

**Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration
Committee (SLARC)**

**Recommendations for
Councillors' Remuneration and
Expenses**

February 2024

Foreword

Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC) was reconvened in April 2023 to undertake an independent review of councillor remuneration, having last reported in 2011.

The Committee issued an Interim Report in October 2023 describing the progress made to date, emerging themes, and further work to be done to produce its findings.

This is the Committee's Final Report. It sets out the approach adopted by SLARC to delivering its remit set by the Scottish Government and COSLA. It describes how we engaged with local government and other stakeholders in the process, the techniques we applied, the evidence we considered, and our findings.

The report also describes how we addressed the four key questions set out in our remit and makes a series of recommendations in relation to these.

As part of its remit the Committee was asked to ensure its recommendations should be "affordable on an ongoing basis". The Committee has, at the conclusion of the analysis of evidence, considered this point and is of the opinion that the increased costs constitute a small percentage of the total local authority budget. While we recognise the challenging financial pressures in which the Scottish Government and local government operate, our recommendations would see the cost of remunerating elected members increase by around 0.04% of the total local government budget. On the basis of financial information available to the Committee at this time, it is estimated that the full year costs arising from our recommendations will be £5.1 million per annum from 1 April 2024. This does not include any assumptions to meet the cost of our recommended resettlement payments to councillors losing office, as this will vary on a case-by-case basis.

In addition to the questions, we were asked to consider in our remit, we have identified a broader set of issues we believe to be central to any understanding of councillors' remuneration in Scotland, and to overcoming barriers to elected office. We have therefore included a series of recommendations around these and described where we consider further work is required to be done, and by whom.

The Committee makes the following findings based on the evidence gathered between April 2023 and November 2023:

- Overall, the demographic make-up of Scotland's councillors does not match the general population with under-representation particularly from women, young people and people with disabilities.
- More than half of councillors who completed our survey reported spending 26 hours per week on formal council duties, while more than 40% consider their role

as councillors to be full-time. 38% are either in full-time or part-time work, and 15% are retired in receipt of pensions. Nearly 40% of councillors spend 26-40 hours per week on employment, education, or caring duties out with their council duties.

- Social media creates more casework for two thirds of councillors and almost as many have experienced on-line personal criticism. Almost three quarters of councillors say their involvement in partnerships and committees has become more demanding since they first became involved.
- For councillors who are part of an Administration, particularly Council Leaders, the role has become more complex, reflecting the changing landscape within which local government now operates. There is significant variation in the time that individual councillors dedicate to the position, particularly between Opposition and Administration councillors.
- The work of councillors cannot easily be defined in terms of full-time or part-time. However, we believe that while the role of the councillor can usually be undertaken on a part-time basis and Senior Councillor roles requires a full-time commitment, such distinctions between full-time and part-time are no longer appropriate.
- The role of councillors is not always well understood by members of other public bodies, and the scale of their responsibility for key public services and community wellbeing is generally not well understood.
- Some councillors believe that there should be a clearer link between their remuneration package and those received by MSPs or MPs.
- Current remuneration levels are not considered to reflect the complexity of the role of the councillor, and this can be a significant barrier to potential candidates, as well as serving councillors, particularly those who have no other source of income.
- The role of the councillor is often much more demanding than newly elected members understood before standing, but induction and training are provided to new councillors by their councils.
- The current banding structure is thought to be unfair by some councils, particularly smaller authorities who believe it has not kept pace with changes to population structures.

The Committee wishes to take this opportunity to thank COSLA, Scottish councils, the Improvement Service, the Local Government Information Unit (Scotland) and Scottish Government for their assistance throughout its work.

I am grateful to the members of the Committee, all of whom contributed fully to addressing the questions we were set in the remit. Despite the start of our work being delayed until April 2023, their time and expertise has enabled us to meet the timescales originally planned. There is full consensus on the part of Committee members on the recommendations being made to Scottish Ministers and COSLA.

Angela Leitch CBE

Convener
Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee
February 2024

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Biographies

Convenor - Angela Leitch CBE

Angela has significant leadership experience gained over many years in four local authorities of different sizes and demographics. Latterly she was Chief Executive of East Lothian council before being appointed in 2019 to lead the new national public health body, Public Health Scotland. Throughout her career she has worked closely with elected representatives and appreciates the time commitment and diversity of responsibilities that councillors can be required to undertake. She has chaired several national groups and is a past chair of SOLACE. In addition, Angela has experience of job evaluation and remuneration policy.

Peter Argyle

Peter served as a councillor on Aberdeenshire council from 1999 to 2022, holding a number of senior roles including Chair of the Infrastructure Services Committee (2008-15 and 2017-22) and Deputy Leader of the Council (2017-22). He also served as a member of the Cairngorms National Park Authority from 2015-18. Peter has an excellent understanding of the role of a councillor, gained through experience of the challenges and the satisfaction of public services, together with a deep knowledge of the work of Local Government and its partners.

Rosemary Docherty

Rosemary has more than 35 years' experience working in the public sector as a management consultant specialising in reward, salary benchmarking and equalities. She has supported Scottish local government since 1998 as an independent technical expert in job evaluation, pay and grading, and gender equality. Rosemary provides training for Job Analysts and JE Appeal Panel Members in relation to the application of the Scottish Joint Council (SJC) JE Scheme for Local Government Employees; and supports Councils in undertaking reward structure design and equality impact assessments most recently in embedding the Scottish Local Government Living Wage in grading and pay structures. She served for more than 20 years as a member of the ACAS Panel of Independent Experts (Equal Value).

David Heaney

David joined Strathclyde Regional Council in 1985, and went onto work for Glasgow City, East Lothian and Fife Councils. He is a graduate of Strathclyde University and in his most recent role with Fife Health and Social Care Partnership he was responsible for a wide range of health and social care services and led a series of complex service transformation programmes and large-scale capital projects. In addition to his local government experience, David has worked for Audit Scotland, where he led full council Best Value audits, as director of a national charity, and worked for the NHS developing strategic partnerships with local authorities. During his time at East Lothian Council he was seconded to the Scottish Government to develop support systems for emerging health and social care partnerships.

Martin McElroy

Martin was first elected to Glasgow City Council in 2012 and served until 2022. During this time, he served as the Labour Group Spokesperson for Personnel, a member of Glasgow's Workforce Board, and a COSLA delegate to SOLACE. He is particularly interested in tackling the barriers that young people and people with caring responsibilities face when considering elected office. Outwith elected politics, Martin has held management roles in the charitable and housing sector and is currently the Chief Executive of a development trust in Glasgow. Martin is a graduate of Strathclyde University (BSc (Hons) Natural Sciences, 2009) and Queen Margaret University (MSc Strategic Communications, 2019).

Laura Simpson

Laura Simpson possesses a comprehensive knowledge and extensive experience of democratic processes and the role of Elected Members, having worked effectively with Councillors for over 25 years. As the former Head of HR & OD at Aberdeenshire Council, she was responsible for Councillors' induction, learning and development as well as pay and remuneration. As the Professional Adviser to the Council on all workforce matters, she worked closely with the recognised Trade Unions to maintain effective employee relations and to also ensure collaborative working between the Unions and Councillors. During her career, Laura led the successful implementation of new pay and grading structures as well as revised terms and conditions for local government employees.

Glossary

Administration – The political groupings or councillors who are responsible taking the lead in policy formulation and decision making. Akin to the MSPs who form the Scottish Government. The majority of Senior Councillors in a local authority will belong to the Administration.

ASHE - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. Collated by the Office of National Statistics, it is the most comprehensive source of information on the structure and distribution of earnings in the UK.

Banding – The method of categorising councils to reflect their size and complexity, and their associated number of Senior Councillors and Leader’s remuneration.

Civic Head – The Provost, Lord Provost, or Convener of a local authority elected in terms of section 4(2) of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) 1994 Act.

COSLA – Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. Umbrella organisation representing the interests of Scotland’s 32 local authorities. Has a particular role in developing policy and engaging with the Scottish Government on a range of issues.

Councillor – Defined by the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007, for the purposes of payment of remuneration, means a councillor who is not the Leader of the Council, the Civic Head or a Senior Councillor.

CPP – Community Planning Partnerships a formal statutory partnership of council and other public services in each Scottish local authority area that come together to take part in community planning. Each CPP focuses on where partners' collective efforts and resources can add the most value to their local communities.

Electoral Management Board – The Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) consists of Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) drawn from across the country. They represent the officials responsible for delivering electoral events in Scotland.

Ethical Standards Commission – The organisation responsible for encouraging fairness, good conduct and transparency in public life in Scotland. They investigate complaints about the behaviour of MSPs, local authority councillors, and board members of public bodies.

Executive/Cabinet - the type of Administration a local authority uses to develop, implement, and monitor policy. In most cases, an Executive model will give decision-making powers to a Senior Councillor who is accountable to an oversight or scrutiny committee.

HSCP – Health and Social Care Partnerships are statutory bodies established to integrate a range of health and social care services provided by Health Boards and Councils in Scotland. Each partnership is jointly governed through an Integration Joint Board (IJB), or lead agency. IJBs/Lead Agency are responsible for the strategic planning and delivery of the functions delegated to the HSCP.

Improvement Service (IS) – established in 2005, IS was set up to deliver improvement support that would help councils to provide effective community leadership, strong local governance and deliver high quality, efficient local services.

Leader - The convener of a local authority elected in terms of section 4(1) of the 1994 Act or such other councillor as that local authority decides has the title of Leader of the Council for the purposes of payment of remuneration.

LGIU – Local Government Information Unit was established in 1983 and is an independent local authority membership organisation supporting councils across the UK and internationally through research and policy development.

Members' Support Services – Council officers who are responsible for assisting elected members fulfil their democratic duties including administrative, diary management, case work, and other tasks associated with supporting councillors. Monitoring Officer – a council officer responsible for the training of elected members on the Councillors Code of Conduct. This is a statutory appointment pursuant to section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Opposition – the political groups or councillors who are not part of the Administration.

Resettlement Payment – A payment made to elected members who demit or lose office at an election. Currently, MPs and MSPs receive a similar allowance that is determined by length of service.

Senior Councillor – Defined by the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007 for the purpose of payment of remuneration, a councillor who is designated as such by the local authority of which that person is an elected member.

SLARC – Scottish Local Authority Remuneration Committee. Reconvened in April 2023 to consider remuneration levels and barriers to elected office.

SOLACE – The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers is a representative body for senior strategic managers working in the public sector in the United Kingdom.

SOLAR – The Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland is a professional public sector organisation whose aim and purpose is to support the work of those professional officers employed in local authorities and associated organisations in Scotland.

SPDS –The Society of Personal Development Scotland is a professional association, comprised of Human Resource and Organisational Development Lead Officers from across the public sector in Scotland, that provides collective advice and support at a strategic level on all workforce matters in relation to the wider Scottish Local Government Workforce.

Standards Commission - an independent body whose purpose is to encourage high ethical standards in public life through the promotion and enforcement of Codes of Conduct for councillors and those appointed to the boards of devolved public bodies.

Verity House Agreement – a 2023 partnership agreement between COSLA and the Scottish Government that sets out a vision for greater collaboration and joint deliver across Scottish and local government.

Recommendations

- R1** On the basis of the evidence gathered, the Committee recommends that the role of councillor continues to be fulfilled on a part-time basis, while the role of Senior Councillors is likely to require to be fulfilled on a full-time basis.
- R2** Notwithstanding R1 above, the Committee recommends that the definitions “full-time” and “part-time” should no longer be applied when describing the role of councillors, and that the role should be treated as a public office within Scotland’s democratic processes, as is the case for MPs and MSPs.
- R3** The Committee recommends that all 10 councils currently within Band A should be funded to enable the appointment of up to a maximum of 10 Senior Councillors, and that no other changes to the maximum numbers of Senior Councillors in Bands B, C and D are required.
- R4** The Committee recommends that all councils currently within Band A should move into Band B, and that there should be no change to the councils currently within Bands C and D.
- R5** The Committee recommends that all bandings are reviewed by SLARC in advance of each Council election.
- R6** The Committee recommends that the salaries of councillors be set at 80% of the median salary for all employees in the public sector in Scotland as published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) resulting in an annual salary of £24,581 with effect from 1 April 2024.
- R7** The Committee recommends that this proportionate link to median public sector salaries in Scotland is accepted as the methodology on which councillor salaries are established.
- R8** The Committee recommends that the salaries of Council Leaders in the current Band D (Glasgow and Edinburgh) are benchmarked at the salary of a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP).
- R9** The Committee recommends that the salaries of Council Leaders in the current Band C be set at 85% of the salary of those in current Band D; and those in the combined Bands A and B be set at 70% of the salary of those in the current Band D (Table 5, Page 36).
- R10** The Committee recommends that the salaries of Civic Heads and Senior Councillors continue to be set at up to a maximum of 75% of the salary of their Council Leader (Table 5, Page 36).

