

A Review of Special Responsibility Allowances

For

**Newark & Sherwood District
Council**

**A Report by the
Independent Remuneration Panel**

**Sarah Britton
Paul Cox
Dr Declan Hall (Chair)**

March 2026

Executive Summary: Recommendations

Newark & Sherwood DC IRP Executive Summary	SRAs 2025/26 (recommended)		
REMUNERATED POSTS	Nos. Paid	SRA per Post	Total per Category
Leader of Council	1	£21,692	£21,692
Deputy Leader Council	1	£12,239	£12,239
Portfolio Holders	5	£9,329	£46,645
Chair PPIC	1	£9,329	£9,329
Vice Chair PPIC	1	£2,332	£2,332
Chair Planning	1	£9,329	£9,329
Vice Chair Planning	1	£2,332	£2,332
Chair Audit & Accounts*	1	£5,423	£5,423
Vice Chair Audit & Accounts*	1	£1,356	£1,356
Chair Governance, General Purposes & LGR*	1	£5,423	£5,423
Vice Chair Governance, General Purposes & LGR*	1	£1,356	£1,356
Chair Licensing*	1	£3,254	£3,254
Vice Chair Licensing*	1	£814	£814
Main Opposition Group Leader	1	£9,329	£9,329
Leaders Minority Opposition Groups (if reach 4 members)	0	£1,085	£0
SRAs TOTAL	18		£130,853
*SRAs for these posts to be paid from 15th July 2025			

Other Recommendations: The IRP also recommends that:

The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)

The DCA is maintained but two types of differential care are set out in the allowances scheme and inserted into the scheme as follows:

- Childcare – payable at maximum hourly National Living Wage
- Elderly/Other care – payable at the hourly rate charged by Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services for a Home Help Carer

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

The Subsistence Allowance paid to Members of the Planning Committee is reset at £15 per month to be paid automatically to all Members on the Planning Committee, excluding the Chair and Vice Chair.

Furthermore, that the:

- That the applicable mileage rates for which Members can claim for attending by their own vehicle remains at 50 pence per mile
- That when public transport is used then standard class will be reimbursed
- That this recommendation should be inserted into the scheme in addition to the applicable subsistence rates, with reference to casual user mileage rate removed

Confirmation of Indexing

The following allowances are indexed for four years (the maximum period permitted under the 2003 Regulations before the Council has to seek further advice from the IRP) from 2025/26 to 2028/29, as follows:

- **Basic Allowance, SRAs and Co-optees' Allowances:**
 - Updated annually in line with the annual percentage pay increase given to Newark & Sherwood District Council employees (and rounded to the nearest £) as agreed for each year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Staff as agreed at SCP 43.
- **Out of Council Area Mileage Allowance:**
 - Indexed to the same rate applicable to Officers.
- **Out of Council Area Other Travel and Subsistence:**
 - Reimbursement of actual costs taking into account the most cost effective means of transport and/or accommodation available and the convenience of use with the Subsistence maximum rates indexed to the same periodic percentage increase that may be applied to Officer Subsistence Allowances.
- **Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA):**
 - The maximum hourly rates to be indexed to the government's national living wage applicable to the age of the carer (childcare) and Nottinghamshire County Council's hourly rate for a Home Care Assistance (care of other dependants).

Implementation

The new scheme of allowances based on the recommendations contained in this report is adopted from the dates as follows:

- The recommended SRAs for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Licensing, Audit and Accounts and Governance, General Purposes and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Committees – to be implemented from the date these Committees were established on 15th July 2025.
- All other recommendations – to be implemented from the date the Council agrees on the report

**Independent Remuneration Panel:
A Report of Members' Allowances
For
Newark & Sherwood District Council
March 2026**

Introduction: The Regulatory Context

1. This report contains the recommendations arising out of the independent review, January 2026, of Members' Allowances for Newark & Sherwood District Council by the Council's statutory Independent Remuneration Panel ('IRP' or 'Panel'). It also lays out the deliberations of the IRP to show elected Members, Officers and the public the rationale for the Panel's recommendations.
2. The Panel was convened under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021) (the 2003 Regulations). These regulations, arising out of the relevant provisions in the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to maintain an independent remuneration panel to review and provide advice on the Council's Members Allowances. This is in the context whereby the Council retains powers to determine the scope and levels of Members' Allowances.
3. All Councils are required to convene their IRP and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their Members' Allowances Scheme. They must 'pay regard' to their IRP's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme. On this particular occasion, the IRP has been reconvened under the 2003 Regulations [19. ()], which states that:

Before an authority referred to in regulation makes or amends a scheme that authority shall have regard to the recommendations made by any independent remuneration panels in relation to any authority of a description referred to in regulations 3(1)(a), (b) or (c) by which any of its members are nominated
4. In the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations, a district council is included in 3(1) (a). Therefore, before the Council amends its allowances scheme it is required to reconvene its IRP. It also provides an opportunity for IRPs to publicly scrutinise their councils' allowances schemes and enhance public accountability. It is under this requirement that the IRP has undertaken this review of members' allowances for Newark & Sherwood District Council.

