

The current Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances were set in 2009 and have remained unchanged over the last 15 years following decisions taken by Council., and often contrary to recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel. The basic allowance for councillors is intended to recognise the time commitment of the role including (but not limited to) travel to meetings, meeting preparation, attendance, meeting with officers and residents and case work. Government guidance also states the role of an elected councillor must in part be viewed as an unpaid voluntary service. On the basis of the above, do you think the basic allowance for the role of a Durham County Councillor is?

Significantly too low	27
Too low	35
About right	10
Too high	1
Significantly too high	0

Does the current basic allowance affect **your** decision to stand for re-election?

Yes	29
No	44

Do you think the current basic allowance would deter a **prospective candidate** from standing for election?

Yes	56
No	17

How many hours per week on average do you spend on **Basic** Council duties? This does not apply to duties you undertake for which you receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

Less than 5 hours	0
5 - 10 hours	0
10 - 15 hours	7
15 - 20 hours	15
20 - 25 hours	18
25 - 30 hours	14
30 - 35 hours	5
35 - 40 hours	11
More than 40 hours	3

The elections in 2025 will see the Council Size reduce from 126 to 98 Members, the majority of Electoral Divisions change and the number of Divisions reduced. Do you think the workload of Members will increase?

Yes	69
No	1
Remain the same	3

Why do you believe this to be the case?

Comments	No.
More residents for each member to represent	25
Caseload and issues will increase	25
Geographical dispersed villages within the Division involves more work (time and commitment)	22
Increased number of more residents/communities/town parish meetings	11
Housebuilding	3
Fewer members will also result in the remaining having to be on more committees	2
Less staff available at the council mean more time trying to find the officer you need to help. Delays and increases pressure on Members	2
reorganisational changes of AAPs will result in more administration work for Officers and Members and drive down efficiency	2
New area which will take time to understand areas of residents	1
Workloads are already busy	1
Neighbourhood Budgets will be stretched	1
The meagre allowance afford to be Councillor means that only retired people, lack of diversity and we have not had in increase since 2009 which in real time is a Drop of 56%.	1
Councillors pay should be linked to staff pay rises so we don't have of voting on allowances each year	1
The council will continue to do the same things with less members, thus we have a greater role in fulfilling our political duties in the council	1
Whilst currently I believe the allowance to be about right I do feel that the reductions that are ahead of us require a review and consideration of an increase	1

We have undertaken annual reviews of the Members Allowance Scheme for many years, however, the Regulations allow for Schemes to be reviewed four yearly (even though the council must agree the scheme annually). Do you want to continue with engaging the IRP on an annual basis or convene the IRP on a four yearly basis?

Yes – Engage with the IRP on an annual basis	43
No - convene the IRP on a four yearly basis	30

The Regulations allow for annual indexed uplifts to be applied. Do you think this is the correct approach or should the allowances / recommendations of the IRP apply for four years?

Yes – Annual uplift to be applied	41
No – the recommendations should apply for 4 years	18
Unsure	7
Other	7

Are you currently in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance?

Yes	38
No	35

Do you feel that the level of Special Responsibility Allowance that you currently receive is commensurate to the role that you carry out?

Yes	24
No	21

Feels low. rather increase the basic councillor allowance than the SRA	1
Increased paperwork which takes considerable time to read	2
In order to better understand the work, site visits are also carried out.	1
The allowance is £50 per week before tax	1
Takes significant number of hours	5
These amounts were considered suitable in 2009, which is now 15 years ago. With inflation and cost of living increases	1

it is no longer possible to suggest that these amounts are appropriate	
Some roles receive less than others but it is still demanding on time and can prevent some Members from seeking these roles due to low allowance.	1
nominal figure compared to the volume of work required for the SRA	1
appropriate amount of allowance and therefore no uplift is required	1
AAPs etc and not receive any extra allowance. This has meant that I've had to come off committees as I've had to prioritise paid work.	1
Should increase along with the basic allowance	1
responsibility add over 10 hours per week, but offers only 10% more allowance. I gave up my position as it simply cost me too much money to accept. I lost too much time and therefore too much opportunity to earn money in my employment to undertake my vice chair role	1
High workload	1

#### Gender

Male	41
Female	30
Woman	0
Man	1
Non-binary	0
Prefer not to say	1

How many terms have you served as a Councillor?

2021-2025 was my first term of office	34
More than the current term	39

Any other comments to make generally?

Allowances should be sent independently at the national level
I think it is time we had an allowance increase

Low allowance is putting off younger people with families and mortgages from becoming a councillor. The job done properly is definitely not part time yet in many cases the allowance works out at lower than minimum wage. Some weeks the workload is higher some lower and you're expected to be available 7 days a week. I have even been contacted on Christmas day

The allowance must at very least become index linked to prevent increases becoming a political pawn

On average members will have 8000 constituents per division this will require equivalent to 40 plus hours a week for members to be able to give full commitment , an allowance should reflect this, if not many will have to hold down full time work and will struggle to commit

Should be part of annual pay review as part of all DCC staff

The allowance is not sufficient to allow all people the opportunity to become a Councillor - it does not allow for equal opportunities. Some Councillors have to hold 1 or 2 other jobs to be able to make ends meet.

In my term of office I have not claimed any travel allowance but with the increase in price of petrol, car insurance, etc. I may consider claiming for this.

Most of my 'office' work is done on an evening at home, this is an extra cost on lighting, heating, etc.