- R11** The Committee recommends that the salaries of all councillors continue to be uplifted on an annual basis as per the current arrangements introduced in 2017, which are in line with the median increase in earnings of public sector employees in Scotland, as published by the ASHE.
- R12** The Committee recommends that the current regulations (2010) on councillors' expenses for travel, subsistence and accommodation should be replaced by the provisions applying to officers in their respective Councils.
- R13** The Committee recognises the joint work underway by COSLA and Police Scotland aimed at tackling the issue of councillors' safety, including online safety, and recommends that training and resources for councillors should continue to be developed and kept under review by both organisations.
- R14** The Committee recommends that resettlement (severance) payments are introduced for councillors losing office. This should be modelled on the system applied to MSPs and should be in place for the next election cycle.
- R15** The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government considers whether existing legislation needs to be reviewed to strengthen requirements on councillors to perform their duties. Given the Committee's recommended link of councillor pay to 80% of median public sector pay, councils should monitor and report upon councillor activity levels and attendance at formal council meetings.
- R16** The Committee recommends that all councils should review their internal and partnership governance arrangements, to assure themselves that councillors are able to fulfil their statutory duties.
- R17** The Committee recommends that all councils continue to provide induction for new councillors as well as ongoing topic-based training using a variety of delivery methods to ensure maximum take-up. It is important when these opportunities are provided, that councillors take advantage of them, and participation levels should be reported publicly.
- R18** The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government and COSLA make a joint public statement endorsing the important role played by councils and councillors in delivering a wide range of critical local services. This statement should spearhead a wider multi-media public awareness campaign between now and the next Council Election, designed to raise public awareness and encourage potential candidates to stand for office.
- R19** The Committee recommends that COSLA develops a Pre-Election Induction Programme for potential council candidates. This should provide potential

candidates with an accurate understanding of the role of the councillor and the demands they are likely to face. This should also contain details of how political parties will support candidates before, during and after their election campaign, including unsuccessful candidates.

R20 The Committee recommends the establishment of a national dataset showing the demographic composition of the country's councillors, and how this is changing. Overtime, such data will identify key population groups who continue to be under-represented within councils to enable action to be taken to remove barriers and enable wider participation.

R21 The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government and COSLA, working alongside representatives drawn from all under-represented groups, should consider how best to enhance supports for councillors in these groups, and develop proposals to support, encourage and enable more people from under-represented groups to stand for office, particularly women, young people and people with a disability.

R22 The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government and COSLA work together to ensure adequate provision is made to provide a minimum level of Members Support Services.

Figures illustrating the differences in Local Government



32

Councils



1,226

Councillors in
Scotland

60 km area of Dundee city Council
25,659km area of Highland Council

22,450 population of Orkney

635,130 population of Glasgow



5,436,600

Population served by
Scottish Councils



£13,231m

Local Government
Budget 2023/2024

2,100 workforce of Comhairle nan
Eilean Siar

28,000 workforce of Glasgow city
Council



262,000

Employees in Local
Government. 44% of
public sector.



68%

Councillors first
elected in 2017 and
2022

£80.6M budget of Orkney Council

£1,529.3M budget of Glasgow city
Council

Our Remit

The Committee was reconvened in April 2023 to undertake an independent review of councillor remuneration, having last reported in 2011.

In a joint statement¹, published in February 2022, the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) recognised,

“... the need for a review of Councillor pay to ensure that terms and conditions truly reflect the responsibilities of a modern-day Councillor, and that remuneration does not act as a barrier to encouraging a diverse range of people to stand for elected office”.

SLARC has been reconvened to review the remuneration of councillors and to consider whether the present levels of remuneration for Councillors and Senior Councillors, are appropriate within the current context. In addition, the Committee has been tasked to assist the Scottish Government to review and amend the Councillors’ Remuneration: Remuneration, Allowances and Expenses – Guidance, which was last revised in April 2010. The Committee has also been asked to review whether the current methodology for determining the banding of councils is appropriate and, if so, if the current bands allocated to councils remains accurate.

SLARC was asked to consider four questions:

- Q1. Has the workload and responsibilities of councillors increased and become more complex?
- Q2. Has the use of email, social media and other digital platforms increased pressure on councillors and increased demands from their constituents, including expecting speedier responses?
- Q3. Has there been an increase in formal committee meetings (and the duration of these meetings) and informal meetings, such as working groups within a council?
- Q4. What is the breakdown of the average time spent by a councillor carrying out their day-to-day duties e.g., committee meetings, constituent queries etc?

In making recommendations, the committee considered:

- The workload of councillors, including whether the role of an ordinary councillor should now be considered as full time rather than part time. If still part time, which proportion of their time should be required to enable them to reasonably undertake their council duties and role as a local representative in their respective ward.

¹ “Statement from the Scottish Government and COSLA: increasing the diversity of local councillors”, 18 February 2022.

- The responsibilities of councillors, particularly those in senior positions, and whether the numbers who hold senior positions should be revised, and if so whether this should be across all or only for specific individual councils.
- Whether the mechanism introduced in 2017 to align councillors' annual pay increase to the percentage increase in the median annual earnings of public sector workers in Scotland remains appropriate or consider what alternative arrangements should be adopted.

Recommendations from SLARC should:

- “Establish whether the role of a modern-day ordinary councillor is full time or part-time and what the commensurate pay for that work should be.
- seek to ensure that remuneration does not act as a barrier to encouraging people to stand for elected office.
- encourage a wider and more diverse range of people with varied lived experience from across our communities to stand for elected office; and
- be affordable on an ongoing basis.”

The term “Ordinary Councillor” is contained within the Committee’s remit. This is not terminology that the Committee has adopted as it does not adequately reflect the responsibilities of the role. Instead, the Committee has used the definitions set out in the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007.²

SLARC’s Approach – Engaged and Inclusive

In order to discharge its remit effectively, SLARC built a comprehensive evidence base on which we have made our recommendations. Our approach has been to gather evidence through research, while working closely with local authorities and other key organisations to ensure that SLARC’s work remains robust and credible, informed by the direct experiences of Scotland’s councillors.

Sources of Evidence

In delivering its remit, the Committee engaged directly with COSLA – Leadership Sounding Board and Barriers to Elected Office Special Interest Group, The Improvement Service, Scottish Councils including Chief Executives, Monitoring Officers, and councillors, and face-to-face Engagement Sessions with Aberdeen City Council, Angus Council, Clackmannanshire Council, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Glasgow City Council, Highland Council, Midlothian Council, Renfrewshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, West Lothian Council, SOLACE, SOLAR, SPDS, Directors of Finance, Ethical Standards Commission

² ‘councillor’ means, in relation to a local authority, an elected member of that authority; ‘Councillor, for the purposes of payment of remuneration, means a councillor who is not the Leader of the Council, the Civic Head or a Senior Councillor.’

Standards Commission, Accounts Commission, Scottish Conservative Councillor Association, Association of Nationalist Councillors, Association of Scottish Liberal Democrat Councillors, MPs/former MSPs/Former MEP, Local Government Information Unit (Scotland), Universities, Scottish Government Legal Department.

Councillors' Survey

Working in partnership with the Improvement Service and COSLA, we developed an on-line survey designed to provide a national picture of life as a modern-day councillor in Scotland, and a sense of how this has evolved in recent years. The survey was launched on 1st June 2023, and ran for two weeks until 15th June 2023.

The survey considered the impact on councillors of the growth in use of social media, the increasing complexity of formal partnerships and new ways of working post-pandemic. In addition, it asked all 1,226 councillors to comment on their experiences of working in their own wards, and the challenges and opportunities this brings in urban, rural, or very rural settings.

The survey closed with 785 responses representing 64% of Scotland's councillors. We are grateful to all councillors who took the time to complete the survey, providing a rich data set of both quantitative and qualitative information. Our thanks too for the work of SOLACE and the Local Government Information Unit Scotland for their help in publicising the survey amongst councillors and ensuring such a positive response was achieved.

Figure 1 Key Points from Councillors' Survey

What Scotland's Councillors told us...

More than half of councillors report that they spend at least 26 hours per week on formal council duties, while almost half (43.56%) spend more than 16 hours on informal duties. 42% say their council role is full-time, while more than half (51.29%) are employed elsewhere in a full-time or part-time job. Nearly 60% of councillors are frequently approached by constituents for help whilst not engaged in council duties. 15% are retired and in receipt of pensions.

Social media creates more casework for two thirds of councillors and almost as many have experienced on-line personal criticism. Almost three quarters of councillors (72.79%) say their involvement in partnerships and committees has become more demanding since they first became involved.

56% of councillors are aged 55 or over, compared with 39% of the population, while far fewer councillors are aged from 18-34 than the overall population. Fewer councillors said they had a disability than the overall population, while almost four times as many identified as LGBT+. Councillors are far more likely to be male than female; only 36% are female while making up 52% of the overall population. The ethnic makeup of councillors is broadly reflective of the general population.

In addition to our pre-set survey questions, we asked councillors to add any other comments at the end of the survey. In total, councillors added 60 pages of free text comments. The key themes contained within councillors' comments are set out in Appendix 1. These were of great assistance to the Committee in considering the four key questions in our remit.

Overall, the survey has provided us with a wealth of data describing the life of a modern-day councillor in Scotland. On conclusion of the survey process, all council Chief Executives were issued with a full set of survey results for their own councils, alongside the national results. It was considered by the Committee that councils may find the data useful in developing future improvement actions. In addition, we issued an info-graphic bulletin setting out the high-level results from the survey across the country. This is attached in Appendix 2.

It is worth noting that there is no central collated data held, and updated, on the changing composition of elected representatives to the 32 local authorities and a survey was the only way the Committee could build a picture of the diversity of councillors. The Committee recommends the establishment of a dynamic national dataset showing the demographic composition of the country's councillors, and how this is changing. Overtime, such data will identify key population groups who continue to be under-represented within councils, to enable action to be taken to remove barriers and enable wider participation. This should be pursued with the Electoral Commission. (R20)

The Committee would also highlight the Candidate Diversity Survey, developed by the Scottish Government Elections Team for the 2022 local elections. This survey asked candidates to complete an equality monitoring form at the point of nomination. The purpose of this survey was to provide a vital source of evidence on the diversity of both candidates and those elected as councillors.

Follow up meetings: Council Engagement Sessions

Throughout July and August 2023, the Committee completed a programme of Council Engagement Sessions. These were designed to test out the key themes emerging from the survey, as well as from the Committee's broader workstreams. We engaged with 11 councils from across the spectrum of bandings, and representing cities, urban and rural communities, and the islands. These sessions typically involved SLARC members meeting with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, the Council Leader, Councillors and Senior Councillors.