Terms of Reference

5. In accordance with the requirements of 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations Newark & Sherwood District Council has reconvened its statutory Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to review the Council Members' Allowances Scheme. Specifically the IRP in a decision by Council on 21st October 2025 has been tasked with undertaking the following:
 - a) A full review of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

The IRP

6. Newark & Sherwood District Council reconvened its IRP and the following Members were appointed to carry out the independent review of SRAs, namely:
 - Sarah Britton: Formerly a HR Director in the Automotive Industry with experience in setting senior Salaries and is also one of the Council's Independent Persons appointed under the 2011 Localism Act
 - Paul Cox: Formerly the Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer at Rushcliffe Borough Council and is also one of the Council's Independent Persons appointed under the 2011 Localism Act
 - Dr Declan Hall (Chair): A former academic at the Institute of Local Government, The University of Birmingham, now an independent consultant specialising in Members' Allowances and support with experience of reviews across the United Kingdom
7. Logistical and practical support to the Panel was provided by Nigel Hill, Business Manager – Elections & Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer at Newark & Sherwood District Council.

Process and Methodology - Evidence Reviewed by the IRP

8. The IRP met at the Council Offices at Castle House, Newark on the 6th and 7th January 2026. The meetings were in private session to enable the IRP to meet with Members and Officers and conduct deliberations in confidence. In accordance with the terms of reference, in arriving at its recommendations, the IRP took into account a wide range of evidence, both oral and written. All relevant post holders and Group Leaders were invited to meet with the IRP. In addition, all Members were sent a short questionnaire so that no Member was denied a voice in the course of review. The IRP received 15 written responses.

- The questionnaire was also used as the template for Member interviews to ensure a common set of questions were being asked.
9. The IRP also met with relevant Officers for factual briefings on the Council, governance structures and challenges facing the Council.
 10. The IRP also reviewed relevant written information, such as council and committee meetings schedules, relevant reports and information on the new governance arrangements, the 2006 Statutory Guidance on Members' Allowances, etc.
 11. For full details of whom the IRP met and full range of information reviewed see:
 - Appendix 1: for Members who met with the IRP
 - Appendix 2: for Officers who provided factual briefings to the IRP
 - Appendix 3: for a list of the full range of evidence considered by the IRP
 - Appendix 3: for more details on the Special Responsibility Allowances (2025/26) paid in the 7 Nottinghamshire District Councils and the 2 District Councils adjacent to Newark & Sherwood DC referred to by the IRP for benchmarking purposes, referred to as the benchmarking group.

Key Messages and Observations – Addressing the Main Priority

12. Clearly, the main priority for this review is to address SRAs for the 3 new committees,
 - Licensing Committee
 - Audit & Accounts Committee
 - Governance, General Purposes and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Committee
13. These 3 new committees were established after a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Review Challenge in October 2024. They replaced the previous
 - Licensing & General Purposes Committees
 - Audit & Governance Committee
14. In effect, the Licensing and Audit functions were focused by assigning each function its own standalone committee, with the residual functions (Governance and General Purposes) assigned to a third committee with the LGR function also added to it due to its particular salience in local government at present.

15. It has been the main function of this review to assess the responsibilities associated with being Chair and Vice Chair of these 3 new committees.

Secondary Function of the Review – Addressing Anomalies Arising

16. While the IRP has been asked to undertake a “full review” of SRAs it concluded that in the main many of the SRAs currently payable were fit for purpose. However, the IRP also concluded that there were some SRAs where there was a strong case to revise them. Therefore, the secondary function of this review has been to address these anomalies rather than carry out a fundamental overhaul of all SRAs.
17. The IRP has also addressed a number of other minor anomalies in the wider allowances scheme that came to its attention.

Special Responsibility Allowances – Following the ‘Pro Rata’ Approach

18. In arriving at the recommended SRA for the 3 new committees and other SRAs the IRP deemed in need of revision the IRP paid due regard to the 2006 Statutory Guidance which states in paragraph 76:

A good starting point in determining special responsibility allowances may be to agree the allowance which should be attached to the most time consuming post on the Council (this maybe the elected mayor or the leader) and pro rata downwards for the other roles which it has agreed ought to receive an extra allowance

19. By definition the Leader will be 100% in terms of responsibility and workload, no other role is larger and all other remunerated post holders can be assessed as a proportion of the Leader’s SRA, thus the pro rata approach. It is the typical approach undertaken by IRPs when recommending SRAs; it has the advantage of being simple, transparent and readily understood.
20. In arriving at the appropriate ratio in recommending SRAs the IRP has taken into account any governance changes and taken cognisance of the benchmarking while being informed by the substantial representation received.

The Chair of the Licensing Committee

21. The starting point for the IRP was to note that the new Licensing Committee has lost the function of General Purposes. Although this was never a major function, mostly relating to electoral matters, Community Governance Reviews and recommendations to the Council regarding Secretary of State reviews on district and ward boundaries, it is a slight diminution of responsibility. In the representation received there was general support for this principle. The IRP also noted that despite having four scheduled meetings per year that on

