

# Draft written evidence for the 12-month review of Opposition Leader and Opposition Spokespersons' Allowances

Member allowances 2022-23

<https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s107473/Members%20Allowances%202022-23.pdf>

## Opposition Group Leader SRA

Last year, the IRP recommended that The SRA for Opposition Group Leaders should amount to 55% of the SRA for the Leader of the Council, divided proportionally between all Opposition Groups (consisting of two Members or more) according to the number of seats held by that Group on the County Council.

In effect, that meant that the Leader of the LibDem Opposition Group retained an SRA of about 40% of the SRA of the Leader of the Council, as it had been the previous year, The Independent Group and the Labour Group Leaders each had SRAs of about 7% of the SRA of the Leader of the Council.

The Leader of the Council retained an SRA of about 65% of the total paid in Leader SRAs.

Last year, the IRP **noted in particular that the Group Leader role was similar across the board in terms of needing to understand all areas of the Council and represent their Group.**

However, in arriving at their recommendation for the Opposition Group Leader SRA, the IRP did not consider that key finding but addressed only the issue of minimum Group size.

I would hope that this year the IRP may extend their recommendation for the Opposition Group Leader SRA to include that key finding.

As last year, it would be fair to retain the starting points for the SRA of the Leader of the Council and the LibDem Opposition Group Leader (adjusted only in line with the % agreed for Council staff).

**For Independent Opposition Group Leader, the IRP may wish to consider recommending an SRA of 20% of the SRA of the Leader of the Council (that is, half that of the LibDem Opposition Group Leader), and, for the Labour Opposition Group Leader an SRA of 15% of the Leader of the Council (that is, 75% of the Independent Opposition Group Leader – to reflect the relative sizes of these two Groups – four Independent and three Labour).**

## **Opposition Group Spokesperson SRA**

Last year, the IRP were keen to introduce a solution that would remove the need for a minimum Group size for Opposition Group Spokesperson SRA and proposed to mirror the solution recommended for Opposition Group Leader SRAs.

In effect, the proposal is even more unfair than that arrived at for Opposition Group Leader SRA, when the totality of it is assessed.

The net effects are that, looking at the SRAs, including Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson of the five Committees (since January 2023), the total paid would be £118,024. Of that, £85,631 (73%) goes to the Conservative Group, £28,385 (24%) to the LibDem Opposition Group, and £2,004 (<2%) to each of the Independent and Labour Groups.

This distribution is patently unfair, given that £2,004 is removed from each of the Independent and Labour Groups because they must double up and some have two roles, whereas there are sufficient members in the Conservative and Lib Dem Groups for none of them to have more than one role.

As last year, it would be fair to retain the starting points for the SRA of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and the LibDem Opposition Group Spokesperson on Committees (adjusted only in line with the % agreed for Council staff).

**In line with the proposed IRP recommendation for Opposition Group Leader SRA, for the Independent Opposition Group Spokesman SRA, the IRP may wish to consider recommending an SRA of 20% of the SRA of the Leader of the Council (half that of the LibDem Opposition Group Spokesman SRA), and, for the Labour Opposition Group Spokesman, an SRA of 15% of the Leader of the Council (that is, 75% of the Independent Opposition Group Leader SRA – to reflect the relative sizes of these two Groups – four Independent and three Labour).**

**In addition, the IRP may wish to consider recommending removal of the block on Independent and Labour Opposition Spokespersons having more than one SRA, as that appears again to discriminate against them because of their small sizes compared with the Conservative and LibDem Groups who do not have any SRAs removed because they have sufficient numbers that none of them has more than one role.**

## **Hampshire Pension Fund Panel and Board SRA**

The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Hampshire Pension Fund panel and Board receive SRAs - £13,053 and £3,272, respectively.

Also, Co-opted Scheme Representatives of the Hampshire Pension Fund Panel and Board (including Substitute Co-opted Member) receive SRA of £763.

I joined the Hampshire Pension Fund Panel and Board in October 2021, having been elected in May 2021.

It is the most onerous role on the County Council, as HPFP&B members need to undertake substantial training (**Appendix, Draft Annual Report 2022-2023, page** ), as required by the Pensions Regulator, attend regular HPFP&B meetings and investment manager briefings, attend conferences and seminars relevant to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), and keep abreast of important development relevant to pension schemes, such as climate change, environmental, social and governance issues, particularly relating to the investments that the £9.5-billion Hampshire Pension Fund holds.

**The IRP may wish to consider recommending a Hampshire Pension Fund Panel and Board SRA to reflect the dedication and commitment required to be effective, over and above what is required in any other role on Hampshire County Council.**

**Cllr Alex Crawford  
Leader, Hampshire Labour Group**

**28 July 2023**