Key Messages emerging from these sessions were:

- i. The role of councillors, especially those within the Administration, and in particular, Council Leaders, has become more complex covering as it does, ward, council-wide, regional, national, and occasionally international dimensions.
- ii. The complexity of the Leader's role reflects the changing landscape within which local government now operates. Formal partnerships aiming to deliver shared outcomes for citizens predominate. These include Community Planning Partnerships, Health and Social Care Partnership Integration Joint Boards, and regional economic partnerships such as City/Region Deals.
- iii. A key element of the Council Leader's role is to work across political and group boundaries to build consensus to drive forward complex local and national policy programmes in their areas.
- iv. There is significant variation in the time that individual councillors dedicate to the position depending on the roles they hold within the council. Our Councillors' Survey showed that this ranged from 21 hours to 36 hours per week being spent by councillors on formal council business.
- v. The time commitment of a councillor is dependent on the make-up of the council, the governance arrangements in place and the composition of the Administration. In some local authorities those in Opposition could find themselves focusing primarily on ward duties with occasional committee attendance. Those in Administration saw themselves being required to take part in a greater number of committees, outside bodies and undertake ward duties.

- vi. The Committee is of the opinion that as the role is an elected office and not employment, the work of councillors cannot be defined in terms of full-time or part-time. However, the evidence we gathered throughout the committee process indicates that the role of the Councillor can, in the main be undertaken on a part-time basis while those holding Senior Councillor roles require more of a full-time commitment. This is supported by the numbers who report having other commitments out with their councillor role. R1
- vii. The role of elected members is not well understood by members of other public bodies working in partnership with councils, and often, councillors do not experience parity of esteem in partnership settings. The importance of the role of councillors as elected members responsible for key public services and the furtherance of community wellbeing is generally not well understood and should be re-stated publicly. R18
- viii. Councillors are subject to increasing abuse via social media which can be particularly targeted at young, female members. The Committee is aware of the work currently underway by the Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee who recently noted in correspondence to Council Chief Executives that:

“We are aware that the long-standing issue of political culture and at times, the toxicity of debate, both within councils themselves but also across the broader political landscape and wider society as a whole – something that is particularly evident in online discourse – can act as a major barrier to diverse representation”.
- ix. Some councillors believe that there should be a clearer link between the remuneration package provided to them and those received by parliamentarians, reflecting more clearly the shared responsibility of councillors, MSPs and MPs to represent the interests of their constituents. Very often, we heard that the complex portfolios carried by senior councillors involved far greater responsibilities than some parliamentary roles.
- x. Current remuneration levels are not considered to reflect or match the complexity of the role of the councillor. This can be a significant barrier to candidates, particularly women, people with disabilities, lone parents, and young people. We heard that the current level of remuneration can lead to candidates deciding not to stand, or to serving councillors standing down after serving a single term, as well as concern at the lack of any severance arrangements for councillors losing office. Consequently, the demographic make-up of Scotland's councillors does not match the general population with under-representation from many key groups.

- xi. Some councillors have indicated their belief that the current banding structure is unfair. This is particularly true of elected members in smaller authorities who believe it has not kept pace with changes to population structures over the last decade and is likely to continue to diverge with further, large-scale housing developments either planned or underway.

- xii. The role of the councillor is often much more demanding than newly elected members were led to believe before standing, and there is little evidence of political parties supporting the induction of new members, or their ongoing development following election. Induction and training are routinely provided to new elected members by their councils with follow up training opportunities available on an ongoing basis. Up to date Role Descriptions should be produced for all elected members and the Committee has produced sample role outlines in Appendix 5.

Most Common Messages from Councils	%
<p>The role of elected members is not understood by non-elected members of other public bodies.</p> <p>The Leader's role is highly complex covering, ward, local, regional, national/international dimensions.</p> <p>Remuneration levels do not match the complexity of the role of the councillor, and this is a significant barrier to candidates, particularly women, who often carry other responsibilities.</p>	91
<p>Councillors should receive greater parity with the range of supports received by parliamentarians.</p> <p>Senior Councillor roles can only be delivered on a full-time basis.</p> <p>Councillors receive initial training.</p>	73
<p>Councillors are subject to increasing negative comments via social media which can be particularly targeted at young, female members.</p> <p>Councillors are very visible in their communities, more publicly available and more widely accessible than those appointed to other public office.</p> <p>Council Leaders in the main work across parties to seek consensus.</p> <p>The demographic make-up of council membership does not match the general population with women and young people particularly under-represented. This is directly linked to the low level of councillor remuneration.</p>	64
<p>Senior Councillors are responsible for large, complex service/political portfolios, compared to the role of councillors.</p>	55

Figure 2 Most Common Messages from Councils during Engagement Sessions

Review of Governance

The Committee sought to understand the role and remit of councillors, and the overall context in which they operate. Working in partnership with the Improvement Service and SOLAR, we gathered information about governance arrangements across Scotland's councils, who provided details of their internal governance structures, external partnership arrangements, and the role and remit of councillors.

A review of the role of the modern-day councillor was carried out and the Committee was able to map key events over the last 10 years that have had a significant impact on the workload and responsibilities of Scotland's councillors. Appendix 4 sets out some of the changes over this time. In total 28 of the 32 councils responded to the survey (87.5%). We have noted below, the key themes emerging from the survey.

Council Governance Structures

Few councils report having regularly and routinely reviewed their governance structures during the past 10 years. Whilst there have been minor changes implemented in response to local circumstances or external drivers, it is notable that most councils do not have regular reviews of their governance arrangements.

19 councils who responded (68%) operate a committee structure while 9 (32%) have an Executive/Cabinet model.

The pattern of council meeting cycles varies widely, resulting in significant variations in frequency of committee meetings. There is wide variation in the extent to which members are involved in the work of council committees. Our survey data show that while there is a greater involvement for members in smaller councils, there is no correlation between councillor involvement and rurality.

Remote and/or hybrid meetings have become the norm across Scottish local authorities, although there are local variations in practice.

External Arrangements

In general, councils report that there can be a large number of bodies that elected members sit on, meeting regularly throughout the year. A number of these come with decision making responsibility, although some ask for strategic or consultative input.

Remuneration for participation in these bodies is very rare, and generally only received for participation in formal partnerships or statutory bodies, often only for specific roles. A small number of councils highlighted an increase in the number of statutory bodies over the last decade.

More than a quarter of councils said that the numbers of external bodies that have councillors as members had remained unchanged over the past decade.

Almost a quarter said that there were higher demands and expectations of councillors in relation to attending outside bodies and/or their role within these had become more time consuming and complex, while almost one fifth were unable to say whether this activity had increased or become more complex over the last 10 years. More than a third of councils have reduced the numbers of outside bodies that councillors sit on.

Role and Remit of Councillors

Feedback from councils provided evidence about the changing nature and increased complexity associated with the role of a councillor over the past decade.

Expectations around partnership working have increased, as has the role of councillors in scrutiny and challenge. It was also reported that there was an increase in decision making responsibility which required a degree of strategic input.

20 councils shared councillor role profiles information in their returns. The content of the role profiles varied considerably.

Senior Councillors

Whilst all councils that responded have a Leader and Civic Head, there is no uniformity or pattern in relation to other senior appointments either in relation to size or geography of the council.

All councils that responded pay some form of allowance to their Leaders, Civic Heads and Committee Chairpersons/Spokespersons. One in four councils utilise 100% of the budget allocation for these payments, 35% use between 91-99% of the funding and 29% use between 81-90%. The remainder use between 60-80%.

23 of the 28 councils make payments to councillors who are not part of the Administration.

Support

Communication & Media

Councillors typically have access to their council's communication teams for council related matters only. These teams provide advice, guidance, and support related to media engagement and use of social media. Many councils offer basic media training to their elected members, particularly as part of members' induction.

ICT Support

Councils mainly provide elected members with a range of ICT support and equipment such as laptops and mobile phones to support their work.

Case Management

Case management systems for elected members' caseloads differ across local authorities, reflecting varying approaches to handling constituent issues and inquiries. This means no overall trends can be determined regarding the volume of casework elected members undertake.

Training and Development

Councils across Scotland provide varying degrees of induction training and development support to their elected members. The scope and content of these programmes differ, but they generally cover several common themes. All councils offer induction to elected members following elections and many councils continue to provide ongoing development opportunities for elected members throughout their term of office. R17

Monitoring Attendance

79% of the councils that responded indicated they monitor councillors' attendance at Council and Committees, and some publish this information on their websites. All councils indicated that they monitored attendance to ensure compliance with the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and would report if any councillors were reaching the six-month point of non-attendance where there is a risk of disqualification. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government should consider whether existing legislation needs to be reviewed to strengthen requirements on councillors to perform their duties. R15

More than half of councils also recorded and reported councillors' attendance at training sessions and monitored their Continuous Professional Development (CPD) logs. Whilst all councils reported on councillors' expenses, a small number of councils monitored these.

Given the Committee's recommended link of councillor pay to 80% of median public sector pay, councils should consider monitoring and reporting upon councillor activity levels and attendance at formal council meetings. R15

Severance Payments

None of the councils who responded provided any formal supports when councillors demitted office. No financial compensation was made by any councils, and few had any form of structured support in the form of career counselling or pension advice, but some did conduct exit surveys and provided some informal support. We heard that the lack of any payment was a deterrent to standing for office given the prospect of losing salary without any form of compensation. R14

Members Services and Administrative/Clerical Support

Our evidence gathering exercises confirmed that councils generally offer a range of administrative and clerical support to councillors to aid them in undertaking their responsibilities. This support commonly includes personal assistants (PAs) for key figures such as the Council Leader, Conveners, and Provost. Additionally, there are Members Services or Democratic Services teams that provide administrative assistance to all elected members, including diary management, expenses handling, and general clerical support.

The level of support can vary in terms of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, with some councils having more extensive support teams than others. Our feedback from councillors and councils indicated that overall, administrative and clerical support is there to help elected members with council activities, including constituency work and civic events.

Given the different types of support offered to elected members, and the differing levels of detail councils provided in their survey responses, it is not possible to calculate the exact level of admin/clerical support for elected members across all councils. R22

Barriers to Elected Office

The Committee has gathered evidence showing clearly that the current councillor cohort does not represent the demographic make-up of Scotland as a whole, particularly with regard to women, younger people and people with a disability. The ethnic make-up of councillors is broadly in line with the general population.

Our survey demonstrates that 56% of councillors are over 55 years of age, whereas within the population as a whole 39% are within this age group. Equally, 36% of councillors are women whereas within the Scottish population 52% are female. 17% of councillors in the survey considered themselves to have a disability, compared with 20% in Scotland.

The committee has identified a number of barriers impacting on these under-represented groups, while recognising the work being undertaken by the Scottish Government, COSLA and other organisations to address these.

Women

The evidence gathered by the Committee demonstrates there are particular barriers for women when seeking or holding office as a councillor. These include remuneration, childcare, the reputation of politics as a whole and behaviour within councils. Personal safety was highlighted as an issue, particularly in the use and abuse of social media.

Working patterns for councillors do not sit well with family life and this impacts disproportionately on women with families or other caring responsibilities, not only discouraging them from standing but also leading to many of those elected standing down after a single term. The challenges in arranging suitable and affordable childcare were highlighted by many.

Younger People

There are clear barriers facing younger people when considering standing for election, including the difficulty of balancing their careers with their role and responsibilities as a councillor, family life and remuneration. Younger people are

more likely to have financial commitments that cannot be matched easily with current levels of remuneration and the evidence from party councillor associations shows that these considerations prevent many potential candidates from standing for election.

Councillors with a Disability

COSLA's Barriers to Elected Office Special Interest Group has been re-convened for the 2022-27 Local Government term, and has identified support for disabled councillors, amongst other themes, as priority workstreams.

17% of elected members who responded to the SLARC Councillors survey considered themselves to have a disability. This is lower than the national average, where 20% of people in Scotland consider themselves to have a disability. Some councillors with a disability who responded to the survey commented on how hybrid working arrangements makes the role more accessible to them, although this was not a unanimous view.

Councillors with a disability identified financial barriers the current rate of remuneration creates and the potential difficulties in taking on secondary employment.

Councillor associations commented that there is a perception that councils do not provide the level of support that is required to open the way for people with a disability to stand for election. Associations expressed the view³ that the support offered to MSPs is far greater than that offered by councils. One association commented that people with disabilities faced additional challenges when considering standing for election.