- occasion meetings of the Licensing Committee has been cancelled due to lack of business. This situation is not unusual as most of the actual work of the Licensing Committee, determining licensing applications, is carried out by the Licensing Sub Committees. Consequently, the IRP concluded that the SRA (£3,808) paid to the previous Chair of the old Licensing & General Purposes Committee was not an appropriate guide.
22. Benchmarking shows the following average SRAs paid to Chairs of similar Committees
- Benchmarking group Chair of Licensing mean SRA £4,426
 - Benchmarking Group Chair of Licensing median SRA £4,471
23. The benchmarking also shows that the mean ratio utilized in the comparator group of councils is 19%. In other words, the mean SRA for Chair of Licensing in the benchmarking group is 19% of the mean SRA paid to Leaders.
24. However, the IRP has decided not to be wholly driven by the benchmarking figures. In many of the comparator group of councils the Chair (and Vice Chair) are expected or even constitutionally mandated to Chair or at least sit on their respective Licensing Sub Committees. This is not the case in Newark & Sherwood; membership of the Licensing Sub Committees is rotated across all the Licensing Committee members.
25. Consequently, the IRP concluded that a slightly smaller SRA that was paid to the previous Chair of the old Licensing & General Purposes Committee (£3,808) was appropriate for the Chair of the Licensing Committee and it is has set it at 15% of the Leaders recommended SRA (£21,692 – see below), which equates to £3,254.
26. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Licensing Committee should be set at £3,254 to be backdated to the date the post was established on 15th July 2025.**

Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee

27. The IRP considered whether there was a case to continue paying an SRA to Committee Vice Chairs. In the main they are not assigned discrete additional tasks and mostly stand in when required and attend pre-meets. Moreover, as the benchmarking shows, it is not uniform practice to remunerate all Committee Vice Chairs. However, the representation received supported the continuation of paying an SRA to Vice Chairs as it was argued that they can be consulted by their respective Chairs and meet with relevant Officers when necessary.
28. It was noted that the previous Vice Chair of the old Licensing & General Purposes Committee was paid an SRA of £949, which was set at 25% of their Chair's SRA – for these types of roles the relevant comparator is typically their respective Chair. Benchmarking shows that the average ratio for SRAs for Licensing Vice Chairs (where paid) is 22%, with a mean SRA of £992. The IRP

received no evidence or representation to suggest the old ratio of 25% was not appropriate in the current context. Therefore, the IRP has arrived at the recommended SRA for the Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee by setting it at 25% of the recommended SRA (£3,254) for the Chair of the Licensing Committee, which equates to £814.

29. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee is set at £814 to be backdated to the date the post was established on 15th July 2025.**

Chair of the Audit & Accounts Committee

30. Similarly, the starting point for the IRP when considering the appropriate SRA or the Chair of the Audit & Accounts Committee was to note that it had lost the Governance function and therefore the SRA (£6,584 – which equated to 30% of the Leader's SRA) paid to the previous Chair of the older Audit & Governance Committee was not an appropriate guide. Again, a principle generally accepted in the representation received.

31. Benchmarking shows the following average SRAs paid to Chairs of similar Committees

- Benchmarking group Chair of Audit mean SRA £4,108
- Benchmarking Group Chair of Audit median SRA £4,180

32. The benchmarking also shows that the mean ratio utilized in the comparator group of councils is 18%. In other words, the mean SRA for Chair of Audit in the benchmarking group is 18% of the mean SRA paid to Leaders. However, once again the IRP has not been guided by the benchmarking data in this case. It accepted that the decoupling of the Governance function, while not irrelevant was not substantial and it was felt that the Audit Committee was central to the financial wellbeing of the Council and its remit regarding Audit alone was wide ranging.

33. Consequently, the IRP decided to set this SRA at 25% of the Leader's SRA (£21,692), which equates to £5,423. The IRP notes this would leave the Chair of Audit as the highest paid Chair of equivalent committees in the benchmarking group but the IRP is comfortable with this situation based on the representation received.

34. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Audit & Accounts Committee is set at £5,423, to be backdated to the date the post was established on 15th July 2025.**

The Vice Chair of the Audit & Accounts Committee

35. The previous Vice Chair of the old Audit & Governance Committee was paid an SRA of £1,630 which equated to 25% of the SRA paid to the Chair.

Benchmarking shows that the average ratio for SRAs for Audit Vice Chairs (where paid) is 27%, with a mean SRA of £1,107 and median SRA of £1,115. The IRP received no evidence or representation to suggest the old ratio of 25% was not appropriate in the current context. Therefore, the IRP has arrived at the recommended SRA for the Vice Chair of the Audit & Accounts Committee by setting it at 25% of the recommended SRA (£5,423) for the Chair of the Audit & Accounts Committee, which equates to £1,356.

36. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Vice Chair of the Audit & Accounts Committee is set at £1,356 to be backdated to the date the post was established on 15th July 2025.**

The Chair of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee

37. The Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee is an entirely new committee acquiring the Governance and General Purposes function from two previous committees and being assigned a new function, namely Local Government Reorganisation. This latter function has a particular resonance with the looming anticipation of local government reorganisation over the next 18 months. However, a dilemma for the IRP was that the actual impact on the committee regarding LGR is an unknown quantity apart from the fact that it will develop over the next 18 months.
38. Benchmarking is of no value in this instance as only one other council in the comparator group (Mansfield) remunerate a similar post and even then it is for Governance and Standards only. However, in the representation received it was generally agreed that the Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee was an important one, particularly as it also has the Standards remit which has a separately remunerated Committee Chair in 4 out of the 9 councils in the comparator group.
39. As such and largely based on the representation received the IRP has set the SRA for the Chair of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee on a par with the recommended SRA for the Chair of the Audit & Accounts Committee and set it at 25% of the Leader's SRA, which equates to £5,423.
40. **The IRP recommends that the SRA the Chair of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee is set at £5,423 to be backdated to the date the post was established on 15th July 2025.**

The Vice Chair of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee

41. The IRP received no evidence that the SRA for the Vice Chair of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee should not be set at the standard Vice Chairs ratio of 25% of the recommended SRA (£5,423) for the Chair of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee, which equates to £1,356.

