

A Review of Members' Allowances for North Herts Council.

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel – November 2023.

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1 Introduction and Background.

- 1.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) was convened to undertake a full review of Members' Allowances. The review was undertaken and the Panel convened in accordance with The Local Authority' (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations (SI 1021)(2003) and the Guidance on Regulation for Local Authorities Allowances (2003 and 2006).
- 1.2 The Panel met on the 7th July, 4th and 18th August, 1st, 6th, 7th 15th and 29th September 2023. Membership of the Panel was Julie Byrom, IRP Member for two Councils and Independent Member for 6 Councils, Tom Etheridge, HM Treasury and local resident and Margaret Waller, Member of the Institute of Personnel and Development. The Panel was assisted and supported throughout by Melanie Stimpson, Democratic Services Manager, James Lovegrove, Committee Member and Scrutiny Manager and particularly, Callum Reeve, Democratic Services apprentice.

2 Terms of Reference.

- 2.1 The Regulations provide for Independent Remuneration Panels to have the following functions:
- to make recommendations to the authority as to basic allowances that should be payable to its elected members
 - to make recommendations to the authority about the responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a special responsibility allowance and as to the amount of such an allowance
 - to make recommendations to the authority about the duties for which a travelling and subsistence allowance can be paid and the amount of this allowance
 - to make recommendations as to the amount of co-optee's allowance.
 - to make recommendations as to whether the authority's allowance scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and if it does make such a recommendation, the amount of this allowance and the means by which it was determined
 - to make recommendations on whether any allowance should be backdated to the beginning of a financial year in the event of the scheme being amended
 - to make recommendations as to whether annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should run

3 Deliberations of the Panel.

- 3.1 The Panel had access to the previous reports of the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Panel has given consideration to these reports as part of its deliberations whilst forming recommendations. The panel noted that apart from the pay award aligned to the NJC for Local Government Services for Council Officers last year, no real increase in either Basic Allowance or SRAs had taken place since 2021/22.

- 3.2 The Panel gained the views of stakeholders by questionnaire and interview. A questionnaire was sent to all 49 Councillors. 20 Councillors responded. A response rate of 40% which is disappointing. A higher response rate would have enabled firmer conclusions to have been made. The summarised survey results are attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The Panel also sent separate questionnaires to the three Group Leaders. Two responses were received and two group leaders interviewed. One group leader chose not to respond or be interviewed so their views could not be taken into account. Again, this is disappointing. Interviews also took place with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Council and the Monitoring Officer, vis-à-vis the role of the Independent Persons.
- 3.4 A key role of the panel is to recommend a scheme of allowances which recognises both Members' responsibilities and workloads. The Panel was mindful of financial restraints, inflation and the cost of living, when making recommendations. We feel confident that the recommendations are a realistic assessment of the worth and work of Councillors.
- 3.5 The Panel were made aware that North Herts Council currently have a joint Labour and Co-operative/Liberal Democrat Administration and that an 'all-out' full election will take place in May 2024, as well as changes in Councillor Wards decreasing the number of 1 - Councillor Wards to 6. The Panel, therefore, decided not to recommend decisions that might bind a new council over 4 years with regard to special responsibility allowances, when this might not be appropriate. It was therefore recommended that the Scheme of Allowances apply for one year from 1 April 2024 and a further IRP Report be prepared after the next Council was formed to be undertaken at a time to be agreed with them.

4 Basic Allowance.

- 4.1 The current Basic Allowance is £5406 and has not increased over the last two IRP reports (apart from the NJC for Local Government Services award for Council Officers mentioned above.) The previous IRP recommended an increase of 6% being the nearest whole percentage between the mean and median salary increase for the current year which was implemented. It is understood that Councillors had in the past been reluctant to raise the basic allowance due to cost of living pressures on constituents. The current IRP asked for the basis of the Allowance, established in 2003. It may have been based on the Local Government Members Rate at that time.
- 4.2 There are two approaches to reaching a recommendation on the basic allowance. The first is to baseline the allowance against an external comparator. This could be the allowances offered by other Councils in the area or the earnings of local residents. The second approach is to start with the existing allowances and assess what changes might be justified.
- 4.3 Our approach is a mixed approach. We started with the baseline allowance against both other Councils and local wages. This provided a useful sense-check of allowances and suggested they are slightly lower than comparators. But we concluded that neither baseline is an appropriate way to set allowances. We therefore assessed what changes to the status quo might be acceptable.