The Committee considers that further work is needed to enhance the support that is provided for councillors with a disability, as well as supporting more people to stand for election. R21

“The role of a councillor is a real challenge for people with disabilities, including dyslexia where reading and digesting vast amounts of paperwork is required. This is also the case for those with impaired hearing. Levels of support are insufficient.”
(Party Councillor Association C)

Childcare

Many councillors who commented on the benefits of hybrid working highlighted the flexibility that this gives them in relation to childcare. The cost of childcare was a significant issue mentioned by many councillors who responded to our survey, as

³ See Appendix 8

was the lack of reimbursement for childcare costs incurred as a result of evening or weekend council commitments.

Many councillors were only able to carry out their role because family or friends provided childcare and many would be unable to afford alternative childcare provision. One councillor said:

“If I hadn't had that support, I couldn't have afforded to pay for childcare to let me stand and then take on the role, and I would have had huge problems with the evening and weekend commitments.”

Councillor associations commented that the cost of childcare is a barrier to parents considering whether to stand since childcare costs cannot be claimed as expenses and finding suitable childcare is often difficult, especially at weekends and for evenings.

The current guidance provides an option for salary sacrifice in return for childcare vouchers and is now significantly out of date. The cost of childcare support is not generally provided to staff working in the public sector and for that reason the Committee cannot recommend the introduction of financial support for childcare expenses for councillors. However, it is recognised that the proposed uplifts to councillors' remuneration, as well as regular reviews of the governance arrangements in councils, may assist in offsetting some of the financial challenges associated with childcare costs.

Reputation of Politics and Politicians

Our Councillors Survey highlighted examples of poor behaviour within councils including bullying and misogyny. It was suggested that this is a deterrent to potential candidates and has led to some councillors leaving office after a single term, with female members disproportionately affected. Whilst all political associations do provide extensive support and training to encourage women to stand, one commented:

“Poor behaviour exists within some councils. While remuneration is important, we are only going to attract people from under-represented groups if there is a stronger emphasis on tackling this.”

The Committee recognises that unacceptable behaviour is a significant barrier to elected office. We consider that councils should develop more intensive training for councillors, both during induction and throughout each council term. There is also a role for COSLA, the Improvement Service, the Standards Commission, and the Ethical Standards Commission, to work in partnership with Councils to ensure appropriate councillor conduct. R13

Personal Safety

Councillors are considered part of their communities and are more accessible than ever due to the growth in social media. While incidents involving councillors have been rare, there is clear evidence from our Councillors Survey 2023 and from our engagement sessions that personal safety is an issue for some elected members. Councillor associations all report that this issue is a deterrent to attracting potential candidates.

We heard examples where councillors have reported threats requiring police intervention, and where social media has left councillors feeling exposed to on-line threats of violence against themselves or their families.

Women councillors, especially in rural areas, attending evening meetings, often travelling after dark to and from community meetings, may be more at risk. Some elected members reported being unwilling to claim for taxis due to potential criticism this would attract.

The Committee recognises the seriousness of this issue and the work underway by the Barriers to Elected Office Special Interest Group and Police Scotland to develop specific training and resources to tackle these matters. R13

Complexity of Roles

The Committee considered whether the role of a councillor has changed and become more complex over the last decade. Both our Councillor and Governance Surveys suggest that for many councillors the role has become more demanding and complex.

There are several factors that have led to changes in the workload of councillors, including a decade of financial challenges, national policy and legislative changes⁴, increased public expectations and the growth in social media and electronic communications. All these themes are illustrated throughout this report.

The past decade has seen significant change in the way services are delivered, partly resulting from financial constraints and service redesigns, but also because of national policy and legislative change. Structural changes, such as the creation of Integration Joint Boards⁵ (IJBs), have introduced complex, inter-agency governance arrangements, where the strategic focus has been on delivering shared outcomes rather than a focus on council-only objectives. Often the contribution of elected members in such joint governance arrangements is neither well understood nor respected by their partners.

4 Timeline of changes to local government can be found in Appendix 4

5 Integration Joint Boards were established by the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014

New duties for Participatory Budgeting and Community Asset Transfers contained within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 have changed councils' relationship with communities. This legislation has added new and potentially complex arrangements to the operation of community facilities and assets.

Councils have embraced approaches to community engagement, recognising that meeting increased demand for services requires a positive relationship with their constituents. Despite these new approaches, the role of councillors remains poorly understood and there is a lack of awareness of the scale and breadth of responsibility carried by them. There is a need to promote the work of councillors and councils to improve awareness and understanding of the important role they play in governing the delivery of local public services.

Councillors are often expected to respond to a wide range of issues, raised by constituents, not all of which are exclusively council responsibilities. These may relate to the cost-of-living crisis, availability of affordable housing or mental health issues. At the same time, our feedback from councillors suggests a greater degree of public intolerance when things go wrong or when councillors are unable to provide a successful resolution.

The introduction of multi-member wards in 2007 has increased the complexity of councillors' work in their wards. Our surveys show that 50% of case work is raised by constituents with more than one ward councillor, leading to duplication of effort, not only for councillors in their wards, but potentially for council officers too. We have also seen that the way in which councillors interact with their ward colleagues can sometimes make their case work more onerous.

Our evidence has demonstrated how the growth in social media has impacted the work and lives of councillors. While it was reported that social media can be a useful tool for communicating with local residents, we heard many examples of councillors having a negative experience. Hostile comments on social media platforms can have a negative impact on both councillors and their families. Advances in technology have made communication easier and this has increased expectations from constituents who often seek instant responses to their enquiries.

Role Comparisons

The Committee compared the roles, remits and total remuneration packages available to councillors with those of MSPs, MPs and members appointed to other public bodies. Given the nature of appointments to public bodies compared to the elections of politicians, it was difficult to draw direct comparisons between these roles.

MSPs/MPs

Our evidence indicates some key similarities in the roles of councillor, MSP and MP. These include representing constituents, contributing to the formulation of policy and strategy or working in partnership with key stakeholders. However, there were also differences between the roles, particularly in the scale and reach of activities. A further point of difference is that while MSPs and MPs have direct responsibilities for managing offices, budgets and staff, councillors typically do not.

At different stages in the Committee's engagement processes, particularly in our conversations with Senior Councillors, we heard views expressed that the complex portfolios carried by Senior Councillors involved far greater responsibilities than some parliamentary roles and that Council Leaders' remits were more comparable with those of MSPs.

While the roles have some similarities the allowances and expenses differ. Role profiles for councillors, Senior Councillors, Civic Heads and Council Leaders are set out in Appendix 5 and a comparison of councillor, MSP and MP expenses is set out in Appendix 6.

Public Bodies

In Scotland, there are currently 115 public bodies, of which 92 are regulated. These ministerial appointments are usually for a fixed duration and specific purpose. Each standard public appointment is allocated to one of three tiers by reference to the significance of the body, based on its size (staff numbers) and the resources managed (budget/grant), as well as consideration of its public profile. Different daily fees are paid to the respective Chairs and Members of the body, depending upon which tier is applicable and there is a separate framework for Tribunal appointments. The Committee could draw no conclusions in relation to the allowances paid to those in other public bodies.

Banding of Councils

The Committee was asked to review the appropriateness of the current methodology for determining the banding of councils and whether the current bands allocated to councils remains accurate.

During the Council Engagement Sessions, we heard that some smaller councils believe the banding system is unfair as it has not kept pace with population changes. The current four band structure is based on various factors, including the size of the council budget. However, the original differences between bands were based on 'estimated service expenditure' rather than directly aligned with the size of the population served by the council. Bandings are not automatically adjusted to reflect significant changes in council budgets or population size and have not been reviewed since 2010. In our view, it would be prudent to review the bandings on a regular basis and specifically before each election cycle. R5

The table below shows the current bandings and corresponding payments with effect from 1/4/2023.

Table 1 Bandings of Councils

Council band	Councils	Salary of Leader	Salary of Civic Head
A	Clackmannanshire; East Lothian; East Renfrewshire; Eilean Siar; Inverclyde; Midlothian; Moray; Orkney Islands; Shetland Islands; Stirling	£33,503	£25,128
B	Angus; Argyll and Bute; Dumfries and Galloway; Dundee City; East Ayrshire; East Dunbartonshire; Falkirk; North Ayrshire; Perth and Kinross; Renfrewshire; Scottish Borders; South Ayrshire; West Dunbartonshire; West Lothian	£40,205	£30,154
C	Aberdeen City; Aberdeenshire; Fife; Highland; North Lanarkshire; South Lanarkshire	£46,902	£35,179
D	City of Edinburgh; Glasgow City	£60,304	£45,228

Evidence from our engagement sessions indicated that neither population nor budget were considered to adequately reflect the range of factors impacting on the work of councillors. It was argued by some that all councils have the same responsibilities, for example, for regulatory functions and therefore there should be no banding. However, it was acknowledged by others that differences in population and budget do reflect actual differences in 'scope and scale' between councils.

The 2010 SLARC report recommended that councils should be split into 3 bandings for senior councillor remuneration levels to recognise that the roles, scale, and complexity of responsibilities of councillors in the Bands A and B are very similar.

We consider there remains a clear case for the bandings applied to councils to be altered. The Committee has concluded that Glasgow City Council and the City of Edinburgh Council should remain together in Band D, and that there should be no change to the councils in Band C. The 10 councils in Band A should be transferred to Band B as there is not, in our view, sufficient difference in the roles of Senior

Councillors between Councils in these two bandings to justify the current differences in allowances paid to Leaders, Civic Heads and Senior Councillors. R4

Numbers of Senior Councillors

As described in the Governance section of this report, councils each have their own structures reflecting a range of local circumstances, and they configure the number and designation of Senior Councillor roles accordingly. In our Council Engagement sessions we heard it was considered important for councils to retain flexibility in determining how they configure their senior roles and how much they are paid.

In our evidence gathering the Committee learned of Senior Councillors in Band A being required to lead on more than one policy area because of an insufficient number of Senior Councillors. As a consequence, the workload for these individuals has increased. In view of this, and the information gathered from the Governance Survey, the Committee recommends the councils which currently have the capacity to appoint up to either eight or nine Senior Councillors have funding increased to enable them to appoint up to a maximum of 10 Senior Councillors. R3

Remuneration

The 2005 SLARC Report recommended that councillors' remuneration be set at 75% of the Scottish median salary for a full-time worker. This was based on evidence that councillors committed 32 hours per week on average and those in employment committed 28 hours per week on average (28 being 74.67% of the then standard 37.5 hour-week). The recommended salary of £15,452 per annum calculated on that basis was subsequently accepted by the Minister and implemented in full.

However, the use of that proportionate relationship to median salaries was not a specified recommendation; and it was not maintained during the subsequent years when councillors' remuneration was either frozen or uplifted by less than inflation as was the case for public sector employees.

Since May 2017 the annual uplift in councillors' salaries has been linked to the median increase in salary for a full-time public sector worker in Scotland (as published by ASHE Table 25.7a). The uplift is applied from the following April, rather than retrospectively as is the case for annual salary awards for public sector employees.

As shown in Section 3 above, serving councillors now report they spend between 21 and 36 hours per week on formal council business. The Committee's 2023 survey of Scottish councillors has shown that the median hours spent on formal council and ward business equates to 28.75 hours per week, which is 82.14% of the now standard working week of 35 hours as recommended by Scottish Government. The results of our councillors' survey and engagement sessions demonstrate that the role of a councillor can be undertaken in less than a standard full-time working

week, while Senior Councillor roles require more of a full-time commitment as set out in the Role Profiles in Appendix 5. R1

The Committee was mindful of the fact that Councillors are remunerated for holding public office not for hours worked. R2

Comparisons to average earnings in Scotland

We considered pay data on full and part-time earnings in Scotland as a whole and for employees in the public sector. These are set out in Table 2 below:

Table 2 Earnings in Scotland

2022	Median hourly rate all employees	£15hr/35hrs	£27,274
2022	Median hourly rate public sector employees	£17.71hr/35hrs	£32,319
2022	Median annual salary for all employees in public sector in Scotland - as per ASHE Table 25.7a	35hrs	£30,726
2022	Median annual salary for full-time employees in public sector in Scotland - as per ASHE Table 25.7a	35hrs	£36,782
2023/24	Salary for Councillors - <i>full time equivalent</i>	28 hrs - <i>equates to £13.77per hour</i> 35 hrs	£20,099 £25,124
2023-24	National Living Wage	£10.42hr/35hrs	£19,015
2023/24	Scottish Local Government Living Wage (SLGLW)	£11.89hr/35hrs	£21,698
2023-24 w.e.f. 1/5/24	Real Living Wage	£12hr/35hrs	£21,899

Scottish Local Government Living Wage (SLGLW) is based on an hourly rate whereas councillors are remunerated on an annual basis for holding office; nevertheless, the data show councillors' actual remuneration is little different to employees paid at the SLGLW.