42. **The IRP recommends that the SRA the Vice Chair of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee is set at £1,356 to be backdated to the date the post was established on 15th July 2025.**

The Leader of the Council

43. In setting the SRA for Leaders IRPs typically follow the advice set out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance, paragraph 76, which states that one way of arriving at a Leader's SRA

... may be to take the agreed level of basic allowance and recommend a multiple of this allowance as an appropriate special responsibility allowance for either the elected mayor or the leader.

44. This is known as the 'factor' approach, the SRA for the Leader is set as a factor or the Basic Allowance. Currently, the Leader receives an SRA of £21,692 which is 3.78 times the current Basic Allowance. Benchmarking shows that the mean factor is also 3.78 times the mean Leaders SRA, with an average SRA of £23,315, although in this case the median SRA (£21,002) paid to Leaders in the benchmarking group may be a more appropriate guide due to the high SRA (£49,377) paid to the elected Mayor of Mansfield.
45. Consequently, benchmarking does not provide a case to alter the Leader's SRA. In addition, while there was some representation arguing for this SRA to be increased largely on the grounds that it was such a substantial role that precluded regular full time employment, the majority of the representation received made no case to alter this SRA.
46. **The IRP recommends that the SRA the Leader remains at £21,692.**

Deputy Leader of the Council

47. Currently, the Deputy Leader of the Council receives an SRA of £12,239, which equates to 56% of the Leader's SRA. Benchmarking shows that Deputy Leaders in the comparator group have a mean SRA of £13,014 and median SRA of £12,001, with a mean ratio of 56% of the mean Leaders SRA. So once again benchmarking provides no case to revise the Deputy Leader's SRA. Moreover, in the representation received the general view was that there was not a case to revise this SRA.
48. **The IRP recommends that the SRA the Deputy Leader remains at £12,239.**

Cabinet Members with Portfolios (x5)

49. Currently, the Portfolio Holders (other Cabinet Members) each receive an SRA of £9,329, which equates to 43% of the Leader's SRA. Benchmarking shows that Portfolio Holders in the comparator group have a mean SRA of £9,723 and

median SRA of £8,455, with a mean ratio of 42% of the mean Leaders SRA. So once again benchmarking provides a limited case to revise the Portfolio Holders SRA. Moreover, in the representation received the general view was that there was not a case to revise this SRA.

50. **The IRP recommends that the SRA the Portfolio Holders remains at £9,329.**

The Chair of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC)

51. Currently the Chair of PPIC is receives an SRA of £9,329, which equates to 43% of the Leader's SRA. Benchmarking shows that the Chairs of equivalent committees in the comparator group have a mean SRA of £6,252 and median SRA of £6,689, with a mean ratio of 27% of the mean Leaders SRA. Thus, in this case benchmarking does present a case to revise this SRA. Indeed, it is somewhat anomalous for a committee chair to be the same level of SRA as a Portfolio Holder.

52. However, the benchmarking needs to be placed in context – PPIC is the sole committee at Newark & Sherwood to undertake the Overview and Scrutiny function. In 4 other comparator councils there are in addition to a main Overview and Scrutiny Committee thematic Scrutiny Committees with a mean SRA of £5,358 and in one authority (Broxtowe) it also pays SRAs to Scrutiny working groups Chairs. Thus, the mean overall cost of supporting the Overview and Scrutiny function is not reflected in the mean/median SRA paid to Chair of the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the benchmarking group. Finally, in the representation received it was generally felt that the current SRA paid to the Chair of PPIC was appropriate and required no revision.

53. **The IRP recommends that the SRA the Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee remains at £9,329.**

The Vice Chair of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC)

54. Currently, the Vice Chair of PPIC is paid an SRA of £4,664 which was set at 50% of the Chair's SRA. Benchmarking shows that the Chairs of equivalent committees in the comparator group have a mean SRA of £2,130 and median SRA of £1,383, with a mean ratio of 34% of the mean Chairs SRA. Thus, benchmarking does provide a case to revise this SRA.

55. The SRA for the Vice Chair of PPIC was set without substantial experience of the role but on the assumption that the Vice Chair of PPIC would chair PPIC working groups. Indeed, the terms of reference for PPIC state that PPIC working groups are to be "Normally chaired by the Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee." However, since then 'normally' has turned out different in practice. The experience has been for any PPIC member to chair working groups and the Vice Chair has only chaired a very limited number of PPIC working groups..

