

COUNCIL – 14 DECEMBER 2021

PART I

4. MEMBER ALLOWANCES 2022/23 (CED)

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report asks Council to agree the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) which met on 8 November 2021 to consider the Member Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for 2022/23.
- 1.2 The Panel are recommending that the Member Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for 2022/23 be increased by 1.75% in the line with the pay award put forward to employees.
- 1.3 The Panel agreed that should the pay award be reduced or increased then the Member Allowance and SRA should only increase by this amount.
- 1.4 The Panel agreed that the Dependent carer's allowance and mileage allowance should remain unchanged.

2 Member Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances

- 2.1 The Member Allowance scheme budget for 2021/22 was £262,848. A breakdown of the budget is provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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 2022/23 and 2023/24
 - Economic Climate within the District and Hertfordshire
 - Pay awards for Staff
 - Efficiency Savings
 - Level of Council Tax
 - Business Rates
- 2.4 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. Both the Group Leaders advised the Panel that workload had increased during the Covid Pandemic.
- 2.5 The Panel did not review the Chair or Vice-Chair allowance this year as they were not asked to review these allowances.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 Having considered all the information provided to them the Panel recognised that the Members Allowances and SRAs in Three Rivers are low compared with some other Councils and were conscious that they did not want anyone to be dis-incentivised from standing as a Councillor and didn't feel it was right to not increase the allowances bearing in mind the increasing pay rates and cost of living increases. The Panel also took into account the increasing workload of Councillors since the start of the Pandemic.

3.2 The Panel wish to recommend an increase in line with the pay award for employees which was currently proposed to be 1.75%. This will mean the following increases:

1) Member Allowance paid to each Councillor to increase by 1.75% to £5,200.

2) That the Allowances paid for SRA to increase by 1.75% and to be as follows:

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

Leader of the Council - £10,401 (2 x basic Member Allowance)

Main Opposition Leader - £3,900 (0.75% of basic Member Allowance)

Other Opposition Leaders (x2) - £1,560 (0.3% of basic Member Allowance)

Lead Members (x7) - £5,200 (1 x basic rate)

Chair of Planning Committee - £5,200 (1 x basic rate)

Chair of Licensing Committee/Regulatory Services Committee - £2,600 (half of basic rate)

Chair of Audit Committee - £2,600 (half of basic rate)

3) That there be no changes made to the Dependants' Carers' allowance of £12.50 per hour for 2022/23

4) That no changes be made to the Travel allowance of 52.2p per mile for 2022/23

3.3 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 on 26 November 2021. The Council decision on Member Allowances will be published in the local newspaper after the Council meeting on 24 December 2021.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Having considered all the information provided to them, heard the representations made the Panel is recommending a 1.75% increase to the Members Allowance and SRA for 2022/23.

4.2 The Panel proposed that both the Dependent carer's allowance and mileage allowance remain unchanged.

5 Policy/Budget Implications

5.1 The budget impact of increasing the allowances will form an additional pressure on the 2022/23 Budget. The additional cost of £4,593 will be taken into account as part of the budget setting process. The full financial implications are set out in Appendix 1.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 See Paragraph 3.3 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 2022/23 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 there be a 1.75% increase in the Members Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance for 2022/23 in line with the current proposed employee pay award.

Report prepared by: Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

Report checked by: James Baldwin, Solicitor to the Council

Deen Odunsi, Assistant Finance Manager

Background Papers: 2022/23 Independent Remuneration Papers

Data Quality

Data checked by: James Baldwin and Deen Odunsi

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	X

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Member allowance scheme budget breakdown of the budget 2022/23 is provided in Appendix 1.