In light of our evidence the Committee considers that the salaries of Councillors should more appropriately be set at 80% of the median salary for all public sector employees in Scotland as published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). We consider the data for all employees, rather than full-time employees, to be the more appropriate comparator given the variation in hours worked by councillors. We consider that the data used should be the final version of ASHE Table 25.7a for a full year; and as such we have used the most recent final data for a full year published which is for 2022.

The Committee recommends that this methodology of setting the councillor salary level as a proportion of the median salary in the public sector in Scotland based on the median time commitment required for formal council and ward business, be adopted. This methodology would mean Councillors remuneration being increased to £24,581 with effect from 1 April 2024. R6

Comparison with others in elected office

In both 2006 and 2010, SLARC considered whether the roles of councillors and MSPs were comparable. They concluded that while both are elected and hold similar community representation roles, there were no other factors to justify any comparison as an MSP's role is different to that of a councillor in two important respects: i) an MSP is a legislator and ii) they have a national role. We have gathered evidence and heard how the scope of responsibilities of Scottish local government has grown since 2010 and how the strategic responsibilities which councils have always carried are now more complex, involving greater focus on inter-agency partnerships and the delivery of shared outcomes across agencies. The scope of these partnerships often takes on local, regional, national, and occasionally, international dimensions.

When considering any similarities between the roles of Councillors and MSPs and MPs, it is noted that all three roles are part of the democratic process. A previous SLARC reported that the role of a councillor is neither a job nor equivalent to a Board member. In the view of this Committee, the responsibility to represent the citizens within a defined area is the role of Councillors, MSPs and MPs, and the roles are comparable in that respect.

In Scotland the average number of electors represented is:

Councillor	15,500 constituents
Constituency MSP	55,000 constituents
MP	67,200 constituents

The proportionate relationships between the numbers of constituents served by councillors and MSPs/MPs are currently broadly similar to the proportionate relationships between the salaries of councillors and MSPs/MPs.

The Committee heard from councils that Senior Councillors and Council Leaders in particular deal with issues affecting the whole population of their Council which ranges from 22,450 in Orkney to 635,130 in Glasgow. Taking this into account alongside our findings on the growing complexity of these roles has led us to recommend a link between the salaries of MSPs and the leaders of Band D Councils.

We note that the role of MSP or MP is not defined as either full-time or part time and the remuneration paid to those holding these roles is based on the responsibilities they carry. This Committee is of the opinion that a similar approach should be adopted in respect of councillors. R2

Remuneration calculations

The most recent data on the median increase in full-time public sector earnings for Scotland as published annually by ASHE on 1st November. Table 25.7a indicates that an uplift in salary in the order of 6.2% will apply to councillors with effect from 1st April 2024 (as per current arrangements), giving salaries as set out in the Table 3:

Table 3 – Revised Salaries - median public sector increase in Scotland applied w.e.f. 1/4/2024

Band	Councils
A	Clackmannanshire; East Lothian; East Renfrewshire; Eilean Siar, Inverclyde; Midlothian; Moray; Orkney Islands; Shetland Islands; Stirling
B	Angus; Argyll and Bute; Dumfries and Galloway; Dundee City; East Ayrshire; East Dunbartonshire; Falkirk; North Ayrshire; Perth and Kinross; Renfrewshire; Scottish Borders; South Ayrshire; West Dunbartonshire; West Lothian
C	Aberdeen City; Aberdeenshire, Fife; Highland; North Lanarkshire; South Lanarkshire
D	City of Edinburgh; Glasgow City

	Current		Comparative Salaries - median public sector 2023 increase of 6.2% (ASHE Table 25.7a)	
Councillor	£20,099	£20,099	£24,581	£24,581
Band	Salary of Leader 2023-24	Salary of Civic Head 2023-24	Salary of Leader 2024-25	Salary of Civic Head 2024-25
A	£33,503	£25,128	£35,580	£26,686
B	£40,205	£30,154	£42,698	£32,024
C	£46,902	£35,179	£49,810	£37,360
D	£60,304	£45,228	£64,043	£48,032

Council Leaders and Civic Heads

Council Leaders have a responsibility to improve the day-to-day lives of those within their council areas, not only in leading the delivery of critical local public services, but also in driving economic and social development programmes, that often go beyond the limits of their council boundaries and routinely involve multi-agency partners from across the public and private sectors. We heard a consistent message that the role of a Council Leaders can be as complex and onerous as that of MSPs.

In particular the Committee heard in the Council Engagement Sessions how complex the role of Council Leaders has become, reflecting the changing landscape within which local government now operates. We also heard about the complexity of securing agreement across political groups and non-affiliated members, as well their national responsibilities. As a consequence, the Committee recommends that the Council Leaders in Band D (Glasgow and Edinburgh) are benchmarked at the current salary of an MSP. R8

The salary of the Civic Heads and Leaders of Councils in Band A is currently 55.56% of the salary of the Civic Heads and Leaders of the Councils in Band D which does not reflect the similarities in these roles as undertaken by Civic Heads and Leaders in the different bands even taking account of differences in scale. We consider that the differentials between salaries for Leaders in Bands B and C, and between Bands C and D should be more appropriately set evenly at 15% - a standard size of differential in pay structures. This would provide a minimum salary for the Civic Heads and Leaders of Councils in Bands A & B that is 70% of the maximum salary for the Civic Heads and Leaders of Councils in Band D, with the salary for Civic Heads and Leaders of Councils in Band C being 85% of that for Civic Heads and Leaders of Councils in Band D. R9

We consider that the current differential between the salary of Civic Head and Council Leader should remain at 25%. R10

This would result in a salary structure as set out in Table 4:

Table 4 – Comparative Salaries - SLARC recommendations applied w.e.f. 1/4/2024

Band	Councils
A	Clackmannanshire; East Lothian; East Renfrewshire; Eilean Siar, Inverclyde; Midlothian; Moray; Orkney Islands; Shetland Islands; Stirling
B	Angus; Argyll and Bute; Dumfries and Galloway; Dundee City; East Ayrshire; East Dunbartonshire; Falkirk; North Ayrshire; Perth and Kinross; Renfrewshire; Scottish Borders; South Ayrshire; West Dunbartonshire; West Lothian
C	Aberdeen City; Aberdeenshire, Fife; Highland; North Lanarkshire; South Lanarkshire
D	City of Edinburgh; Glasgow City

	Uplifted Salaries with effect from 1/4/2024		Recommended Salaries with effect from 1/4/2024	
Councillor	£21,345	£21,345	£24,581	£24,581
Band	Salary of Leader	Salary of Civic Head	Comparative Salary of Leader	Comparative Salary of Civic Head
A	£35,580	£26,686	£47,363	£35,523
B	£42,698	£32,024	£47,363	£35,523
C	£49,810	£37,360	£57,513	£43,135
D	£64,043	£48,032	£67,662	£50,747

Other elements of remuneration

In relation to expenses, regulations have not been updated since 2010 and no longer reflect current costs of travel, accommodation, or subsistence. We consider it would be more appropriate for councillors to be paid travel and subsistence expenses (based on reimbursement of receipted expenditure) in line with those paid to officers in their respective councils, including the HMRC approved mileage rate. R12

This will allow for more regular updates. From our engagement sessions we learned that some councils have already adopted this approach because the current regulations no longer adequately reimburse councillors for authorised expenses. For comparison purposes, we have set out a summary of salary, travel, subsistence, and accommodation provisions for councillors, MSPs, and MPs in Appendix 3.

Since 2007 councillors have been paid a salary, as opposed to receiving either an allowance or more general remuneration, which makes them eligible to join the LGSS pension fund. In relation to pension provisions, elected members are eligible to join the local government pension fund; and we understand that its provisions are applied to them in the same manner as to local government employees, including the legislative requirement to stop contributing to the scheme at age 75. We do not consider that any changes are required.

The Committee heard that the lack of any severance or resettlement payments is not only a barrier to standing but seen as unreasonable, reflecting a period when councillors received an allowance and were generally seen as having access to other means. The comparison was made with MSPs for whom appropriate resettlement payments have been in place since the Parliament was established.

Considering the evidence, the Committee is of the view that a resettlement scheme should be put in place for councillors and should be modelled on the scheme currently in place for MSPs. It is recognised that the costs of these arrangements are not easy to calculate; however, since a scheme for councillors would not be activated until the next election, in 2027, there is time for it to be designed and an accurate estimate of the cost to be established. The Committee recommends the introduction of a resettlement (severance) payments scheme from 2027, modelled on the system applied to MSPs, which would enable councillors losing office to be awarded the equivalent of one month's salary per year served, up to a maximum of twelve years. R14

Costs

Over the course of the past 10 months, the Committee has considered the time commitment required of elected members and the complexity of the roles. Given the evidence, it is our view that the changes proposed in the remuneration of Councillors, Senior Councillors, Civic Heads and Leaders are proportionate, in light of their roles and the length of time since they were last reassessed. SLARC last

reported in 2011 and the Committee is aware the recommendations were not adopted.

Overall, the cost of the recommended salaries across all councils would be £4,685,780 which represents an increase of 14.29% on current salary costs excluding the 6.2% uplift due to take effect from 1st April 2024. As a percentage of the overall 2023-24 local government settlement in Scotland, this would represent an increase of 0.04%. This does not take account of severance payments since these would be calculated on a case-by-case basis.

The cost of the recommended increase in the number of Senior Councillors for councils currently in Band A would be £426,276 which represents a further increase of 1.3% on current costs, taking the total increase in cost to 15.59%.

Table 5 – Councillors’ remuneration costs as a percentage of overall Local Government Budget

Total Costs	Increase	Increase as a % of Current Costs	Total as a % of LG 2023-24 Budget of £13,231m
Current Salaries including 1/4/24 uplift of 6.2%: £32,792,514			0.25%
Recommended Salaries: £37,478,294	£4,685,780	14.29%	0.28%
Additional Senior Councillors £37,904,570	£426,276	1.30%	0.28%

Table 6 - Cost of Recommended Salaries and Additional Senior Councillors in current Band A councils. Available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/ISBN/9781835219317/documents>

Conclusions

From the outset, the Committee approached its task in a manner designed to engage with and include the Scottish Local Government community. We have done this through two original surveys, involving all councillors and councils, by eleven direct engagement sessions with councils representing the demographic and geographic variety of local government in Scotland, and through dialogue with national bodies representing the political and professional interests of the sector. We have reviewed previous SLARC reports and learnt much from a wide range of civic and academic experts. We have considered how other democratic and public bodies are organised and remunerated, to establish what, if any lessons we could apply to our task. The Committee has now set out its findings and recommendations. Table 7 below sets out our recommendations as these relate to our remit, as well as the range of other relevant themes the Committee has considered.

