and Council meetings
- Petrol costs visiting constituents and other non-Council meetings etc
- Making charitable donations

#### **Questions 4 & 5 - Time spent on additional activities at the Council as Portfolio Holder, Chairman of a Committee, Leader of the Council or political group**

In total 45% of the Members who completed the questionnaire (18 respondents) completed questions 4 and 5 of the Members Allowances survey. Of these 18 respondents, 10 said their role as either Portfolio Holder, Chairman of a Committee, Leader of the Council or political group made them spend 5-8 extra hours a week above those required of regular Councillors, while 3 respondents said they spent 9-11 hours on additional activities. 1 Member stated they spent more than 11 hours on additional activities each week.

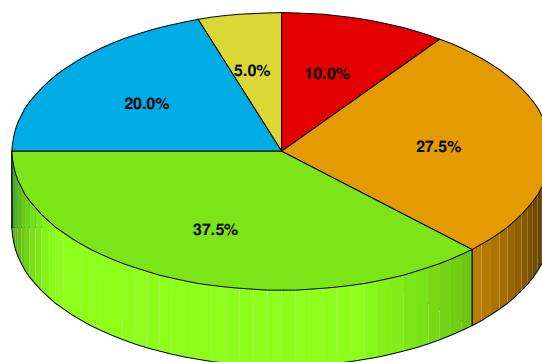
Listed below are a few of the additional activities undertaken by the above group over and above those required of regular Councillors:

- Attending openings of improved facilities financed by funding
- Attending weekly briefing meetings
- Attending Task and Finish Groups
- Visits to Beacon Councils to look at best practice and gain ideas
- Handling the press
- Researching current issues
- Visits to all planning application sites, parishes and organisations within the Committee area
- Attending County Council meetings concerning portfolio
- Preparing for Council meetings

#### **Question 6 - Usage of home computer for work as a Councillor**

The table below shows the percentage of usage of Members' home computers for Council related business.

If you have access to a PC, how much is the PC used for



■ No reply    
 ■ Less than 25%    
 ■ Up to 50%    
 ■ Up to 75%    
 ■ Up to 100%

Members were then asked to identify how much paper they had used in the last 4 weeks and how many e-mails they had sent in the same period. These findings are detailed in the tables below:

#### Amount of paper used for Council related business

Absolute Analysis % Respondents	Base	Missing	Up to 50 sides of A4	Up to 100 sides of A4	Up to 150 sides of A4	Over 200 sides of A4
		No Reply				
During the past 4 weeks, approximately how many sides of A4 paper have you printed as a result of your work as a Councillor?	40 100.0%	4 10.0%	18 45.0%	11 27.5%	3 7.5%	4 10.0%

#### Amount of e-mails sent on Council related business

Absolute Analysis % Respondents	Base	Missing	Up to 20 e-mails	More than 20 but less than 50 e-mails	50+ e-mails
		No Reply			
How many e-mails have you sent regarding Council business in the past 4 weeks?	40 100.0%	4 10.0%	11 27.5%	13 32.5%	12 30.0%

#### Question 7 - Level of agreement with statements about the Members Allowance at North Hertfordshire District Council

The table below shows Members' levels of agreement with a series of questions around the Members Allowance provision at NHDC.

Absolute Analysis % Respondents	Base	Missing	Agree Strongly	Agree Slightly	Neither agree ...	Disagree Slightly	Disagree Strongly
		No reply					
<b>Base</b>	120	7 5.8%	15 12.5%	14 11.7%	23 19.2%	14 11.7%	47 39.2%
<b>The Members Allowance at NHDC compares favourably with other district councils</b>	40	2 5.0%	2 5.0%	- -	4 10.0%	3 7.5%	29 72.5%
<b>I feel sufficiently well paid for the job I do as a Councillor</b>	40	2 5.0%	1 2.5%	5 12.5%	10 25.0%	7 17.5%	15 37.5%
<b>An increase in Members Allowances is essential to maintain high levels of participation by Councillors</b>	40	3 7.5%	12 30.0%	9 22.5%	9 22.5%	4 10.0%	3 7.5%

The results above clearly show that Members are not satisfied with the current Members Allowance. 80% of Members (32 respondents) do not feel that the Members Allowance at NHDC compares favourably with other District Councils while only 15% of Members (6 respondents) agree that they are sufficiently well paid for the job they do as a Councillor. 55% of Members (22 respondents) disagreed with this statement.

**Question 8**

The final question in the questionnaire asked Members for any additional comments they wished to add regarding the Members Allowances at the Council. Some of these comments are detailed below:

*"I think the rate is one of the lowest in the country, but since most District Councillors don't take payment into account when deciding whether to stand its just slightly insulting rather than a recruitment issue!"*

*"We are one of the worst for pay in the whole of the south east. It needs to double!"*

*"It is a great pity that we at NHDC have got ourselves into the mode of thinking it is politically sensitive to reward ourselves adequately for the time we spend representing the electorate and trying to move the council forward. We pay particular attention to the fact that year on year we have to cut budgets and increase council tax. The financial pressures is always seen to be great. Members Allowances are at the bottom of the pile of would like to but...!?"*

*"As a Councillor representing a rural Ward I attend two Parish Council meetings monthly, 2 meetings quarterly and one meeting twice a year. I do not claim mileage nor do I claim for any of the numerous visits to residents in my Ward."*

*"Members Allowances are very low at North Herts compared with similar Districts. This is particularly important for leading Members who are required to spend a considerable amount of time. This prevents some from taking the role and prevents others from doing it properly."*

*"In order to give sufficient time to Council duties, I am only able to work part-time in paid employment. Not only do my Council activities involve me in over 30hrs of weekly duties and responsibilities, but this is time which I cannot spend in paid employment. I am happy to engage in many of the activities on a voluntary basis but it does put a strain on family finances."*

*"If you work hard and are on lots of Committees which you also attend you get no more money than someone who attends twice a year."*

*"I am retired and can give time fairly freely. To attract young Councillors with jobs and active families, the Allowance must be considerably higher."*

*"I believe the current rate to be poor in comparison to other Authorities and this is demonstrated each year but without any justification of why we are so far behind. Should not shadow Portfolio Holders receive an additional amount in recognition of the extra work /time that they put in?"*