

Appendix 2 – Estimate of Time Required to do the Job of a Unitary Councillor

The job of a Unitary Councillor is the equivalent of two District Councillors and half a County Councillor.

1. Estimate of Councillor Hours

1.1. Estimate of Wiltshire County Councillor Hours (extracted from WCC's Recommendations for New Electoral Arrangements in Wiltshire, p7): Currently county councillors serve on average on two committees and attend on average two formal committee meetings a month. This estimate is based on the number of committee places available multiplied by the number of committee meetings and then divided by the number of non-executive members of the council i.e. 40. In the past, when county councillors have been surveyed for the purposes of informing the setting of members' allowances, the time spent on county council duties has remained consistent at around 15 to 20 hours a week, or 70 hours a month. This is very similar to data collected nationally.

1.2. Estimate of District Councillor Hours : National data indicates that the time spent by a Shire District Councillor on council business of is 17.8 hours.

Source: <http://www.lgar.local.gov.uk/lgv/core/page.do?pageId=23372>

2. Estimate of the Load on Unitary Councillors (Extracted from WCC's Recommendations for New Electoral Arrangements in Wiltshire p 7)

2.1. Disregarding the cabinet places there will be in excess of 200 committee roles to be performed by unitary councillors. Additionally there is the community leadership role, including liaising and supporting parish and town councils, the community area board and within the full council.

2.2. To expand this further, discounting place on area boards and on the full council which all councillors will have, this number of committee places translates into approximately 15 meetings per year per councillor. Adding in the five full council meetings per year and up to eight meetings of area boards each year, this in practical term means three to four formal committee meetings a month. Some of these meetings will be more demanding than others with some quasi judicial and regulatory work being particularly intensive.

2.3. Nationally the data indicate that the time spent on council business for a Shire County Councillor is 27.2 hours a week and 17.8 hours for a Shire District Councillor. It is accepted that you cannot simply add these two figures together to come up with the time commitment required for a new unitary councillor. There has however to be an acceptance that the role will increase hugely as compared with a current County or District Councillor with more time being spent in meetings and a significant increase in the time spent on the constituency role.

2.4. National data indicates that the time spent by a unitary councillor on council business is 26.6 hours.