

COUNCIL – 13 DECEMBER 2022

PART I - DELEGATED

4. MEMBER ALLOWANCES 2023/24 (CED)

Summary

1.1 This report asks Council to consider the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) which met on 14 November 2022 to review the Member allowances and Special Responsibility allowances (SRA) for 2023/24, the mileage rate, carer allowance, Member transportation and Taxi arrangements, Chair and Vice Chair allowance and an extra Deputy Leader allowance.

1.2 The Panel are recommending that:

the basic Member Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for 2023/24 be increased by 5%.

the Dependent carer's allowance and mileage allowance remain unchanged (£12.50 and 52.2p a mile respectively).

the Chair and Vice Chair allowances should be brought in line with the Member Allowances and therefore the Panel are recommending that these increase as follows:

Chair – currently £5,111 recommended increase to £5,460

Vice Chair – currently £2,555 recommended increase to £2,730

that the Member Transportation and Taxi arrangements remain unchanged.

that no extra allowance be provided to the Deputy Leader of the Council.

2. Details

Member Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances

2.1 The Member Allowance scheme budget for 2022/23 was £267,441. 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 the Panel received information on the following:

- Previous history on the decisions made by Council on Members allowances since 2010.
- Councillor roles
- Current Members' Allowances Scheme
- A chart outlining the Council's meeting structure
- Breakdown of Committees/sub-committees and forums
- Calendar of meetings 2023/24 and 2024/25
- Economic Climate within the District and Hertfordshire

- Government Funding
- Pay Award for staff
- Council Tax
- Benchmarking with other Councils

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.

2.5 At the review meeting, the Panel were also asked to review the Chair or Vice-Chair allowance which had not been reviewed since 2019, Member transportation and taxi arrangements and to consider if an extra allowance should be provided for the Deputy Leader.

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 cost of living and high inflation. The Panel also took into account the increasing workload of Councillors that had arisen following the Pandemic.

3.2 The Panel wish to recommend an increase of 5%. They felt that this was the right level to recommend and felt an increase in line with inflation would not be correct in the current economic climate. They also acknowledged, and confirmed by the oral representations made, that this was an allowance which is provided to Members and not a wage. As part of the meeting the Panel asked for details on what the medium salary is in the Council and what the percentage increase would be on that salary following the recent pay ward. Finance have advised that the most common pay scale is SO2 – PO1 scale point 28. Following the pay award this has increased from £32,798 to £34,723 which is a 5.9% increase.

3.3 If a 5% increase is agreed by Council this will mean the following increases:

1) Member Allowance paid to each Councillor to increase by 5% to £5,460.

2) That the Allowances paid for SRA to increase by 5% and to be as follows:

Group Leader, Main Opposition Leader and Other Opposition Leader

Leader of the Council - £10,921 (2 x basic Member Allowance)

Main Opposition Leader - £4,095 (0.75% of basic Member Allowance)

Other Opposition Leader - £1,638 (0.3% of basic Member Allowance)

Lead Members (x7) - £5,460 (1 x basic rate)

Chair of Planning Committee - £5,460 (1 x basic rate)

Chair of Licensing Committee/Regulatory Services Committee - £2,730 (half of basic rate)

Chair of Audit Committee - £2,730 (half of basic rate)

3.4 In addition the Panel reviewed the Chair of Council and Vice Chair of Council allowance which had not been reviewed since 2019. It was recommended by the Panel that these be increased in line with the basic allowance for Members for the Chair and half the basic allowance for the Vice Chair as detailed in Paragraph 1.2.

3.5 If the recommendations are agreed by Council the increases would come into effect from 1 April 2023.

3.6 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 11 November 2022. The Council decision on Member Allowances will be published in the local newspaper after the Council meeting on 23 December 2022.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Having considered all the information provided to them, heard the oral representations made the Panel is recommending a 5% increase to the Members Allowance and SRA for 2023/24 as detailed in Point 3.2 above.

4.2 Recommend that the Chair and Vice Chair allowance be increased in line with the basic allowance for Members for the Chair and half the basic allowance for the Vice Chair as detailed in Paragraph 1.2.

4.3 Recommend that both the Dependent carer's allowance and mileage allowance remain unchanged (£12.50 per hour and 52.2p a mile respectively).

4.4 That the Member Transportation and Taxi arrangements remain unchanged.

4.5 That no extra allowance be provided to the Deputy Leader of the Council.

5 Policy/Budget Implications

5.1 The budget impact of increasing the allowances will form an additional pressure on the 2023/24 Budget. If the panel's recommendation is approved by Council the additional cost of £12,217 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?
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No

Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	Not applicable
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9. Communications and Website Implications

9.1 The website will need to be updated with the 2023/24 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 Consider the recommendations outlined in Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.5 of the report as follows:

- A 5% increase to the Members Allowance and SRA for 2023/24 as detailed in Point 3.3 above.
- That the Chair and Vice Chair allowance be increased in line with the basic allowance for Members for the Chair and half the basic allowance for the Vice Chair as detailed in Paragraph 1.2.
- Recommend that both the Dependent carer's allowance and mileage allowance remain unchanged (£12.50 per hour and 52.2p a mile respectively).
- That the Member Transportation and Taxi arrangements remain unchanged.
- That no extra allowance be provided to the Deputy Leader of the Council.

Report prepared by: Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

Report checked by: Ciara Feeney, Interim Solicitor to the Council

Laura Renner, Assistant Finance Manager

Background Papers: None

Data Quality

Data checked by: Ciara Feeney and Laura Renner

Data rating:

1	Poor	
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2	Sufficient	
3	High	X

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Member allowance scheme budget breakdown of the budget 2023/24