4a Baseline Against Local Councils.

4.5 We examined 10 local Councils. Seven paid a higher basic allowance than North Herts Council. Two of the seven who paid more have not published an increase since 2019. The average of the 10 local Councils is £6228.10, meaningfully higher than the basic allowance of £5,406 paid by North Herts Council.

4.6 Baselining against local Councils is a useful exercise but the panel does not feel it should be adopted straightforwardly as a method of setting allowances in North Herts Council. First, because we have no meaningful assessment of the appropriateness of other Councils' remuneration. Second, because adopting this approach may create a ratchet in Councillors' remuneration: if Councils increase remuneration to the local average, but are less likely to make cuts to allowances, the local average continuously increases. Third, because increases of the order this baseline exercise suggests are likely to be unacceptably high to both Councillors and local residents.

4b Baselining against a Formula.

4.7 Many Councils use a formula to baseline allowance against local wages. Such a formula would be:

$$\boxed{\text{Required time input (hrs.)}} - \boxed{\text{Public Service discount}} \times \boxed{\text{Remuneration rate}} = \text{Basic Allowance}$$

4.8 Required time input. - We asked Councillors what were the average hours they spent each week on non-SRA duties. Of the 20 responses received, over half stated they worked 13+ hours a week. We also had access to the results of a Councillor survey completed in October 2019/20 as part of the Boundary Review where the same question was asked. In this, fourteen Councillors reported working an average of 15 hours per week.

4.9 Public Service Discount. - In creating a formula the Panel needed to establish a Public Service Discount to recognise that it is expected that some of the role be undertaken on a voluntary basis. We recognised the high level of commitment to role seen in our interviews. A Public Service Discount of 40% (ie minus 60% seen as voluntary) to the role of Councillor would be proposed as the figure normally used by other Councils.

4.10 Remuneration Rate. - Several hourly rates for North Herts are available. Average hourly earnings for North Herts Council, according to NOMIS (Official Census and Labour Market Statistics) hourly rate of £20.44

Thus, if we use 13hrs x 52weeks = 676 hrs/year – PSD 60% x £20.44 = £5527.

The weekly figure for hours is given by a small number of Councillors and therefore challengeable. Using this approach to set allowances is not recommended until more reliable figures can be obtained. Nonetheless, the results of applying this formula provide a sense-check of the basic allowance. The formula approach suggests that the North Herts Council basic allowance is low when set against the average wages of local residents and applying an appropriate discount.

5 Assessing a Reasonable Increase to Basic Allowances.

- 5.1 Our baseline exercises both demonstrated that the basic allowance paid by North Herts Council is low when compared against both local Councils and local wages.
- 5.2 An increase to the basic allowance needs to be justifiable to local people at any time and especially at a time where people are suffering real-terms reductions to their income. There are several possible bases for an increase to the basic allowance that may meet the test of public justifiability. These options are ordered from largest (and possibly hardest to justify) to smallest (and easiest to justify).
- 1) An increase in line with economy-wide pay increases. This may be justified as maintaining pace between councillors and the economy at large. But since different sectors have seen very different wage growth rates this may not represent the pay increases enjoyed by many local people. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) records growth in regular pay (excluding bonuses) at 7.8% for the three months to July 2023. This would increase the basic allowance to £5,828.
 - 2) An increase in line with public sector pay increases. This may represent a more appropriate measure when changes in Councillor allowances are compared with changes to pay in public services. The ONS records growth in regular pay (excluding bonuses) in the public sector at 6.6% (September 2023 ONS Publication, covering May to July 2023). This would increase the allowance to £5,763.
 - 3) An increase in line with inflation. Increasing allowances in line with inflation would maintain the real-terms value of Councillors' allowances. This would avoid allowances losing their value but would not start to close the gap identified by our baseline exercise. The August 2023 CPIH measure was 6.3%. This would take the basic allowance to £5,747.
 - 4) An increase in line with pay settlements for Council officers. Since Council officers are the people Councillors work most closely with and effective working across both elected members and officials is important for a well-run Council, avoiding large differences in pay settlements may be valued. The 2023 settlement for Council Officers has now been announced and an equivalent award for Councillors would be an increase of 5.72% per annum if we use a mean calculation and 6.41% if we use a median calculation.
- 5.3 Our baseline exercise, whilst not a reliable way to set allowances, suggested a gap between North Herts Council basic allowance and both comparators. Meaningfully addressing that gap requires a real-terms increase in the basic allowance but is constrained by public justifiability. In our view the most justifiable basis for raising allowances is to raise them modestly in line with whole-public sector pay increases. We therefore recommend the basic allowance is increased by 6.6% to £5,763.
- 5.4 Recommendation:**
There is compelling rationale to raising the basic allowance, on an ongoing basis. We therefore recommend that the Basic Allowance be increased by 6.6% to £5,763. A 6.6% increase would bring Basic Allowance to a reasonable level and Council Officers pay awards should be applied thereafter.

