

Full Council 20 December 2023 Public Questions and Answers

Name of person submitting	Questions
Mr Paul Elstone	<p>My first two questions relate to Agenda Item 11 - Member Allowances</p> <p>Question 1: It is noted that the recommendation is to increase member allowances by 6.4% to £6,387</p> <p>A recent BBC Report reveals that this Councils Member allowances are already the highest amongst LA's in Devon. That despite Torridge District Council not increasing member allowances for several years they have recently voted for a rise of just 3.9% to £5,538 or £849 a year less than this Councils proposal. That it is being proposed that members reduce much needed Grant Funding by around 20% in real terms.</p> <p>When voting on this recommendation will each member consider these points?</p> <p>Response From the Chairman of the Council:</p> <p>Members considered what other local authorities received for members' allowances during the discussion.</p> <p>Question 2:</p> <p>Will this matter be decided by a recorded vote?</p> <p>Response From the Chairman of the Council:</p> <p>This did not require a recorded vote, and when it was requested by one member there was not the required ten members requesting a recorded vote.</p>

Question 3 Relates to this councils business.

A scurrilous allegation was made against certain members of the General Public at the Scrutiny Committee Meeting of the 18th December 2023. An allegation that stated that they have cost MDDC Council Taxpayers a significant sum of money. This given the requirement to have the Devon Audit Partnership investigate unsubstantiated allegations of either fraud or malpractice.

If the 3 Rivers Working Group had conducted their investigation with the rigor both required and expected, they would have known the full truth.

It is a matter of fact that it was a long-standing Council Leader who called for the DAP investigation and while he was in position. Even detailing the scope of the investigation.

It is also a fact that the Interim Council Leader was asked if he agreed to withdraw the requirement for an investigation but declined to do so.

It is also a fact that the very person whose actions would have formed a key part of the investigation set the terms of reference. Terms of reference which were nothing like the original requirement.

It is also known that DAP only considered it was necessary for them to undertake a quick investigation. It seems as an appeasement to the Council Leaders concerns.

It is also a fact that members of the public were constrained in providing the information and evidence they wished to do given time limits imposed amongst other things.

Given the seriousness of these matters and which cannot be understated will the Council Leader now implement a rigorous investigation and so the full truth can be known?

Response from the Leader of the Council:

The Working group had already completed the report and the Council is satisfied with the report and the answer is no in relation to the question.