

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL* held on Thursday 21 January 2016 at 10.00am at the Council Offices, Welwyn Garden City.

* Reporting to Council

PRESENT: C. Novelli
P.Raynsford
D.Tabraham-Palmer

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (M.Saminaden)
PRESENT: Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN:

The Panel continued with the previously agreed arrangements not to appoint a Chairman.

2. WELWYN HATFIELD MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME:

2.1. Review of the Scheme

The report of the Chief Executive sought consideration of a recommendation from the Panel on a further review of the level of allowances to be paid to Members following the initial consideration given to this at the last meeting of the Panel on 3 July 2015.

The Panel at the last meeting on 3 July 2015 accepted that it was now an appropriate time for the increases in allowances recommended in the review previously undertaken by an independent consultant to be revisited.

The Panel noted from the comparative information provided for the Hertfordshire local authorities for 2014/15 that this Council had fallen behind these, paying almost the lowest level of allowances in the County to its Members.

Whilst remaining mindful of the future economic climate, the Panel was prepared to have a discussion with a view to looking at aspiring to the "median" rate of basic and special responsibility allowances in the Hertfordshire authorities for Members of this Council as a general principle and to try to find an acceptable way of achieving this. This discussion would also include a review of the special responsibility allowances for the Leaders of Opposition Groups. A third Opposition Group comprising two Independent Members had now been formed on the Council.

It was proposed that the current allowance for Opposition Group Leaders, which was the same as that for a Cabinet Member, be replaced by one which was

calculated on the basis of 75% of basic allowance plus a per capita payment of £125 for each Group Member for the first Opposition Group Leader and 25% of basic allowance and a per capita payment of £125 for each Group Member for the second and third Opposition Group Leaders.

It was considered that there could be an incremental increase in allowances over two years with effect from 1 July 2016 with the normal annual review by the Panel still taking place. The Panel was of the view that this was a fair and reasonable way to move towards the Hertfordshire median, on a phased basis to take account of current financial circumstances whilst drawing closer to the spirit of the recommendations made in the consultant's report.

2.2. Financial Implications

At this meeting the Panel had a look at the figures and budgeting implications of moving forward on this basis.

The total budget for the scheme in 2015/16 was currently £342,790 and the draft budget for 2016/17 was £348,500. There was currently a favourable variance on the budget in this financial year of £14,500. The estimated additional cost of the proposed scheme in 2016/17 was £10,000 and would be a further £14,000 in 2017/18. If the favourable variance on the budget continued into 2016/17 and 2017/18 it could be offset against the additional net cost.

The current allowances from 1 July 2015, "median" rate for Hertfordshire authorities in 2014/15 and the figures in the consultant's recommendations in 2009/10, together with the proposed figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are set out on the appendix.

The proposed figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18 would continue to be subject to the normal annual review by the Panel.

2.3. Recommendation

The Panel **RECOMMENDS** to the Council that the proposed level of Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances to be paid with effect from 1 July 2016 and 1 July 2017 be as set out on the schedule attached, noting that the normal annual review by the Panel would still take place.

Meeting ended 11.00am
GS

Members' Allowances

	<u>Per Annum (£)</u> <u>2015/16</u>	<u>Hertfordshire</u> <u>Median Rates</u> <u>2014/15</u>	<u>Consultant's</u> <u>Recommendations</u> <u>2009/10</u>	<u>Per Annum (£)</u> <u>2016/17^</u> <u>Proposed</u>	<u>Per Annum (£)</u> <u>2017/18^</u> <u>Proposed</u>
√ Basic Allowance x 48	4,912	4,951	5,000	4,951	4,951
Leader of the Council	9,505	14,853	15,000	12,179	14,853
Deputy Leader	6,652	7,332	10,500	6,992	7,332
Cabinet Member x 5	5,698	9,485	9,000	7,592	9,485
* Lead Member x 3	3,808	3,808	6,000	3,808	3,808
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees x 3	4,020	4,410	6,000	4,215	4,410
Chairman of Development Management Committee	3,808	4,951	6,000	4,380	4,951
* Chairman of Hackney Carriage Committee	3,808	3,808	6,000	3,808	3,808
* Chairman of Cabinet Panel	3,808	3,808	6,000	3,808	3,808
+ Chairman of Audit Committee	3,808	3,726	6,000	3,726	3,726
* Chairman of Liquor and Regulated Entertainment Licensing Committee	3,808	3,808	6,000	3,808	3,808
* Chairman of Appeals Committee	1,190	1,190	1,875	1,190	1,190
+ Leader of First Opposition Group	5,698	3,051	4,250	5,463	5,463
+ Leader of Second and Third Opposition Groups	5,698	856	2,750	1,488	1,488
+ Chairman of Standards Committee	(5,636)	2,000	5,698	2,000	2,000
* Mayor	6,153	6,153	6,153	6,153	6,153
* Deputy Mayor	1,539	1,539	1,539	1,539	1,539
TOTAL	348,923	367,658	401,515	357,699	371,334

(Notes:

- (1) * Where comparative information could not be obtained for the purpose of calculating the totals the current allowance payments have been included in the Hertfordshire Medium Rates and no increases are proposed to these.
- (2) As the Leader is Chairman of the Standards Committee this allowance is not currently being paid, but it is included in the 2015/16 list.
- (3) √ As the proposed increase is small it would be paid in full in 2016/17.
- (4) + These payments are proposed to be decreased.
- (5) ^ The proposed payments would still be subject to the normal annual review by the Panel.)