

**THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **Independent Members' Remuneration Panel** held in the Dickinson Room, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Wednesday 28 November 2018 from 5.00pm to 5.50pm.

Present: Mrs Victoria Milford (Local Resident) (Chairman)  
Mrs Dot Reynolds (Local Resident)  
Mr David Backinsell (Local Resident)  
Mrs Katie Ahmed (Local Resident)  
Mr Tunde Dabiri (Local Resident)

Officers in attendance:

Anne Morgan, Sarah Haythorpe

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1. Background

The Panel had last formally met on 5 December 2017 to consider Members' Allowances for 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019 and made recommendations to Council on 12 December 2017.

Council resolved as follows:

**CL55/17 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

This item had not been available five clear days before the meeting, as the meeting of the Panel had not taken place until Tuesday 5 December 2017. The report was of sufficient urgency to be considered by Council to enable the changes to the Members Allowances to be included in the budget setting process.

Councillor Sara Bedford, seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd, moved the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel which recommended an increase in Members allowances by 2% and the Chairman of the Planning Committee special responsibility allowance increasing from three quarters times basic to 1 x basic.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being 21 For, 11 Against and 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

For 2018/19 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

## **2. CONSIDERATION OF EXISTING ALLOWANCES**

One member of the Panel had resigned since the last meeting and two new members had joined. The Panel held an informal meeting on 14 November 2018 where officers explained the role of the Panel, the decisions the Panel needed to make and to clarify the information they would require for the formal Panel meeting on 28 November 2018.

After the papers for the meeting were circulated to the Panel further details were requested. The information required was on the impact of the reduction in the Government grant over the last few years, the Councils financial position and the implications on the budget of an increase to the Members allowances.

The Panel considered a number of factors in relation to the recommendations they would make to Council in respect of Members' Allowances and the Special Responsibility Allowances for 2019/20.

The Panel was advised that from May 2018 the number of Service Committees had reduced from three to two and the Lead Members' roles had changed along with their remits. The number of Lead Members had remained at seven with six of the Lead Members being the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the two Service Committees within their "portfolio". Each of the six Lead Members now Chaired two of the six Service Committees each year and the other two acted as Vice-Chairs at the meetings. All these appointments were Council appointments.

The two Service Committees are:

- Leisure, Environment and Community
- Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development

The Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services does not Chair or act as Vice Chair of a Committee meeting but has responsibility for Setting the Council Budget, overseeing the Council budgets and consultation with the Director of Finance on the status of the Council budget.

Although the number of Service Committees had reduced from three to two the number of meetings had not reduced. There were still 12 a year (before there had been four meetings of each of the three Service Committees each year but now there were six meetings of the two Service Committees).

The remits and roles of the Lead Members are now:

**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

In order to assist the Panel, Officers provided background which included:

- How the Council operated from May 2018.
- Details and role of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Lead Members, Chairman of the Committees and the other Group Leaders and their appointment and role in the Council.
- The Council's governance arrangements and the new arrangements of the Service Committees.
- Other Committees and their responsibilities including the role of the Chairman of the Committees.
- The Role of a Councillor (source LGA)
- Comparisons with other Hertfordshire Council's allowances.
- The financial pressures on the Council in the coming year 2019/20 including budget savings which are required to be made by the Council in 2019/20.
- The withdrawal of Government funding
- Pay awards to staff
- Business Rates
- Service Reviews
- Level of Council Tax
- Economic situation in the District

The Panel also considered written representations received from two of the three Group Leaders of the Political Groups. The Leader of the Council had requested that the Panel "undertake a full review of all Members Allowances" for 2020/21.

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
- A travel and subsistence allowance, currently paying 52.2p per mile for travel.
- To consider incorporating the Member IT consumable allowance of £100 as part of the basic Member allowance therefore reducing the administration involved in organising the grant and bringing the grant within the Member basic allowance.

The Panel agreed that the Dependant Carer/Child Care allowance of £12.50 per hour and 52.2p per mile for travel were above the average in Hertfordshire and the mileage was above the Government recommended rate of 45p per mile. They agreed that these amounts remain unchanged.

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

- propose to Council a 2% increase on basic allowances which would be in line with the anticipated increase Officers were to receive on 1 April 2019 and that the special responsibility allowances be based on that increase.
- propose no increase in the Dependant 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.
- to incorporate the Member IT consumable allowance of £100 as part of the basic Member allowance therefore reducing the administration involved in organising the grant and bringing the grant within the Member basic allowance.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:-**

The basic allowance to be increased from £4,766 per annum to £4,862.

That the Special Responsibility Allowances be as follows:

Leader of the Council	£8,967
Lead Members (x7)	£4,862 (1 x basic rate)
Chair of Planning Committee	£4,862 (1 x basic rate)
Chair of Licensing Committee & Regulatory Services Committee	£2,431 (half of basic rate)
Chair of Audit Committee	£2,431 (half of basic rate)
Other Group Leaders:	
Main Opposition Leader	£3,766
Other Opposition Leader	£1,390
Travel Allowance	52.2p per mile
Dependant and Carer Allowance	£12.50 per hour

to incorporate the Member IT consumable allowance of £100 as part of the basic Member allowance therefore reducing the administration involved in organising the grant and bringing the grant within the Member basic allowance

**CHAIRMAN**