Member broadband allowance. Unreliability of broadband services in my area. I would prefer to use a broadband provider negotiated by the County Council to ensure quality of service."

Overall , I feel that the councillors allowance should be reviewed on a 4 yearly cycle .

Politically any rise of allowance would be frowned upon by the public, for that reason alone many councillors would vote against any rise,

The allowance for Chair and Vice Chair of the council is far too low. The Chair's allowance is less than the Vice Chair of Scrutiny and Vice Chair of the Fire Authority, yet the Chair and Vice Chair do far more work than both of these positions.

<p>I am happy at present but going forward boundary changes should be taken into consideration and the amount of extra work for some as every Division brings its own specific continual problems</p>
<p>It would make more sense if allowances increased by inflation .</p>
<p>I think what needs to be looked at with Boundary Changes to the County Council is the Neighbourhood Budget that councillors hold and with the increase in the size of the ward, should result in an increase in the budget that councillors hold. Feel this would be a better way of spending public money rather than thinking of increasing members allowances.</p>
<p>With receiving the members allowance I personally think that mileage allowance should not be paid.</p>
<p>With radical political change occurring with councillors I call on the committee to conduct a complete reset and review of member's allowances.</p>
<p>Far too low, and the expenses system is not appropriate. We are offered strange allowance towards the costs of things, eg broadband. Some just take this money as a pay rise, but those who need it are not actually going to be able to cover the cost of the service they need. If we are to be able to claim for expenses then they should be set to cover the cost of why they are there.</p>
<p>The role of a local authority councillor is an important one that requires specialist skills, knowledge and personality that involves a large commitment in being available 24/7. The current remuneration should at least match the Living wage therefore recognising the hours, financial and personal sacrifice made in being able to support the community.</p>
<p>We should not have to vote to accept an annual pay rise. The members should have an annual increase the same as most of the country. It's a 'get out' not to include the members in an annual pay increase.</p>
<p>No increase in allowance since the formation of the authority is quite astonishing.</p>
<p>As the council-size is being reduced - we should remain within the current financial envelope but use this as an opportunity to increase the basis allowance. All of the councillors I know are either retired or have another source of income. It is difficult to get new people to</p>

stand for the role in terms of the hours you need to work and also the level of support you receive for the impact on your and on your family. This is particularly important in terms of evening meetings out in the community - and being accessible to your community outside of office hours. I think that the members' basic allowance should be linked to the lowest grade of salaried employees - say 25%/30% less in recognition that the role is not necessarily full time. I think that this could be achieved if SRAs are frozen in light of the reduced number of councillors and would make it a more realistic prospect for younger people to take on this important role.

Members should not have to vote for their allowances, I am not convinced that allowance is any longer the correct wording for it as it is becoming much more of a full time job

Yes the mechanism for setting the members allowance scheme should be administered on a national basis

The members allowances should be commensurate with the increased workload and demand on Cllrs time.

Some councillors may work a lot harder than others

Group Leaders allowance should be reduced for groups with less than 10% of members.

Setting members' allowances will inevitably be difficult, if nothing else because of the current low esteem in which politicians are held by the general public, and of course the fact that this is taxpayers' money and must be spent wisely. However, local authorities need to make standing for office as appealing and inclusive as possible, and there's no escaping the fact that allowances play a role in that. DCC is more likely to attract able councillors from diverse backgrounds if the level of allowances are more commensurate with the work that they will be expected to undertake. The council - and councillors - should not be shy of making this point publicly. That said, it feels wrong that councillors make the ultimate decision about the level of their allowances. In that context, it is good that the outcome of this review will affect the next intake, rather than current members, and I hope that it leads to a net overall saving (given the imminent reduction in members). If recommendations have to be considered by full council in the future, then doing so every four years, and ahead of the next intake that will be affected by decisions, is the best option.

The allowance has not been increased since 2009, so surely an increase is now well overdue.
I have no problem whatsoever with councillors being paid sensible amounts of money.
Allowances for group leaders should be more closely related to group size.
Council group secretaries should also receive a SRA, they do a lot of extra work.
Some added role allowances are too high, and some vice chairs allowances are unnecessary.
Member's allowance will always be difficult as you are voting on your own behalf an outside body should set the allowance
Should be based on the work done by the recipient.
I think it is a sensitive subject with the general public, I think it would be fair to have us to be paid at minimum wage for the average hours worked, no higher than that.
To keep a standard you need to make sure members are paid more fairly
Government need to completely overhaul this as it is completely inaccessible for anyone with caring responsibilities, disabilities and those wanting to still have a career/be able to provide for themselves/family.
I have agreed with keeping the allowance fixed in the past but things are changing and to attract working age people that can commit their time effectively this is the right time to review and consider an increase.
what I get paid and the hours I work, it amounts to a pittance , roughly works out £4 an hour
It is very difficult for councillors to openly state that they think the allowances are too low, but after 3 1/2 years on this council I have found that the stress of the role is not worth it.
Haven't had an increase since 2009, you need £1.56 now to buy what £1 did in 2009
22% reduction in number of Cllrs mean that on average we have 22% more residents and so 22% more case work, could be more depending on how your boundaries have altered.
Meagre allowances mean only retired people can afford to be Cllrs, lack of diversity etc
Cllrs pay should be linked to staff pay rises so we don't have the fiasco of voting on our pay rises every year.



They should be consistent with wards of similar size and level of responsibility in other authorities

I do not think that members should have to agree their own allowances and that they should follow a similar process to MPs