

Formal Council Questions and Responses

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1 **Question to the Chair of Cabinet: 2020/01 - Senior Member Savings**

Councillor Mogford asked:

Could the Leader explain the role and duties of Deputy Leader and how does it justify a senior salary of £34,600?

In these times of inflation busting Council tax rises and reduced numbers, does the Leader not think it is time to reduce the number of senior roles, particularly the number of Cabinet Members?

We must look for efficiency saving not only from the officers but also from the Administration, do you not agree?

The Leader responded:

The role of the Deputy Leader is set out in the member role descriptions that the Council adopted as part of the Constitution back in 2017 – essentially, to deputise for the Leader in her absence and to support her in her role. The senior salary for a Deputy Leader is fixed by the IRP, based on the level of responsibility involved, the size of the Council and average earnings. The Council does not have any discretion to pay less than the prescribed salary of £34,600. This is £4,500 more than the other Cabinet Member salaries of £30,100 and reflects the additional responsibility.

Therefore, the requirement for a Deputy Leader and the roles and responsibilities of the post are well established. The Conservatives/Lib-Dem coalition also had a Deputy Leader when they were in power in 2008-12. In Newport, the Deputy Leader also has delegated responsibility for a specific portfolio, as well as deputing for the Leader.

The Local Government Act 2000 and the constitution allow for a Cabinet of up to 10 executive members, comprising the Leader and Cabinet Members. We have a Cabinet of only 9 members – the Leader and 8 Cabinet Members (including the Deputy Leader). In view of the Council's scheme of delegation, with individual decision-making and accountability - unlike other authorities where their Cabinets only take executive decisions collectively - it is not possible to provide effective democratic governance with a smaller Cabinet.