56. Consequently, the IRP has decided to reset this SRA, a conclusion that also had a great deal of support in the representation received. The IRP has not been guided by the mean ratio (34%) in the benchmarking group as many Vice Chairs of equivalent committees are expected and do chair Overview and Scrutiny working groups. The IRP could see no reason why the SRA for the Vice Chair of PPIC should not be reset at the standard ratio utilised for other Vice Chairs, namely 25% of their Chair's SRA (£9,329), which equates to £2,332 which is also close to the mean SRA (£2,139) paid to equivalent posts in the comparator group of councils.
57. **The IRP recommends that the SRA the Vice Chair of the Policy and Performance Committee is reset at £2,332.**

The Chair of the Planning Committee

58. Currently, the Chair of the Planning Committee is paid an SRA of £6,687 which equates to 32% of the Leader's SRA. Benchmarking shows that the Chairs of Planning Committees in the comparator group have a mean SRA of £6,773 and median SRA of £6,105 with a mean ratio of 29% of the mean Leaders SRA. Thus, by taking benchmarking alone there is not a strong case to alter this SRA.
59. However, there was substantial representation received that the workload and responsibility held by the Chair of Planning was equivalent to that of the Chair or PPIC and by extension that of a Portfolio Holder. Indeed, chairing the Planning Committee is a particularly onerous task – it meets more often than any other committee and the meetings are often contentious which requires a great deal of careful handling. On the other hand, it is highly unusual for the a Chair of a Planning Committee to receive an SRA at the same level paid to a Portfolio Holder – although it does occur, for instance such a situation exists in one of the comparator councils, namely Broxtowe.
60. Nonetheless, the IRP has decided to accept the weight of the representation received and reset the SRA for the Chair of Planning at 43% of the Leader's SRA (£21,692) and place it on a par with the Chair of PPIC and Portfolio Holders SRA, which equates to £9,329.
61. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Chair of the Planning Committee is reset at £9,329.**

The Vice Chair of the Planning Committee

62. Currently, the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee is paid an SRA of £1,661 which equates to 24% of the Chair's SRA. Benchmarking shows that the Vice Chairs of Planning Committees in the comparator group have a mean SRA of £2,033 and median SRA of £1,985 with a mean ratio of 30% of the mean Chairs SRA. Thus, benchmarking does indicate somewhat of a case to alter this SRA.

63. Regardless, the IRP decided that this SRA should be reset at the standard ratio utilized for Vice Chairs, namely at 25% of the recommended SRA (£9,329) for the Chair of Planning, which equates to £2,332.
64. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee is reset at £2,332.**

The Leader of the Main Opposition Group

65. Currently, the Leader of the Main Opposition Group is paid an SRA of £7,017 which equates to 32% of the Leader's SRA. Benchmarking shows that the Leaders of Main Opposition Groups in the comparator group have a mean SRA of £5,902 and median SRA of £5,871 with a mean ratio of 24% of the mean Leaders SRA. Thus, benchmarking does indicate somewhat of a case to alter this SRA, if anything it indicates that it should be reduced marginally.
66. However, there are a number of Newark & Sherwood specific conditions that means the benchmarking is not an appropriate, namely:
- The Main Opposition Group is the largest group on the Council
 - The Leader of the Main Opposition Group sits on the Cabinet, which in itself is unusual
 - The Leader of the Main Opposition Group also has a vote on the Cabinet, which is even more unusual
 - While having no individual executive decision making powers on Cabinet, as a non-Portfolio Holder is required to take a view across all the Portfolios
67. Moreover, in the representation received there was a general view that the Leader of the Main Opposition Group merited an increase in their SRA and that in the main it should be on a par with that paid to Portfolio Holders. Consequently, because of the Newark & Sherwood specific set of conditions regarding the Leader of the Main Opposition Group and the weight of representation received the IRP has decided to reset this SRA at 43% of the Leader's SRA (£21,692), which equates to £9,329.
68. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group is reset at £9,329.**

Leaders of Minority Opposition Groups

69. Currently, a Leader of a Minority Opposition Group is paid an SRA of £928 which equates to 4% of the Leader's SRA. This SRA is only paid when a Minority Group attains a qualifying threshold of having 4 Members. The 1989 Local Government Act enables two Members only to form a political group on a Council. However, IRPs often put in a qualifying group membership threshold for Leaders of Minority Groups to be paid an SRA on the basis that a group of 2

- Members does not reach a critical mass. There was no representation to alter this situation.
70. Benchmarking shows that the Leaders of Minority Opposition Groups in the comparator group have a mean SRA of £2,448 and median SRA of £1,605 with a mean ratio of 10% of the mean Leaders SRA. Thus, benchmarking does indicate a case to alter this SRA.
71. However, what the benchmarking does not show is that in many cases Minority Groups can attain substantial size, thus the not insignificant average SRAs payable. Moreover, there was no substantial representation regarding this SRA.
72. Nevertheless, the IRP did conclude that the current SRA for Leaders of Minority Opposition Groups was somewhat low particularly considering that a qualifying threshold was in place and a marginal uplift was merited. The IRP decided to reset this SRA at 5% of the Leader's SRA (£21,692) which equates to £1,085.
73. **The IRP recommends that the SRA for Leaders of the Minority Opposition Groups is reset at £1,085, on the condition that the Group reaches the qualifying threshold of having at least 4 Members.**