SLARC's Remit and Recommendations

Table 7 – SLARC Recommendations

Theme	Recommendations	Evidence
Is the role of the councillor full-time or part-time?	R1 On the basis of the evidence gathered, the Committee recommends that the role of councillor continues to be fulfilled on a part-time basis, while the role of Senior Councillors is likely to require to be fulfilled on a full-time basis.	SLARC Councillors' Survey returns Council Engagement Sessions
	R2 Notwithstanding R1 above, the Committee recommends that the definitions "full-time" and "part-time" should no longer be applied when describing the role of councillors, and that the role should be treated as a public office within Scotland's democratic processes, as is the case for MPs and MSPs.	SLARC Governance Survey
Council bandings	R3 The Committee recommends that all 10 councils currently within Band A should be funded to enable the appointment of up to a maximum of 10 Senior Councillors, and that no other changes to the maximum numbers of Senior Councillors in Bands B, C and D are required.	Council Engagement Sessions. SLARC analytical work
	R4 The Committee recommends that all councils currently within Band A should move into Band B, and that there should be no change to the councils currently within Bands C and D.	
	R5 The Committee recommends that all bandings are reviewed by SLARC in advance of each Council election.	
Remuneration	R6 The Committee recommends that the salaries of councillors be set at 80% of the median salary for all employees in the public sector in Scotland as published in the Annual Survey of	SLARC Councillors' Survey returns

Theme	Recommendations	Evidence
	Hours and Earnings (ASHE) resulting in an annual salary of £24,581 with effect from 1 April 2024.	Council Engagement Sessions
	R7 The Committee recommends that this proportionate link to median public sector salaries in Scotland is accepted as the methodology on which councillor salaries are established.	SLARC analytical work
	R8 The Committee recommends that the salaries of Council Leaders in the current Band D (Glasgow and Edinburgh) are benchmarked at the salary of a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP).	
	R9 The Committee recommends that the salaries of Council Leaders in the current Band C be set at 85% of the salary of those in current Band D; and those in the combined Bands A and B be set at 70% of the salary of those in the current Band D (Table 5, Page 36).	
	R10 The Committee recommends that the salaries of Civic Heads and Senior Councillors continue to be set at up to a maximum of 75% of the salary of their Council Leader (Table 5, Page 36).	
	R11 The Committee recommends that the salaries of all councillors continue to be uplifted on an annual basis as per the current arrangements introduced in 2017, which are in line with the median increase in earnings of public sector employees in Scotland, as published by the ASHE.	
Councillors' Expenses	R12 The Committee recommends that the current regulations (2010) on councillors' expenses for travel, subsistence and accommodation should be replaced by the provisions	SLARC Councillors' Survey returns Council Engagement

Theme	Recommendations	Evidence
	applying to officers in their respective Councils.	Sessions SLARC analytical work
Use of Social Media	R13 The Committee recognises the joint work underway by COSLA and Police Scotland aimed at tackling the issue of councillors' safety, including online safety, and recommends that training and resources for councillors should continue to be developed and kept under review by both organisations.	SLARC Councillors' Survey returns Council Engagement Sessions SLARC analytical work
Resettlement Payments	R14 The Committee recommends that resettlement (severance) payments are introduced for councillors losing office. This should be modelled on the system applied to MSPs and should be in place for the next election cycle.	SLARC Councillors' Survey returns Council Engagement Sessions SLARC analytical work
Councillors' Activities	R15 The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government considers whether existing legislation needs to be reviewed to strengthen requirements on councillors to perform their duties. Given the Committee's recommended link of councillor pay to 80% of median public sector pay, councils should monitor and report upon councillor activity levels and attendance at formal council meetings.	SLARC Councillors' Survey returns Council Engagement Sessions
Governance Reviews	R16 The Committee recommends that all councils should review their internal and partnership governance arrangements, to assure themselves that councillors are able to fulfil their statutory duties.	SLARC Governance Survey SLARC Councillors'

Theme	Recommendations	Evidence
		<p>Survey</p> <p>Council Engagement Sessions</p>
Councillor Training and Development	<p>R17 The Committee recommends that all councils continue to provide induction for new councillors as well as ongoing topic-based training using a variety of delivery methods to ensure maximum take-up. It is important when these opportunities are provided, that councillors take advantage of them, and participation levels should be reported publicly.</p>	<p>SLARC Governance Survey</p> <p>SLARC Councillors' Survey</p> <p>Council Engagement Sessions</p>
Recognising the role of Councils and Councillors	<p>R18 The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government and COSLA make a joint public statement endorsing the important role played by councils and councillors in delivering a wide range of critical local services. This statement should spearhead a wider multi-media public awareness campaign between now and the next Council Election, designed to raise public awareness and encourage potential candidates to stand for office.</p>	<p>SLARC Councillors' Survey</p> <p>Council Engagement Sessions</p> <p>Councillor role descriptions</p>
Preparation of Candidates	<p>R19 The Committee recommends that COSLA develops a Pre-Election Induction Programme for potential council candidates. This should provide potential candidates with an accurate understanding of the role of the councillor and the demands they are likely to face. This should also contain details of how political parties will support candidates before, during and after their election campaign, including unsuccessful candidates.</p>	<p>SLARC Councillors' Survey</p> <p>Council Engagement Sessions</p>

Theme	Recommendations	Evidence
National Dataset	R20 The Committee recommends the establishment of a national dataset showing the demographic composition of the country's councillors, and how this is changing. Over-time, such data will identify key population groups who continue to be under-represented within councils to enable action to be taken to remove barriers and enable wider participation.	SLARC Councillors' Survey Council Engagement Sessions
People with Disabilities	R21 The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government and COSLA, working alongside representatives drawn from all under-represented groups, should consider how best to enhance supports for councillors in these groups, and develop proposals to support, encourage and enable more people from under-represented groups to stand for office, particularly women, young people and people with a disability.	SLARC Councillors' Survey Council Engagement Sessions SLARC analytical work
Office Support	R22 The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government and COSLA work together to ensure adequate provision is made to provide a minimum level of Members Support Services.	SLARC Councillors' Survey Council Engagement Sessions SLARC analytical work

Appendix 1 - Key Themes from Councillors' Survey Open Comments

Q1 Has the workload and responsibilities of Councillors increased and become more complex?

The role is more demanding than the pay suggests. Candidates are often led to believe being a councillor is a part-time role, but the reality is different. If the role is carried out properly, it is full time, and the workload is heavy. Demand on councillors is increasing.

Representing Islands, rural or large urban areas adds complexity and greater demands on councillors as does being part of the Administration compared to Opposition.

Some are unable to commit the number of hours needed to do the council role justice given the volume of paperwork, meetings and other commitments they are juggling in a typical week. It is full-time and more. Some members would like to give up work to be a full-time councillor but can't afford it.

Councillors are underpaid and undervalued. The important role that local authorities play in the governance of Scotland is not being properly recognised but demands on councillors are at least on a par with parliamentarians.

The role should be treated like other elected offices and pay, and access to other supports such as office staff, should be on a par with MSPs/MPs. There is currently no parity of esteem or equivalent compensation for councillors compared with MSPs and MPs. There is no transitional support when councillors lose or give up their seats.

Councillors' work-related stress can impact on personal health and family life; pressure can be overwhelming, and support is lacking from councils and political parties Councillors' families sacrifice a lot.

Low pay deters potentially good candidates from standing. Coupled with long hours, this means some councillors are considering leaving and returning to their previous jobs, while others have already decided they will be standing down at the next election due to lack of money.

Responsibilities need to be properly rewarded. Low pay is a barrier to standing, so higher pay is needed to attract younger candidates. The role is often seen as the domain of the retired and is not attracting sufficient numbers in the 30-60 age band. The current pay level does not match the value of the role, and on its own is not enough to provide a career option for young people.

Campaigning to win a seat requires candidates to make sacrifices that not all can afford in relation to their job, or the financial costs involved. Some employers are not keen to take on councillors, and some think being a councillor is a full-time role and are reluctant to employ councillors. It can therefore be difficult for councillors to secure second jobs to supplement their council income.

There is a financial cost to being a councillor, with out-of-pocket expenses, transport and childcare costs.

The role is almost closed off to lone parents and unpaid carers, and disability barriers are ignored.

Q2 Has the use of email, social media and other digital platforms increased pressure on Councillors and increased demands from their constituents, including expecting speedier responses?

Councillors are now very visible and easy for the public to contact through various online channels. Public expectations are increasing with no limits on when councillors can be contacted, meaning councillors are never off the clock. Social media has added a degree of difficulty and online abuse has increased. Young female councillors have been particularly targeted for abuse.

Q3 Has there been an increase in formal committee meetings (and the duration of these meetings) and informal meetings, such as working groups within a council?

There are too many papers to read over short timescales and too many long meetings. Senior roles, as part of the Administration are full time roles. In smaller areas, greater demands are placed on fewer councillors.

Q4 What is the breakdown of the average time spent by a Councillor carrying out their day-to-day duties e.g. committee meetings, constituent queries etc?

No Comments Received.

SLARC Councillors Survey Results Bulletin 2023

SLARC has been reconvened to review the remuneration of all councillors.

An early priority for SLARC, was to engage directly with Scotland’s councillors through an elected members’ survey. Working in partnership with the Improvement Service and Cosla, we developed an on-line survey designed to provide a national picture of life as a modern-day councillor in Scotland, and a sense of how this has evolved in recent years.

64% of councillors in Scotland responded to the survey and the Bulletin highlights the views of those elected members.



Our Councillors’ survey ran from 1-15 June. Here’s what you told us...

- Nearly 60% of councillors are frequently approached for help whilst not engaged in council duties
- 15% of councillors are retired and in receipt of pensions, while 16% are in full-time employment, and almost 22% are in part-time jobs
- More than half of councillors spend at least 26 hours/week on formal council duties, while almost half spend more than 16 hours on informal duties
- 42% say their councillor role is full time, while more than half are employed elsewhere in a full-time or part-time job



Social media creates more casework for two thirds of councillors and almost as many have experienced on-line personal criticism

Almost three quarters of councillors say their involvement in partnerships and committees has become more demanding since they first became involved



- Councillors are far more likely to be male than female; only 36% are female while making up 52% of the overall population
- Ethnic make-up of councillors broadly reflected the general population
- 56% of councillors are aged 55+, compared with 39% of the population, while far fewer are aged from 18-34 than the overall population
- Fewer councillors said they had a disability than the overall population while almost four times as many identified as LGBT+

Appendix 3 – Remuneration comparison

Elements of remuneration	Councillors	MSPs	MPs
Salary: Ordinary Councillor	Part-time £20,099 w.e.f. 1/4/23	Not specified as full or part-time £67,662 w.e.f. 1/4/23	Not specifies as full or part-time £86,584 w.e.f. 1/4/23
Salary: Civic Heads and Senior Councillors	Full-time Range Bands A-D £25,128 - £45,228 w.e.f.1/4/23 Up to maximum of 75% of Leader's salary	Ministerial additional salaries frozen at 2008 level: Presiding Officer: £50,849 Total Salary £96,999 143% of salary of MSP Salary published on Parliament website w.e.f. 1/4/2023: £118,511	Select Committee Chairs – additional salary £16,865 w.e.f. 1 April 2022 Total salary £103,449 119% of salary of MP
Salary: Council Leaders	Full-time Range Bands A-D £33,503 - £60,304 w.e.f.1/4/23 167% - 300% of salary of ordinary councillor	Ministerial additional salaries frozen at 2008 level: First Minister: £98,016 Cabinet Secretary: £50,849 Minister: £31,854 Range of total salaries £81,449 - £135,605 120%-200% of salary of MSP Salaries published on Parliament website w.e.f. 1/4/2023: £99,516 - £165,678	Ministerial additional salaries frozen at 2014 level: Prime Minister: £75,440 Cabinet Minister £67,505 Minister of State: £31,680 Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State: £22,375 Range of total salary £108,959 - £162,024 125%-187% of salary of MP
Annual Salary Uplift	As per median annual increase in earnings of full-time public sector employees in Scotland – based on ASHE data – applied from the following April rather than	As per average increase in annual earnings of full-time public sector workers in Scotland as provided for by the ASHE - applied from the following	As per average increase in annual earnings of full-time public sector workers as provided for by the ASHE - applied from the following April