6 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs).

6.1 Number of SRAs.

The IRP is aware of the 'Guidance for Local Authorities 2003' which states:

para 71 – The Regulations do not limit the number of special responsibility allowances which may be paid, nor do the regulations prohibit the payment of more than one special responsibility allowance to any one member.

para 72 – However, these are important considerations for Local Authorities. If the majority of members of a Council receive a special responsibility allowance the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified. Local authorities will wish to consider very carefully the additional roles of members and the significance of these roles, both in terms of responsibility and real time commitment before deciding which will warrant the payment of a special responsibility allowance.

- 6.2 It is noted that three North Herts councillors receive more than one SRA and one of these Councillors receives three. All three have a specialist responsibility and are members of an Area Forum as Chair. This seems usual in Councils which have established area forums for a part of its structure but the Council should be aware that the vast majority of Councils, ie 85%, don't pay more than one SRA. Seventeen Councillors receive an SRA. This is less than 50% of Councillors and the IRP expressed no concern regarding this number of SRAs.
- 6.3 The Deputy Leader receives more than one SRA but the total allowance is equivalent to the importance of the role, particularly in a joint administration. Should this arrangement change, the post would need to be reviewed.
- 6.4 The current SRAs and those paid by other Local Councils are at Appendix Three. The figures for Dacorum and Three Rivers are for 2017/18. More recent information is not unfortunately available.
- 6.5 Our surveys and interviews revealed that there is considerable variation between SRAs and between different Councillors' approaches to these positions, leading to very different workloads and degrees of commitment. This variation makes recommending changes to SRAs difficult. It is also problematic when considering how SRAs may be justified to the public and when considering how SRAs relate to performance.
- 6.6 Recommendation:**
Before agreeing any increase to SRAs, the council should set clear and publicly transparent performance expectations for the holders of SRAs.
- 6.7 The IRP considered that it would be more sensible to review SRAs following the elections in 2024 as it is possible that the structure of the Council and duties will change and would align the setting of remuneration for SRAs to the new electoral calendar.
- 6.8 In the immediate term, the IRP was satisfied with the level of SRAs for most posts apart from those specified below.

6.9 Recommendation:

Except where specified below, SRAs should increase by the Council Pay Award for 2023, mean, which is calculated at 5.72%.

7 Chairs, Area Forum (basic allowance x 0.2)

7.1 The function of the Area Committees was changed during 2023 to Area Forum. It was suggested to the IRP that these roles now carry a lower level of duty but that would only become fully clear after the new forums had been in operation for longer.

7.2 Recommendation:

The responsibility level of Chairs of Area Forums should be reviewed after one year of operation as part of the next Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, with a view to reducing or eliminating this SRA if no longer justified. In the meantime, this SRA should be not be increased.

8 Chair and Vice-Chair of Council

8.1 Of all the roles the IRP examined these payments were most difficult to assess. The role of Chair is very much dependent on the individual concerned and their application to the role. We heard that, with a committed Chair in place, the role of Vice-Chair is only to provide cover which may be very limited but that with a less committed chair the Vice-Chair is likely to do more.

8.2 Recommendation:

The roles of Chair and Vice-Chair should be carefully defined to determine how much of the Chair's duties (if any) can be given to the Vice-Chair so that a percentage distribution of duties be established as a framework and expectations are clear. A review of the SRAs can then take place. In the meantime, these SRAs should not be increased.

