

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Independent Members' Remuneration Panel** held in the Dickinson Room, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Tuesday 5 December 2017 from 5.00pm to 6.00pm.

Present: Mrs Victoria Milford (Local Resident) (Chairman)
Mrs Dot Reynolds (Local Resident)
Mrs Caroline Bloomer (Local Resident)

Officers in attendance:

Anne Morgan, Sarah Haythorpe

1. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

The Panel had last formally met on 9 November 2016 to consider Members' Allowances for 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 and made recommendations to Council on 13 December 2016.

Council resolved as follows:

CL64/16 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Councillor Sara Bedford moved, duly seconded, the IRP recommendations with an amendment to the meetings for which Members could claim travel expenses and subsistence.

The recommendations of the IRP and the proposed amendment on being put to Council were agreed the voting unanimous.

RESOLVED:

The basic allowance to be increased from £4,627 per annum to £4,673.

That the Special Responsibility Allowances be as follows:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Leader of the Council | £8,619 |
| Lead Members (x7) | £4,673 (1 x basic rate) |
| Chair of Planning Committee | £3,505 (3/4 of basic rate) |
| Chair of Licensing Committee & Regulatory Services Committee | £2,337 (half of basic rate) |
| Chair of Audit Committee | £2,337 (half of basic rate) |
| Other Group Leaders: | |
| Main Opposition Leader | £3,620 |
| Other Opposition Leader | £1,336 |
| Travel Allowance | 52.2p per mile |
| Dependent and Carer Allowance | £12.50 per hour |

List of meetings as attached at Appendix 1 (copy attached)

2. Attendance through Membership or through invitation including:-
Meetings of Member Groups nominated by Committees
Chilterns Standing Conference

Community Council for Herts

Attendance at meetings in connection with Councillor duties or at the request of Officers of the Council

Attendance of Members representing the Council on local organisations.

Other Joint Member meetings with Councils and Utilities etc. sanctioned by a Chief Officer of the Council.

3. Attendance at Conferences, Seminars, etc.

A copy of the claim form can be found in the Council constitution.

Note: The following is not regarded as approved duty for the payment of Travel or Subsistence Allowances:-

- (a) Attendance at approved meetings by Councillors who are not Members of the Service Committees, Working Parties etc., unless they are specifically asked to attend by that body.

2. CONSIDERATION OF EXISTING ALLOWANCES

A new Independent Remuneration Panel had been constituted in 2017 to look at allowances for members. The Panel held an informal meeting on 3 August 2017 and 16 October 2017 at which officers explained the roles and remits of Committees and members as well as explaining the form of governance operated by the Council to put the roles into perspective. The Panel requested further details on the role of each of the Committees, the role of the Chairman, the frequency of meetings and the statutory functions the Committees undertook. Particularly reference was made to the Planning, Regulatory Services, Licensing and Audit Committees and to the role of the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

The Panel considered the following factors in relation to the recommendation they would make to Council in respect of Members' Allowances and the Special Responsibility Allowances for 2018/19:

Since November 2016 the form of the Council, structure and membership of the Committees had remained unchanged. The Panel was advised that from May 2018 it was proposed that there would be a reduction in the number of Service Committees from 3 to 2. The remits and roles of the Lead Members would be changing and there would be 3 Lead Members on each Service Committee. The likely changes were

That there be 3 Chairmen for each of the two new Service Committees for **Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee:**

- Lead Member for Economic Development
- Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy
- Lead Member for Housing

for **Leisure, Environment and Community Committee**

- Lead Member for Leisure
- Lead Member for Environmental Services
- Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships

The Panel noted that the Calendar of meetings would be updated in February 2018 once the proposed amendments were agreed and that Officers would review the number of seats on the two Service Committees following the District election in May 2018. It was accepted that the Panel would be unable to comment on the prospective changes and how that would affect allowances now and would have to look to review the new arrangements at its next meeting in 2018 once the system had been operational for a few months.

In order to assist the Panel, Officers had provided background including:

- How the Council would be operating from May 2018. (Subject to Council agreeing the recommendations of the Constitution Working Party) i.e. The Policy and Resources Committee and changes to the Service Committees from May 2018.
- Details on the Leader, Deputy Leader, Lead Members, Chairman of the Committees and the other Group Leaders and their appointment and role in the Council.
- Other Committees and their responsibilities including the role of the Chairman of the Committees.
- The financial pressures on the Council in the coming year 2018/19 including budget savings which are required to be made by the Council in 2018/19.
- The withdrawal of Government funding
- Pay awards
- Business Rates
- Service Reviews
- Level of Council Tax

The Panel also considered the written representations received from the three Group Leaders of the Political Groups. They had a long debate about the role of the Chairman of Planning Committee and felt that the workload, frequency of meetings and remit of the Committee which was very much in the public eye justified that Chairman having an increased allowance in line with some of the other Chairmen. The Panel also felt that in order to attract high calibre people to the role of a District Councillor a 1% or 2% increase in the basic allowance was more than justified.

The Panel was asked to review other Member allowances that Members are entitled to claim namely:

- A Dependants' Carer allowance of £12.50 per hour (last reviewed 2017/18.)
- A travel and subsistence allowance, currently paying 52.2p per mile for travel (last reviewed 2017/18).

The Panel noted that in 2015 there had been a detailed discussion with regard to the Group Leader's allowance and the submission by the Chief Executive which had been adopted and retained by Council

Having noted that this was a challenging time for the Council, the Panel agreed to:

- propose to Council a 2% increase on all allowances
- propose no increase in the Dependent Carer Allowance of £12.50 per hour and
- no increase in the Members travel and subsistence allowance and that this should remain at 52.2p per mile.
- Increase the Chairman of Planning Allowance from three quarters of the basic rate to one times the basic rate (£4,766).

The Panel agreed that they would review all Members' Allowances in full at their Panel meeting in November 2018 and would look at how the new arrangements for the Service Committees was working.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:-

The basic allowance to be increased from £4,673 per annum to £4,766.

That the Special Responsibility Allowances be as follows:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Leader of the Council | £8,791 |
| Lead Members (x7) | £4,766 (1 x basic rate) |
| Chair of Planning Committee | £4,766 (1 x basic rate) |
| Chair of Licensing Committee & Regulatory Services Committee | £2,384 (half of basic rate) |
| Chair of Audit Committee | £2,384 (half of basic rate) |
| Other Group Leaders: | |
| Main Opposition Leader | £3,692 |
| Other Opposition Leader | £1,363 |
| Travel Allowance | 52.2p per mile |
| Dependent and Carer Allowance | £12.50 per hour |

CHAIRMAN