Elements of remuneration	Councillors	MSPs	MPs
	retrospectively for the year to which the data applies 6.2% w.e.f. 1/4/2024	April rather than retrospectively for the year to which the data applies 6.7% w.e.f. 1/4/2024	rather than retrospectively for the year to which the data applies 7.1% w.e.f. 1/4/2024
Pension	Eligible to join LGSS contributory pension schemes	Eligible to join the contributory Scottish Parliamentary Pension Scheme	Eligible to join the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund
Resettlement Grant / Severance Pay	N/a	One month's salary for each complete continuous year of service as an MSP. The maximum period of service counted is 12 years. Other officeholders receive a lump sum equal to 25% of their office-holder salary excluding their MSP salary.	On 25 th August 2023 it was doubled for the next general election - MPs stepping down or losing their seat will receive 4 month's salary. Ministers 'stepping down' receive a severance payment of 25% of the addition element of pay for holding ministerial office.
Expenses	Last reviewed in 2010* *It is our understanding that Councils have undertaken to pay their elected members at the HMRC approved rate of 45p per mile	Last reviewed 2023	Last reviewed 2023
Travel	40p per mile for travel by car or van for first 10,000 miles; and 25p per mile thereafter 24p per mile for travel by motorcycle 20p per mile for travel by bicycle 5p per passenger per mile	45p per mile for travel by car for first 10,000 miles; and 25p per mile thereafter 24p per mile for travel by motorcycle 20p per mile for travel by bicycle	45p per mile for travel by car for first 10,000 miles; and 25p per mile thereafter 24p per mile for travel by motorcycle 20p per mile for travel by bicycle
Subsistence	Reimbursement of receipted expenditure:	Overnight accommodation allowance includes	Limit of £25 subsistence per

Elements of remuneration	Councillors	MSPs	MPs
	Lunch: up to max of £12 per day Dinner: up to max of £25 per day Breakfast: up to max of £8 per day	dinner, bed and breakfast	night for each overnight stay
Distant Islands Allowance / London Weighting	N/a	N/a	London Area Living Payment (LALP) London Area MPs £4,435 Additional LALP London Area MPs of 23 outer London constituencies £1,575
Overnight Accommodation	£25 per night if staying away from home overnight with friends or family. Current allowances for hotel accommodation are a maximum of £131 per night for London and a maximum of £110 per night elsewhere	Outside Edinburgh but excluding London – are £215 per night including dinner, bed and breakfast. Allowances for overnight accommodation for MSPs – in Greater London – are £250 per night including dinner, bed and breakfast.	London / Europe £210 per night + up to £25 subsistence Rest of UK £150 per night + up to £25 subsistence

Appendix 4 – Key Legislative Changes impacting Local Government from 2013

This document aims to provide an overview of legislation and events impacting the work of local government and by extension councillors since 2013.

2013

- Police Scotland and Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) came into being on 1st April under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
- Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 – new duties for local authorities. Implementation of SDS has involved wide ranging changes to local service planning and delivery.

2014

- Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced a statutory duty for NHS boards and councils to integrate the planning and delivery of health and social care services. It required the creation of Integration Authorities (Health and Social Care Partnerships / Lead Agency model in the Highlands) and abolished Community Health Partnerships. Described by the Audit Commission as “the most significant change in public services in Scotland in recent years”.¹
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 – corporate parenting is defined within the children and young people (Scotland) Act 2014 and places several duties on public sector organisations to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of looked after children, young people and care leavers.
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 - The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced changes to the way social housing is allocated in Scotland. It emphasises the importance of a single housing register and common housing allocation policies. Local authorities are required to maintain a single list of applicants for social housing in their area, commonly known as a "common housing register" or "single housing register".
- Glasgow city region deal 2014 – the City Region Deals are packages of funding agreed between Scottish Government, the UK Government and local partners. There are currently six City Region Deals in Scotland; Glasgow City Region, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Inverness and Highland, Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland, Stirling and Clackmannanshire, Tay Cities. The Glasgow deal totalled £1.2 Billion, and focuses on infrastructure, skills and employment, business growth and innovation.

- The Scottish Independence Referendum 2014 – a referendum on Scottish Independence was held on the 18th of September 2014, in which Scotland voted to remain part of the UK. This later resulted in the Scotland Act 2016.

2015

- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Aimed to get councils working more closely with public bodies and communities to design, develop and deliver better-quality services, for example through Participatory Budgeting. This Act also gave local authorities statutory oversight of community councils and requires LAs to consult community councils about planning applications and licensing matters. This legislation also introduced a duty on each Community Planning Partnership (CPP) to develop a local outcomes improvement plan (LOIP).

2016

- All health and social care integration arrangements set out in the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, including the creation of 31 new Integration Authorities, had to be in place by 1 April 2016.
- Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016. This Act requires all local authorities to develop a Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan with community justice partners (e.g. Health Board, Skills Development Scotland). This Act also abolished the 8 Community Justice Authorities (CJAs).
- The Scottish Elections (Dates) Act 2016 amended earlier legislation to move the planned local elections in 2021 to 2022 to avoid a clash with Scottish Parliament elections.
- The Scottish Household Recycling Charter was agreed between Scottish Government and COSLA as a commitment to substantially overhaul kerbside waste and recycling collections systems, which typically creates strong responses in local communities. The full roll out of this charter is ongoing.
- UK EU membership referendum – following a referendum on the 23rd of June 2016 the withdrawal of the UK from the EU officially took place on the 31st of January 2020. The terms of departure from the EU continues to influence the work of councils across a multitude of areas. The demands of constituents therefore increasingly require elected members to engage with complex, fast moving and international policy areas such as exports.
- Scotland Act 2016 - The Scotland Act 2016 delivers the cross-party Smith Commission Agreement which was established following the 2014 Scottish

Independence Referendum. The act sets out a range of financial powers and measures.

- Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire city deal 2016 - the City Region Deals are packages of funding agreed between Scottish Government, the UK Government and local partners. There are currently six City Region Deals in Scotland; Glasgow City Region, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Inverness and Highland, Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland, Stirling and Clackmannanshire, Tay Cities. The Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire city deal focuses on a range of measures that impact Local Government service provision, including, technology investment, hospitality, transport, broadband and local housing programmes.

2017

- Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 – Duty on local authorities and health boards to produce an annual report on what they are doing to contribute to reducing child poverty.
- Inverness and Highlands city deal 2017- the City Region Deals are packages of funding agreed between Scottish Government, the UK Government and local partners. There are currently six City Region Deals in Scotland; Glasgow City Region, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Inverness and Highland, Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland, Stirling and Clackmannanshire, Tay Cities. The Inverness and Highland city deal seeks to boost key sectors such as tourism and life science, creating jobs and helping to retain young people in the region.

2018

- The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into effect April 2018. This Act brought in rights for adult and young carers, including entitlement to an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement. Additional duties for councils.
- Launch of Local Governance Review (NB: work on this was paused from 2020-22 due to Covid and the Ukraine resettlement scheme)
- Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 – placed duties on 6 councils (Shetland, Orkney, Eilean Siar, Highland, North Ayrshire, Argyll & Bute), along with other named authorities, to undertake island communities impact assessments and report on compliance with the duties under this Act.
- Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland city deal 2018 - the City Region Deals are packages of funding agreed between Scottish Government, the UK Government and local partners. There are currently six City Region Deals in Scotland; Glasgow City Region, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Inverness and Highland, Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland, Stirling and Clackmannanshire,

Tay Cities. The Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland deal will deliver, innovation, housing, critical infrastructure and a new skills programme.

2019

- Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019²& Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. All Councils have a duty to reduce and report on their carbon emissions. With increased public awareness, emphasis on this area of work has significantly stepped up in the last few years. Councils have declared net zero targets, many well in advance of the national 2045 net zero target. This has been further emphasised by the Scottish Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee report published in 2023 on the role of local government and its cross-sectoral partners in financing and delivering a net-zero Scotland, which highlighted councils as having a crucial role to play in delivering net zero as a result of their local economic status, breadth of responsibilities, and democratic mandate.
- A review of councillor numbers and wards for Shetland, Orkney, Eilean Siar, Highland, North Ayrshire, and Argyll & Bute was undertaken as required by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. Proposed changes for Shetland, Orkney, Eilean Siar, and North Ayrshire were approved by Scottish Parliament for use in the 2022 local elections.
- In 2019, the Audit Commission reported that "Councillors now sit on more boards than before. In our May 2018 report, Councils' use of arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs) we noted that this can make it difficult for small councils to manage potential conflicts of interest."³

2020

- Covid-19 - immediate and ongoing impact on health and social care services and councils in general. The way in which services were planned and delivered had to change rapidly. Local authorities played key role in protecting communities. All those working within LG, including councillors, had to adapt their ways of working.
- UK officially exited the EU
- The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 increased the term for Local Government (and the Scottish Parliament) from four years to five years in line with the UK Parliament and other devolved legislatures.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill – The Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on the 1st of September 2020 and was passed unanimously on the 16th of March 2021. On the 6th of October 2021 the UK Supreme Court rules the bill was outside the devolved legislative competency of the Scottish Parliament. Scottish

Government will now seek to amend the bill with proposals including, that the UNCRC would only apply to public duties resulting from acts passed by the Scottish Parliament (not UK government acts in devolved areas such as the Education Scotland Act). SG will set a timeline for the Bill to be reconsidered by parliament.

- Stirling and Clackmannanshire city deal and Tay Cities Region Deal - the City Region Deals are packages of funding agreed between Scottish Government, the UK Government and local partners. There are currently six City Region Deals in Scotland; Glasgow City Region, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Inverness and Highland, Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland, Stirling and Clackmannanshire, Tay Cities. The Stirling and Clackmannanshire city deal aims to create higher value jobs, invest in the creation of green innovations, digital entrepreneurship and cultural opportunities to deliver a more diverse regional economy. The Tay Cities deal focuses on inclusion, innovation, internationalisation, connectivity and empowerment, and supports projects which aim to promote inclusive economic growth across the region.
- The promise – the Independent Care Review was commissioned in 2016 to consider why the ‘care system’ is not working. When its findings were published in 2020, the First Minister pledged that the country would #KeepThePromise. The promise exists so that children and young people in Scotland can grow up loved, safe and respected. The outputs of the Independent Care Review have created a series of detailed reports and an evidence framework to allow the promise to be kept.

2021

- Independent Review of Adult Social Care (IRASC) published February 2021 set out a series of recommendations for the improvement of Adult Social Care in Scotland. In response, COSLA and SG set out a Joint Statement of Intent with improvements Scottish Government and COSLA are committed to. This includes: Fair Work, shared ethical commissioning principles, support for unpaid carers to have a life alongside caring.
- August 2021 marked the introduction of the statutory duty on local authorities to secure 1,140 annualised hours of ELC for all 3 and 4 year-olds and eligible 2 year olds.
- The Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund provides ‘additional’ funding from SG to close the poverty related attainment gap for young people. This funding is directly controlled by headteachers and was originally only provided to 9 ‘challenge authorities. In 2021 it was agreed for the funding to be shared across all 32 on the basis of poverty.

2022

- National Care Service Bill introduced with concerns raised from COSLA/Councillors about expensive and disruptive structural reform and the provision within the Bill allowing for the mass transfer of staff, functions and assets to a NCS. Councillors gave evidence to various Parliamentary Committees. Work on this is ongoing, on the 30th of June 2023 an agreement was reached that a national framework centred on shared accountability for a National Care Service between Scottish Ministers, local authorities and the NHS should be developed. A National Care Service Board will be established to offer a basis for further negotiations.
- Ukraine Super Sponsorship Scheme launched by Scottish Government, which placed (and continues to place) high demands on local authorities especially around housing and homelessness.
- Local Governance Review – The SG/COSLA joint comprehensive review of how local decisions are made and how local democracy is working and how it might work better. A key element of work on LGR is Democracy Matters 2 which seeks to develop further our understanding of the type of local democratic systems and institutions required to place power and resources in local people’s hands. Work is currently underway to enable the review all the proposals originally made in 2019 prior to Covid-19.
- Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026. This is the second tackling child poverty delivery plan under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. This second Plan builds on the foundations of Every Child, Every Chance.
- Asylum Dispersal – from the 13th of April 2022, the asylum dispersal scheme became mandatory for local authorities; all local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales are now considered dispersal areas. Previously in Scotland Glasgow was the only dispersal area. The system of emergency Initial Accommodation Asylum hotels across Scotland are managed by Mears.