9 Dependant Carers and Child Care Allowance.

9.1 The IRP noted that very few claims, if any, were made for this allowance. The reason might be that Councillors don't need to claim or it may be that they do not wish to. It is important that the ability to claim this allowance is publicised to all new Councillors. The duties where Dependant Carer's Allowance may be claimed are clarified in the regulations and should be added to the Scheme. They are attached as Appendix 4 to this report.

9.2 Real Living Wage (London Weighting) of £13.15 per hour for 2024. Should this be insufficient eg for specialist care, a higher amount can be claimed subject to agreement in advance, reasons given and receipted.

10 Travel and Subsistence Allowances.

10.1 The Travel and Subsistence Allowances are in line with HMRC recommendations and are in line with Staff rates. This should continue.

10.2 Few Councillors claim expenses. Indeed, only £801.11 was claimed by 49 Councillors in 2022/23. Representations were made that claims were difficult to make using the ITrent system. There was also some concern that as claims amounts were published

annually, they might be seen as excessive. The IRP considered that expenses should be claimed in all cases where they were legitimate ie a cost has been incurred and cannot be avoided. Inflation, the cost of living and the lack of increase in the Basic Allowance in the past has meant that expenses will have lessened even more the value of the Basic Allowance.

- 10.3 The only addition recommended to the scheme is the ability to travel by second class rail fare. Claims for second class train fare, single or return, may be claimed for journeys commencing in the North Herts District area. For journeys commencing outside the North Herts. border, payment may only be made from inside the border to a destination within it.

10.4 Recommendation:

It is recommended therefore that Councillors claim expenses in line with the Members Allowance Scheme, and that second-class train fares be included as above. The duties for which Travel and Subsistence can be claimed are attached at Appendix 4 to this Report and should be added to the Scheme. Councillors should be reminded that they have access to a guide to the I-Trent system to enable claims to be made easily.

11 Independent Persons.

- 11.1 The IRP were asked to examine the role of the Independent Person and Reserve Independent Persons of the Standards Committee and the Independent Member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The level of payment to the Independent Person (Standards) is relatively high. Given however the number of complaints received by the Monitoring Officer and the valued assistance given by the Standards Independent Person/Reserve Independent Persons it is not recommended that this be lowered. It is recommended that this amount, the Reserve Independent Persons Allowance and the Independent Member on the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee be held at the current level pending the full review next year.

11.2 Recommendation:

To maintain the Independent Person, the Reserve Independent Persons of the Standards Committee and the Independent Member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee payment at current levels until the next Review.

12 Implementation Date.

- 12.1 The Implementation date is 1/4/2024.

13 Financial Considerations.

- 13.1 Based on the 6.6% increase to the BA and increases to the SRAs, as detailed above, the additional budget required to fund the scheme would be £33,688 as detailed below:

	Proposed Allowances 2024/25			
	No of roles	Annual Allowance	Total Allowances	Increase from 23/24
		£	£	£
Members Allowance				
Basic Allowance	51	5,763	293,913	29,019
Special Responsibility Allowances				
Leader	1	16,003	16,003	866
Deputy Leader	1	2,858	2,858	155
Cabinet Exec Members	7	6,858	48,006	2,597
Chair - Area Forums	5	1,081	5,405	0
Chair - Finance, Audit & Risk Committee	1	4,000	4,000	216
Chair - Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1	4,000	4,000	216
Chair - Planning & Control Committee	1	6,858	6,858	371
Chair - Licensing & Appeals Committee	1	1,715	1,715	93
Leader of the largest opposition group*	1	2,858	2,858	155
Total			385,616	33,688
Chair of Council	1	5,830	5,830	0
Vice Chair of Council	1	1,124	1,124	0
Total			6,954	0
Independents				
Independent Person	1	2,697	2,697	0
Reserve Independent Person	2	648	1,296	0
Finance Audit and Risk Committee –Non-Voting Member	1	1,060	1,060	0
Total			5,053	0
TOTAL			397,623	33,688
Budget				363,900
Additional Budget Required				33,700

*Assumes one opposition group but could be more in the future (subject to a minimum of 3 Members in each group). Budget would be adjusted accordingly.

