

COUNCIL – 8 DECEMBER 2020

PART I

4. MEMBER ALLOWANCES 2021/22 (CED)

1 Summary

1.1 This report asks Council to agree the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) which met on 19 November 2020 to consider the Member Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for 2021/22.

2 Member Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances 2020/21

2.1 The Member Allowance scheme budget for 2020/21 was £261,315.

2.2 The 2020/21 budget for Member Allowances was increased by £1,533 in July 2020 following Council's approval to pay a Group Leader allowance to the new Other Opposition Group. Following Council's decision the increased to £262,848. A breakdown of the budget is provided in Appendix 1.

2.3 If Council agree the recommendation of the Panel there would be no increase to the Member Allowances scheme for 2021/22.

2.4 Each year the Panel review the Members Allowances and make recommendations to Council which Council can decide to accept or not. If Council decide not to accept the recommendations it must give reasons for reaching that decision.

2.5 As part of its review of the Members Allowances and SRA the Panel received a covering report which brought together the following information:

- Previous history on the decisions made by Council on Members allowances since 2010.
- The role of a Councillor (source: Local Government Association [LGA])
- The Council's current Members' Allowances Scheme
- A chart outlining the Council's meeting structure
- Calendar of meetings 2021/22 and 2022/23
- Economic Climate within the District and Hertfordshire
- Government Funding
- Pay awards for Staff
- Efficiency Savings
- Level of Council Tax
- Business Rates

2.6 Also as part of the review process, the Panel had a preliminary meeting where the Interim Head of Finance was invited to attend to provide the Panel with details on the current economic climate, pay awards for staff, Council tax and efficiency savings.

2.7 For the Panel meeting all the Group Leaders were contacted to see if they wished to make representation. Two of the Group Leaders met the Panel to make oral representations.

2.8 The Panel did not review the Chair or Vice-Chair allowance this year.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 Having considered all the information provided to them the Panel recognised that the Members Allowances in Three Rivers are low compared with some other Councils and were conscious that they did not want anyone to be disincentivised people from standing as a Councillor and so would have recommended an increase of 2% in line with other overall market and pay award for staff. However, given the current economic and employment climate, they do not believe that this is appropriate and are recommending no change to Members Allowances for 2021/22 and that they remain as follows:

1) Member Allowance paid to each Councillor remain at £5,111.

2) That the Allowances paid for SRA to remain as follows:

Group Leader, Main Opposition Leader and Other Opposition Leader (x2)

Leader of the Council - £10,222 (2 x basic Member Allowance

Main Opposition Leader - £3,833 (0.75% of basic Member Allowance)

Other Opposition Leader - £1,533 (0.3% of basic Member Allowance) (x2)

Lead Members (x7) - £5,111 (1 x basic rate)

Chair of Planning Committee - £5,111 (1 x basic rate)

Chair of Licensing Committee/Regulatory Services Committee - £2,555 (half of basic rate)

Chair of Audit Committee - £2,555 (half of basic rate)

3) That there be no changes made to the Dependants' Carers' allowance of £12.50 per hour for 2021/22

4) That no changes be made to the Travel allowance of 52.2p per mile for 2021/22

3.2 To accord with the Local Authority (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 details on the recommendations from the Panel on the Members' Allowances have been published in the local newspaper. The Council decision on Member Allowances will be published after the Council meeting.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Having considered all the information provided to them, heard the representations made the Panel is recommending no changes to the Members Allowance or SRA for 2021/22.

5 Policy/Budget Implications

5.1 The recommendations from the Panel are within the Council's agreed budget.

5.2 There are no budget implications and the budget will remain as shown in Appendix 1.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 See Paragraph 3.2 above.

7 Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Implications

7.1 None specific.

8 Equal Opportunities Implications

8.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	No
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	Not applicable

9. Communications and Website Implications

9.1 The website will need to be updated with the 2021/22 Member Allowance scheme.

10. Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

10.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

10.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Committee service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this service plan.

10.3 There are no risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendations.

11. Recommendations

11.1 That the recommendation that there be no change in the Members Allowance or Special Responsibility Allowance for 2021/22.

Report prepared by: Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

Report checked by: Anne Morgan, Solicitor to the Council

Sally Riley, Assistant Finance Manager

Background Papers: 2021/22 Independent Remuneration Papers

Data Quality

Data checked by: Anne Morgan and Sally Riley

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	

3	High	X
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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Member allowance scheme budget breakdown of the budget 2021/22 is provided in Appendix 1.