Reinstating the 1-SRA only rule

74. The 2003 Regulations do not prohibit the payment of multiple SRAs to Members. However, since SRAs are not insignificant sums, Councils typically have adopted the '1-SRA only' rule. In other words, regardless of the number of remunerated posts individual Members may hold they can only be paid one SRA. By allowing Members to receive multiple SRAs it obscures the real level of remuneration received by Members therefore lacking transparency. For instance, in some schemes where multiple SRAs are payable, the Leader's SRA may look relatively low but what it may not take into account is where the Leader also is paid a Cabinet Members SRA and in some cases an additional Group Leaders SRA. It can also lead to the counter intuitive situation where a Member might be being paid more than the Leader.
75. Newark & Sherwood District Council has historically adopted a 1-SRA only rule but that situation was altered at the last review in response to a specific situation that has now passed. In fact, no Member is currently eligible to be paid more than 1 SRA. Moreover, in the representation received there was general support to restore the 1-SRA only rule.
76. **The IRP recommends that the Council restores the 1-SRA only rule within the Newark & Sherwood District Council Members' Allowances Scheme so that a Member cannot receive more than one SRA.**

Issues Arising – The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)

77. Although the remit for the IRP was to review SRAs only it did note a few minor anomalies in the wider allowances scheme that it has taken the opportunity to address. The first being the Dependants' Carers' Allowance.
78. The Local Government Act 2000 explicitly clarifies the right of local authorities to pay a Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA), which Members can claim to assist in meeting costs for care of their dependants while on approved Council duties. It is an allowance explicitly designed to enable a wider range of candidates to stand for and remain on the Council. The IRP notes that the vast majority of councils now pay a DCA. Although it is rarely claimed in Newark & Sherwood, the IRP supports paying such an allowance largely on the grounds that it helps to reduce barriers to public service for traditionally under-represented groups.
79. Currently, the maximum hourly rate for which the DCA may be claimed is capped at the maximum level of the National Living Wage, regardless of the type of care that is being claimed for. It is noted that most allowances schemes now differentiate between two types of care – childcare and elderly/other dependants and pay differential rates. The IRP felt that the Newark & Sherwood allowances scheme would benefit by this distinction.
80. **The IRP recommends that the DCA is maintained but two types of differential care are set out in the allowances scheme and inserted into the scheme as follows:**
 - **Childcare – payable at maximum hourly National Living Wage**
 - **Elderly/Other care – payable at the hourly rate charged by Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services for a Home Help Carer**

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

81. Similarly, the IRP noted a few minor issues with the Travel and Subsistence Allowances as set out in the scheme and a more substantive issue regarding the payment of a £8 Subsistence Allowance for Members on the Planning Committee for when they attend site visits.
82. As noted Members on the Planning Committee can claim £8 Subsistence Allowance for attending site visits. This allowance has not been revisited for a number of years and the IRP felt that it now a negligible sum that needed up rating to permit Planning Committee Members to be able to purchase a decent meal.
83. **The IRP recommends that the Subsistence Allowance paid to Members of the Planning Committee is reset at £15 per month to be paid automatically to all Members on the Planning Committee, excluding the Chair and Vice Chair.**

84. The other minor issue was in relation to clarification on the Travel and Subsistence Allowances. Currently, the scheme simply says that Members can claim travel and subsistence expenses at “the same casual user rate and subsistence for officers.” The first issue in this regards is that is this not the case in reality. Both Officers and Members through local agreement are able to claim 50 pence per mile, rather than the banded casual user rate which is paid at 65 pence per mile for cars with an engine size of over 1200 cc. While the IRP receive no representation that there should be any alteration in the current applicable mileage rate of 50 pence per mile the scheme should be amended to reflect this fact. As a consequence, **the IRP recommends the following:**

- **That the applicable mileage rates for which Members can claim for attending by their own vehicle remains at 50 pence per mile**
- **That when public transport is used then standard class will be reimbursed**
- **That this recommendation should be inserted into the scheme in addition to the applicable subsistence rates, with reference to casual user mileage rate removed**

Confirmation of Indexing

85. Currently, the allowances are indexed. In other words, they are uprated automatically each year with an agreed index. By uprating the majority of allowances on the same basis that Officer Salaries are indexed it treats Members and Officers the same and helps ensure that Members’ allowances and expenses do not lose value over time.

86. Currently, the Basic Allowance and SRAs are “indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column point 45)” as agreed each year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Staff, commonly known as the NJC index. The NJC index is typically utilised by councils for the purposes of uprating allowances. However, it is now noted that SCP 45 has been abolished, with the highest SCP now being 43. Moreover, due to the 4 year rule the authority to continue indexation will lapse next year unless the Council calls back the IRP once more. Thus, to carry on with indexation, to clarify the correct SCP to index the Basic Allowance and SRAs plus the appropriate indices for other allowances the IRP has decided to make recommendations in this regards.

87. **The IRP confirms and recommends that the following allowances are indexed for four years (the maximum period permitted under the 2003 Regulations before the Council has to seek further advice from the IRP) from 2026/27 to 2029/30, as follows:**

- **Basic Allowance, SRAs and Co-optees’ Allowances:**
 - Updated annually in line with the annual percentage pay increase given to Newark & Sherwood District Council employees (and rounded to the nearest £) as agreed for each year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Staff as agreed at SCP 43.

- **Out of Council Area Mileage Allowance:**
 - Indexed to the same rate applicable to Officers.
- **Out of Council Area Other Travel and Subsistence:**
 - Reimbursement of actual costs taking into account the most cost effective means of transport and/or accommodation available and the convenience of use with the Subsistence maximum rates indexed to the same periodic percentage increase that may be applied to Officer Subsistence Allowances.
- **Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA):**
 - The maximum hourly rates to be indexed to the government's national living wage applicable to the age of the carer (childcare) and Nottinghamshire County Council's hourly rate for a Home Care Assistance (care of other dependants).