Appendix One

Councillor Questionnaire Response Results (Average)

1. What Political Party do you represent? (Not compulsory Question)

Conservative	4 Responses
Labour Party	6 Responses
Liberal Democrats	6 Responses
Anonymous	4 Responses
TOTAL	20 Responses

2. In addition to being a District Councillor, are you a Parish or County Councillor?

County Councillor	2
Parish Councillor	2
None	16 Responses

3. On average, how many District Council meetings do you attend each month?
(Including formal Council meetings, informal briefings with officers, etc.)

1-3 Hours	4 Votes (20%)
4-6 Hours	6 Votes (30%)
7-10 Hours	7 Votes (35%)
11+ Hours	3 Votes (15%)

4. In total how many hours do you spend on your role as a district Councillor – just associated for the Basic Allowance, not associated to any SRA you have? (i.e., Casework, reading, attending meeting...)

0-3 Hours	0 Votes (0%)
4-6 Hours	2 Votes (10%)
7-9 Hours	6 Votes (30%)
10-12 Hours	1 Vote (5%)
13+ Hours	11 Votes (55%)

5. If you have a role that receives an SRA, please indicate how many hours per week you spend specifically on this role. (Accidentally made this question compulsory, therefore can assume the 0-3 hours votes were where people do not have an SRA)

0-3 Hours	9 Votes (50%)
4-6 Hours	1 Vote (6%)
7-9 Hours	2 Votes (2%)
10-12 Hours	3 Votes (17%)
13+ Hours	3 Votes (17%)

6. Place rank the importance of the roles - the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom. (Most popular Order)

1. Leader of the Council	18 Votes (95%)
2. Deputy Leader of the Council	7 Votes (37%)
3. Cabinet Executive Members	7 Votes (37%) and 7 Votes for 2 nd Place
4. Chair of the Council	5 Votes (26%) and 5 Votes for 7 th Place
5. Chair - Planning Control Committee	4 Votes (21%) and 5 Votes for 3 rd Place
6. Chair – Overview and Scrutiny	4 Voters (21%) and 7 Votes for 5 th Place
7. Chair - Finance, Audit and Risk Committee	2 Voters (11%) and 7 Voters for 6 th Place
8. Chair – Area Forum	8 Voters (42%)
9. Chair – Licensing and Appeals Committee	6 Votes (32%)
10. Vice Chair of the Council	9 Votes (47%)

7. Any comments as to why you have ranked in this order?

- Number of meetings and responsibilities
- The Chair of Scrutiny should play a larger, more professional role, leading training and development and working to horizon scan the forward plan etc. To encourage a more professional approach, suggest a slight uplift in this SRA.
- I think the Exec roles and chairs of the committees generally involve more work than the ceremonial roles of Chair/Vice-Chair of Council
- the Vice Chair does relatively little unless the Chair is unavailable.
- The Deputy leader is a much more significant role when there is a joint rather than a single party administration.
- Based on perceived order of importance.

8. Do you have other income?

Yes	19
No	1

9. Would you be able to be a Councillor without other income? (i.e., only on Basic Allowance and possible SRA)

Yes	4
No	16

10. Does the Basic Allowance pay for your associated costs with being a Councillor? (i.e., cost of phone, internet access, etc.)

Yes	16
No	4

11. What are your views on the current expenses paid under the scheme? (i.e., mileage rates, subsistence allowances, etc.)

- It is very complicated to make claims.
- I only claim for mileage.
- It seems appropriate for additional expenses although I have not had to use it.
- I do not currently claim these, but they seem fair.
- Reasonable if you a SRA, the basic is poor however and will not help to encourage younger people to become Cllrs.
- I think the mileage rates encourage use of the private car rather than public transport, although the additional 5p for passengers is a good incentive for car sharing.
- I think the childcare allowances should reflect the full costs, to enable single parents to attend Council meetings.
- Hard to work out what can and cannot be claimed for.
- I am not convinced the scheme is necessary except perhaps for example the Chair attending events as a representative of "the Council".
- The financial reward in no way justifies the amount of effort.

12. Do you have any views on other expenses that should be covered by the scheme?

- I would like to see Train Travel covered by the scheme.
- The allowances don't come close to covering the time commitment or responsibility of being a Councillor.
- Childcare costs for discussions with residents.
- Yes, as a teacher, I cannot attend meetings during the day because the school has to spend money on covering me and cannot be reimbursed.