2023

- Signing of the Verity House Agreement – New Deal with local government, which outlines 3 shared priorities: tackling poverty, just transition to net zero and sustainable public services. The Verity House agreement will also work to incorporate into Scots Law the European Charter of Local Self-Government (1988) as soon as possible. In keeping with the Charter both parties agree the maxim “local by default national by agreement”.
- Illegal Migration Act 2023 – The Illegal Migration Act 2023 obtained “Royal Assent” on the 20th of July 2023. The Act brings changes to; Removal,

Protection claims, Leave to Remain + British Citizenship, Destination, Detention, Children, Human Trafficking, and Age Assessment. Only some of its provisions are “in force”, most are not. Whether the key parts of the Act come into force depends on the Rwanda UKSC case (heard on the 9-11 Oct; judgement expected November / December 2023. If fully enforced the Act would bring significant changes for local authorities who’s role in the Migration system has altered significantly in recent years via the move to full dispersal and response to the Ukraine war in 2022.

Appendix 5 - Role Profiles

1. Councillors
2. Leaders
3. Provosts/Civic Heads (Convenors)
4. Senior Councillors (Chairs of Committees/Spokespersons)

These draft role profiles have been designed in order to provide an indicative outline of the key roles and responsibilities of Councillors and those in receipt of Senior Responsibility Allowances.

All Councillors

Role Profile /Key Responsibilities

Representation –

- To represent the views and interests of ward residents and deal with their enquiries and representations fairly and without prejudice.
- To represent and act as an advocate for the interests of their Ward, liaising and working with local organisations and representative groups to further the interests of the Ward and its individual residents.

1. Community –

- To promote the best interests of the Council and the community as they relate to the improvement of the quality of life of the community and its citizens in terms of social, economic, and environmental wellbeing.
- To maintain contact with local groups and organisations; develop knowledge of local issues; and encourage community involvement in the work of the Council.

2. Council Business –

- To participate effectively as a member of any committee, sub-committee, working group or task group.
- To have an overview of corporate and cross-cutting issues as they impact on the Council and the community.
- To contribute actively to the formulation and scrutiny of the policies, budgets and strategies.
- To scrutinise how effectively the Council is performing and meeting its targets, whether it is achieving best value.
- To develop and maintain a working knowledge of the Council's services and activities, management arrangements, partnership arrangements, statutory requirements, duties, and constraints.

3. Partnership –

- To work in partnership with others councillors, officers and partnership organisations.
- To support local partnerships and organisations and develop links between these groups and local communities.

In carrying out these roles, elected members should adhere to the Councillors' Code of Conduct and demonstrate commitment to the principles of selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, openness, accountability and respect for others.

Leaders

Role Profile /Key Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities identified for all Councillors, the Leader of the Council is also responsible for the following:

1. **Leadership** - To lead the political administration of the Council, providing leadership in relation to policy formulation, implementation and monitoring of the council's policies, budgets, strategies, and service delivery and to contribute to the effective governance of the Council.
2. **Strategic** - To take the lead role for proposing, directing, and overseeing the Council's overall strategy and policy development.
3. **External** - To be a political figurehead and provide an external focus for the Council.
4. **Represent** -To represent the Council as its Political Leader at meetings and events at local, regional, national and international level.
5. **Relationship Management** - To develop and manage the general relationship with the Scottish and UK Government Ministers, MPs and MSPs, COSLA, Parliament and other key organisations and individuals.
6. **Reputation & Media** - To manage reputation at a political level and represent the Council to the media where the importance of the issue demands it.
7. **Co-ordination/Direction** –
 - To co-ordinates the work of the Committee Chairs/Convenors and the Council Administration to ensure corporate effectiveness and that the work of the Council meets and delivers agreed priorities, strategies, and policy.
 - To provide the key political level link between the officer structure and the political structure and provides day to day political direction.
 - To give direction to the Chief Executive on political matters and participate in the performance review and development of the Chief Executive.
8. **Standards** –
 - To promote high standards of behaviour and compliance with all relevant standards. and to promote an inclusive working environment involving all members of the council.

- To ensure effective governance arrangements are in place and the Council's Chief Executive and Chief Officers manage the operation of the Council within the financial limits and decisions set by the Council.
9. **Chair** - To chair committee meetings/Full Council.

Civic Head/Provost(Convener)

Role Profile /Key Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities identified for all Councillors, the Civic Head/Provost is also responsible for the following:-

1. **Civic:**
 - To undertake civic and ceremonial functions on behalf of the Council and the community.
 - To provide civic hospitality for international, national, regional and local visitors to the Council for significant celebrations within the Area and for individuals who have brought honour to the community at home and/or abroad.
 - To represent the Council at civic and ceremonial events and be the formal representative when meeting with visiting dignitaries.
2. **Ambassadorial** - To act as an ambassador for and promote the Council.
3. **Communications** - To communicate the ethos of the Council to citizens, external bodies, and local and national government community.
4. **Promotion** - To promote the core values of the Council in fulfilling their remit.
5. **Full Council** – To preside over meetings of the full Council and ensure that its business is carried out efficiently and with regards to the rights of councillors and the interest of the community.
6. **Liaison** - To liaise closely with the Leader of the Council in terms of the civic roles and functions on behalf of the Council.
7. **Deputise** - To deputise for the Leader as and when required.

Senior Councillor (Chair of Committee/Strategic Spokesperson)

Role Profile /Key Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities identified for all Councillors, Senior Councillors (Chairs of Committees/Strategic Spokespersons) are also responsible for the following:-

1. **Committee** –

- To act as Chair of a Committee and liaise with senior officers within their portfolio regarding committee business.
 - To ensure Committee and working group meetings are conducted effectively in accordance with standing orders and encourage participation and debate.
2. **Strategic/Corporate** –
- To contribute to the development of the Council’s corporate strategies to help ensure the development of service policy within the corporate environment in relation to their portfolio.
 - To providing regular reports on the areas of work for which they have responsibility, including reporting back on meetings with organisations and other events outside the Council.
 - To take a corporate lead in the development of the Council as an organisation and the formulation and achievement of its strategic vision.
8. **Spokesperson:-**
- To promoting awareness of service strategies, achievements, and constraints in order to inform the public, government and other organisations.
 - To act as spokesperson within and outside the Council in relation to the Committee’s remit.
 - To advocate within the local community, and with appropriate agencies and bodies, for the services within their area.
3. **Governance** –
- To contribute to the effective governance of the Council.
 - To ensure the overall co-ordination and management of the relevant Committee function and terms of reference.
4. **Liaison** –
- To work closely with the Chief Officer and senior managers to provide clarity on political direction and assist in working through strategies and plans within their portfolio.
 - To maintaining good communications with Council employees, providing a bridge between the Council and employees to provide a policy background for, and recognition of, their work.

Appendix 6 - Costs of Current Salaries available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/ISBN/9781835219317/documents>

Appendix 7 - Costs of Recommended Salaries available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/ISBN/9781835219317/documents>

Appendix 8 – Responses from Political Associations

Feedback from discussions with Scottish political party councillor associations conducted during July and August 2023.

All discussions were undertaken on the understanding that they were to be unattributed, either to individuals or to a political party, since the discussions included politically sensitive matters.

Party Councillor Association A

- Across Scotland 1/3rd of our councillors are women and 2/3rd are men
- For younger councillors a major issue is remuneration – for older councillors often they have no mortgage, have pensions or other means, and can afford to be a councillor full time. This is not the case for younger councillors, particularly parents. Women often have an extra barrier of sexism. Councillor pay is well-below the national average pay and it also effectively gives an in-built advantage to councillors who can afford to only be a councillor compared to those who have to hold another job.
- For smaller parties, an issue is the amount of time it takes to get elected – many will need to campaign for years before an election without guarantee of being elected – and with the current levels of remuneration, it makes it a challenge to find people willing to put in that commitment.
- No payment if losing re-election makes it a major financial risk, particularly for younger councillors, who face a cliff-edge.
- Poor behaviours is exhibited by some councillors. While remuneration is important, we are only going to attract people from under-represented groups if there is a stronger emphasis in tackling this.
- Mental health wellbeing is also a challenge and there is perhaps a pastoral care element that needs to be addressed.

Party Councillor Association B

- It is not easy to find candidates and even harder to find candidates with the right qualities. In general, the public do not understand the role of a councillor (and potential candidates are members of the public) which means those who are approached and elected can be disillusioned when faced with the reality, not having understood the detail of the role prior to election. It is a major problem; new councillors are keen and eager but find they cannot change the issues they campaigned for.
- The time commitment is not apparent to candidates and is often not understood by those who recruit candidates either. Time commitment and ways of working vary between councils, and it is hard for recruiters to understand such differences.
- It is a challenging role and challenging to find the right candidates.

- Remuneration is a major challenge, depending on the journey councillors have come on, their needs and circumstances.
- In addition, politics has got a bad name and politicians as a body do not have a good reputation. There are also security concerns, particularly after the murder of Jo Cox for example.
- Much work is done to encourage women candidates to stand and to foster the development of women councillors. There are many reasons why women choose not to stand, including childcare and the associated costs.
- Financially the remuneration does not stack up. A councillor's salary without a partner's income or other resources, is not enough, particularly when having to meet the demands faced by single parents or carers.
- Disabled people: MPs and MSPs receive considerable support but this is limited within councils. Some support is offered through party structures.
- Remuneration is a barrier. Current levels are unrealistic, particularly for back-bench councillors. It is the case that people get out of the role what they put in but public expectations and the time commitment - including evening or week-end events etc - make remuneration unrealistic.
- Increasing remuneration could lead to increasing professionalism.
- It is not easy for councillors to find additional employment. It is not always easy or sustainable for employers to be flexible, particularly around daytime working hours. Consequently many councillors work for MPs and MSPs; it is also easier for those working in the public sector.
- Caring responsibilities can be almost full time and these can conflict with the time commitment expected of councillors.
- Whilst the possibility of losing office without compensation is a real issue for councillors, it is not something that weighs heavily on potential candidates when considering whether to stand.
- Liability: councillors receive no protection against legal challenge. No indemnity or other protection is provided.
- Lone working/security is an issue, particularly when attending evening meetings.

Party Councillor Association C

- It is not easy to find candidates with the right life experience combined with a willingness to stand. Most people have no idea of the complexity of the role or understand that it is not glamorous.
- Few people can undertake the role if it is to be their sole income and it is difficult to hold another job while serving as a councillor. Employers are wary and employing a member of a particular party can be an additional difficulty for them.
- Not everyone wants to be involved in the political arena.

- Timings are unpredictable, particularly in councils where a majority hold other employment as meetings and other commitments are geared around the needs of that majority. There is no regular structure to the working week.
- Hours/timings are particularly challenging for women and almost impossible for women without family support.
- Remuneration is a major issue and a real barrier to potential candidates.
- The workload can be intense, much of it 'behind the scenes', reading masses of papers, often under pressure.
- Councillors do not receive the support they need and are often (usually) 'left to get on with it.'
- Candidates who have been party activists before being elected find the role is very different to what they imagined; it is not operational and they soon find they cannot 'change the world' but have to take decisions that go against their hopes and expectations.
- A real challenge for people with disabilities, including dyslexia where reading and digesting vast amounts of paper work is required. Also, for those with impaired hearing. Levels of support are insufficient.
- Losing office is a real risk, especially for those who have given up other employment. There is an assumption, reflected in the lack of any support or compensation, that being a councillor is 'not a real job' and councillors are not dependant on the remuneration they receive. This is a hangover from the days when being a councillor was not remunerated and was usually part-time.
- Surveys by the association suggest there is a resistance to change within councils, particularly around the timing of meetings.

Other points:

- The salary should be based on the skills required to perform the role, not on the hours worked. That is the common approach in almost all other employment.
- For many the role is not part-time and this should be reflected in the assessment. However, for some, particularly those with other employment, it is of necessity part-time. Therefore, it would be appropriate for newly elected councillors to declare on election (or during their term) whether they wish to work full or part time and be remunerated accordingly.



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