Implementation

88. **The IRP recommends that the new scheme of allowances based on the recommendations contained in this report is adopted from the dates as follows:**
- **The recommended SRAs for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Licensing, Audit and Accounts and Governance, General Purposes and Local Government Committees – to be implemented from the date these committees were established on 15th July 2025.**
 - **All other recommendations – to be implemented from the date the Council agrees on the report**

Appendix One: Members who met with the IRP

Cllr N. Allen:	Vice Chair Audit & Accounts Committee (Conservative Group)
Cllr R. Cozens:	Deputy Leader of Council & Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture & the Arts (Leader of Independents for Newark & District Group)
Cllr D. Darby:	Leader of Newark & Sherwood District Independents (Minority Opposition Group)
Cllr A. Freeman:	Chair Planning Committee (Labour Group)
Cllr J. Hall:	Chair Licensing Committee (Independents for Newark & District Group)
Cllr P. Harris:	Leader of the Liberal Democrat (Minority) Opposition Group
Cllr R. Holloway:	Chair Governance, General Purposes and Local Government Reorganisation Committee (Independent)
Cllr J. Kellas:	Leader of Main (Conservative) Opposition Group & Cabinet Member without Portfolio
Cllr S. Michael:	Chair Audit & Accounts Committee (Conservative Group)
Cllr D. Moore:	Vice Chair Planning Committee (Independents for Newark & District Group)
Cllr P. Peacock:	Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance & Finance (Labour Group)
Cllr C. Penny:	Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development (Labour Group)
Cllr M. Pringle:	Chair of Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (Labour Group)
Cllr P. Rainbow:	Vice Chair Governance, General Purposes and Local Government Reorganisation Committee (Conservative Group)
Cllr N. Ross:	Vice Chair Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (Independents for Newark & District Group)
Cllr K. Smith:	Leader of Reform (Minority Opposition Group)

CLlr P. Taylor: Portfolio Holder for Public Protection & Community Relations (Labour Group)

CLlr L. Tift: Vice Chair Licensing Committee & Council Chair (Labour Group)

Written Submissions - Elected Members

The IRP received 15 written submissions

Appendix Two: Officers who provided factual briefings to the IRP

John Robinson:	Chief Executive
Fran Whyley:	Monitoring Officer
Nigel Hill:	Business Manager – Elections & Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer at Newark & Sherwood District Council.

Appendix Three: Information Pack Index

The IRP received an Information Pack containing the following information and data that was referred to in its considerations and deliberations:

1. IRP Terms of Reference as set out in Report to Council, Appointment of IRP, namely full review of SRAs given recent changes in Committees, 21 Oct 2025
2. Newark & Sherwood District Council Members' Allowances Scheme 2025/26
3. Newark & Sherwood District Council, statutory publication of allowances and expenses paid to Members, including sub-totals for each category 2024/25
4. "A Review of Members' Allowances for Newark & Sherwood District Council 2022/23" A Report by the Independent Remuneration Panel, March 2022
5. Report to Council, "Members Allowances – Report of the IRP/Members Travel Expenses", 17 May 2022
6. "A Review of Members' Allowances for Newark & Sherwood District Council 2023/24", A Report by the Independent Remuneration Panel, September 2023
7. Report to Council, "Report of the Members Allowances IRP", 17 October 2023
8. Report to Council, "Review of the Council's Constitution", 20 May 2025
9. Report to Council, "Changes to the Council's Constitution – Replacing the Audit & Governance Committee", 15 July 2025
10. Calendar of Meetings 2025/26 including
 - Meetings that were cancelled
 - Number Licensing Sub-Committee meetings for last 4 years and who chaired and attended them
 - Number of Standards hearings in past 4 years
11. Newark & Sherwood DC Constitution, Part C – responsibility for functions, Pages C8-C12 – Policy & Performance Committee
12. Newark & Sherwood DC Constitution, Part C – responsibility for functions, Pages C13-C14 – Audit & Accounts Committee
13. Newark & Sherwood DC Constitution, Part C – responsibility for functions, Pages C15-C18 – Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee
14. Newark & Sherwood DC Constitution, Part C – responsibility for functions, Pages C19-C21 – Planning Committee
15. Newark & Sherwood DC Constitution, Part C – responsibility for functions, Pages C22-C2 – Licensing Committee

16. Newark & Sherwood DC Constitution, Part C – responsibility for functions, Pages C35-C44 – The Cabinet & Executive Functions
17. Flow Diagram of Newark & Sherwood District Council Committee Structure and decision making process
18. Membership of Cabinet, Committees and Panels 2025/26 including who chairs them
19. Hard copies of written submissions from Members to the Panel – 15 received
20. Power point presentation by Panel Chair (Dr Declan Hall), “Reviewing Members’ Allowances: Patterns, Approaches and Issues to Consider”
21. National Employers for Local Government Services: Local Government Pay 2025/26, National Employers pay offer of 3.2% (on all NJC Pay points 2 and above)
22. New Council Constitutions; Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances, 5 May 2006, Department of Communities and Local Government (extract)
23. The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)
24. Hard copies of allowances schemes from 9 district councils included in the Benchmarking group - Other Nottingham and adjacent District Councils, 2025/26 – including comparative summary BM1- BM2
25. LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, Feedback Report to Newark & Sherwood District Council, October 2024