13. Have you claimed any expenses within the last 12 months?

Yes	3
No	17

14. If so, do you feel the payments are enough to cover your expenses?

- I think the allowance covers any expenses.
- Yes, other than the lockdown period when I incurred substantially higher phone charges. However, I don't need childcare to attend meetings.
- Yes

15. If you do not claim expenses, why do you not claim them?

Not worthwhile for small amounts	10 Votes (40%)
The information is publicly available	2 Votes (8%)
Basic Allowance/SRA is enough to cover my expenses	7 Votes (28%)
Unsure of the claim process	3 Votes (12%)
Other	3 Votes (12%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Never had a cause to claim. - I don't need the money. Council does - Uncomfortable with public seeing costs of conferences etc so prefer to self-finance

Appendix Two

Special Responsibility Allowances – Councils Local to North Herts.

Council/ Year	N Herts 23	Wel Hat 23	Watford 22	St'age 23	St Alb 21	H'mere 23	E Herts 22	Broxb 23	Dacorum	Three Rivers	Average
Population (2018)	133,214	122,246	131,326	89,500	147,373	104,205	150,158	96,876	154,280	93,771	122,294.90
Leader of the Council	15,137	13,722.56		23,831	13,670	27,418	19,767	20,559	15,165	10,401	17,741.30
D/Leader of the Council	2,703	11,477.97					12,225.96	9,416			8,955.73
Cabinet Members	6,487	11,003.22	3,229	11,671	9,551	4,601	9,780.96	8,240	10,110	5,200	7,987.32
Chair-Planning	6,487	4,279.03		11,671	33,330	6,044	7,336	7,537			10,954.86
Chair-Overview & Scrutiny	3,784	4,279.03	8,878	10,481	2,820		6,646.04	7,537			6,346.44
Chair-Finance, Audit & Risk	3,784	4,279.03	8,878	4,767		1,930	6,646.04	4,119	5,055	2,600	4,673.12
Chair-Licensing & Appeals	1,622	4,279.03	8,878	4,767	2,820	1,930	6,051		2,527.50	2,600	4,181.84
Chair-Area c'ttees(x5)	1,081										1,081
Leader of the Opposition	2,703 ^a	8,630.85	112 ^b	1,631	10,800	3,830	108 ^c	4,119	6,318.75	3,900	4,215.26
Chair	5,830		4,500				6,500				5,610
Vice-Chair	1,124		1,500				1,450				1,358
Mayor		7,335.48	73,607	14,540				7,357			25,709.87
IP Standards	2,697	500	200	1,441			2,500	1,472			1,468.33
IM Audit & Risk	1,060			1,441			2,500				1,667

^a - subject to a minimum of 3 members

^b - £112 p.a. per group member

^c - a factor of 0.1 of the Basic Allowance x the number of members

Appendix Three

Basic Allowances of Councils Local to North Hertfordshire.

COUNCIL	YEAR	BASIC ALLOWANCE
North Herts DC	23	£5404
Broxbourne BC	22	£5885
Dacorum BC	19	£5426
East Herts DC	22	£5428.79
Hertsmere BC	23	£6601
St Albans City & DC	23	£6236
Stevenage BC	23	£8490
Three Rivers DC	?	£4627
Watford BC	22	£8071
Welwyn Hatfield BC	23	£6112.90

Appendix Four

The duties are specified in the Regulations for the payment of Dependent Carer's Allowance and Travelling and Subsistence Allowance are as follows:

a meeting of the executive

- a meeting of a committee of the executive
- a meeting of the authority
- a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of the authority
- a meeting of some other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or
- a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of a body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations
- a meeting which has both been authorised by the authority, a committee or sub-committee of the authority or a joint committee of the authority and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of a joint committee **and** to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited (if the authority is divided into several political groups) or to which two or more Councillors have been invited (if the authority is not divided into political groups)
- a meeting of a local authority association of which the authority is a member
- duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in pursuance of any standing order requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened
- duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises
- duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at a school approved for the purpose of section 342 of the Education Act 1996
- any other duty approved by the authority in connection with discharging the duties of the authority or its committees or sub-committees.