Appendix Four: Newark & Sherwood BC Benchmarking 2025/26

BM1 Newark & Sherwood - Other Notts/adjacent DCs: BA + Exec + Scrutiny SRAs (2025/26)										
Comparator Council	Basic Allowance	Leader or Mayor	Leader Total	Deputy Leader	Exec Mbers	Chair Main O&S	V/Chr Main O&S	Chairs or Lead Scrutiny	Vice Chairs Scrutiny	Chairs Scrutiny WGs
Ashfield	8,511	24,047	32,558	18,035	14,428	9,619	3,607	7,214	2,044	
Bassetlaw	5,351	16,053	21,404	8,027	7,224	6,689	803			
Broxtowe	4,740	21,002	25,742	12,001	5,250	5,097	867	3,332	867	321
Gedling	4,924	16,910	21,834	9,583	8,455	3,228				
Mansfield	6,386	49,377	55,763	16,692	13,828	6,921				
Rushcliffe	6,567	18,417	24,984	10,896	7,179	4,149	1,383	4,149	1,383	
N. Kesteven	6,603	18,765	25,368	11,127	8,340	4,504	1,363			
S. Kesteven	6,735	23,574	30,309	18,522	13,470	6,735	2,223	6,735	2,223	
Newark & Sherwood	5,750	21,692	27,442	12,239	9,329	9,329	4,664			
Mean	6,174	23,315	29,489	13,014	9,723	6,252	2,130	5,358		
Median	6,386	21,002	25,742	12,001	8,455	6,689	1,383	5,442		
Highest	8,511	49,377	55,763	18,522	14,428	9,619	4,664	7,214		
Lowest	4,740	16,053	21,404	8,027	5,250	3,228	803	3,332		
Mean Ratios	mean Leaders SRA 3.78 X mean BA	100%		56%	42%	27%	34%	23%		
N&S ratios	3.78	100%		56%	43%	43%	50%			

BM2 Newark & Sherwood - Other Notts/adjacent DCs: Planning & Licensing/Regulatory SRAs (2025/26)										
Comparator Council	Chair Planning	Vice Chair Planning	Planning Members	Chair Lic'ng &/or Regulatory	Lic'ng V/Chr	Chair Audit	Vice Chair Audit	Chair Governance, GP & LGR	V/Chair Governance, GP & LGR	Chair Standards
Ashfield	9,619	3,607		4,809		4,809				4,809
Bassetlaw	5,297	1,059	795	2,568	514	3,532	706			
Broxtowe	5,250	867		5,250	867	3,432	867	Inc in Audit		Inc in Audit
Gedling	5,919			5,919		4,228				1,691
Mansfield	9,588			7,505				4,937		Inc in Governance
Rushcliffe	6,105	3,054		1,518						1,518
N. Kesteven	6,232	1,985		4,132	1,363	4,132	1,363			2,240
S. Kesteven	6,063	2,001		3,705	1,224	4,512	1,491	Inc in Audit		
Newark & Sherwood	6,887	1,661	£8 p/site visit	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	
Mean	6,773	2,033		4,426	992	4,108	1,107			2,565
Median	6,105	1,985		4,471	1,046	4,180	1,115			1,966
Highest	9,619	3,607		7,505	1,363	4,809	1,491			4,809
Lowest	5,250	867		1,518	514	3,432	706			1,518
Mean Ratios	29%	30%		19%	22%	18%	27%	NA		11%
N&S Ratios	32%	24%		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		

BM3 Newark & Sherwood - Other Notts/adjacent DCs: Group & Misc SRAs (2025/26)					
Comparator Council	Main Opposition Group Leader	Main Opposition Group Dep Leader	Minor Opposition Group Leader	1 SRA only	Other or Comment
Ashfield	9,619	1,443	6,012	Yes	<i>Chair/V/Chair Local Plan Development Committee £7,214/£2,044</i>
Bassetlaw	4,013		1,605	Yes	<i>Majority Group Cabinet Liaison £3,211, Licensing Sub Members £28 p/meeting</i>
Broxtowe	3,432	860		No	<i>Deputy Cabinet Members £4,359, Cabinet Member w/o Portfolio £3,432, V/Chair Scrutiny WGs £107, Group Business Managers £333, Broadband & Tele Allowance £372, IT Allowance £200</i>
Gedling	5,814		709	Yes	<i>Chair JCSC £1,691, Majority/Opposition Group Business Managers £4,582/£1,586, Policy Advisor £2,114</i>
Mansfield	£988 + £320 p/Group Mbr		£320 p/Group Mbr	Yes	
Rushcliffe	5,928		2,985	No	
N. Kesteven	4,654			Yes	<i>V/Chair Standards £746</i>
S. Kesteven	6,735			No	<i>Chair/V/Chair Employment Committee £4,512/£1,491, Opposition SRA paid to all Opposition Leaders pro rata, 75% 2nd SRA payable</i>
Newark & Sherwood	7,017		928	No	<i>If Other Opposition Group has ≥4 Members Leader gets SRA £928</i>
Mean	5,902		2,448	Yes - 5	
Median	5,871		1,605	No - 4	
Highest	9,619		6,012		
Lowest	3,432		709		
Mean Ratios	25%		10%		
N&S Ratios	32%		4%		