

CHESHIRE EAST

GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 1 December 2008
Report of: Mike Flynn, Governance Lead Officer
Title: Cheshire East Independent Remuneration Panel

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update on the appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Cheshire East Council and to seek approval to its composition and related operational matters.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 To consider and approve:-
- (a) the appointment of four panellists to the Independent Remuneration Panel, their term of office and the Chairmanship of the Panel;
 - (b) the payment of travel and out of pocket expenses to the Remuneration Panel Members when carrying out their duties, and to consider whether any further allowance should be paid.

3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 3.1 Payment of any allowances which may be approved would not be significant as the Panel will only meet up to four times in the Shadow period.

4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 4.1 As indicated at 3.1, the level of expenses required to support the meetings of the Panel will be minimal.
- 4.2 The outcomes of the deliberations and recommendations of the Panel as to overall allowances cannot be estimated accurately at this stage but arguably a sum in excess of that estimated for members' allowances during the Shadow year will need to be factored into the budget for 2009/10 and beyond. These actual costs will become evident when the Panel has made its recommendations to the Council.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None are identified at this stage.

6.0 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 The total amount of allowances payable will be dependent on the final political structures for the vested Council, which may not be known in detail before the Panel makes its recommendations, ideally before the Budget Council meeting in February.

7.0 Background and Options

- 7.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require that before a local authority makes or amends a Members' Allowances Scheme it must have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel. The Shadow year allowances for Cheshire East were recommended by the Cheshire County Council Members' Remuneration Panel, on an interim basis and it is now necessary for the Shadow Council to appoint its own Remuneration Panel to make recommendations for a scheme of members' allowances for the new Council with effect from April 2009.
- 7.2 At its meeting on 14 July the Governance and Constitution Committee decided that an Independent Remuneration Panel of four or five members should be established for Cheshire East; and that existing members of the current Independent Remuneration Panels should be invited to express an interest in membership of the Cheshire East Panel.
- 7.3 At a meeting on 18 November, the Chairman and Spokesmen of the Committee met with four current Panellists who had volunteered to join the Cheshire East Panel, and accordingly it is proposed that the Panel should initially comprise:

Mr David Routs	(Cheshire Panel)
Mrs Christine Crowe	(Crewe and Nantwich Panel)
Mrs Jan Charles	(Congleton Panel)
Mr Peter Foden	(Congleton Panel)

- 7.4 It would be possible for additional Member(s) to be appointed in due course. However, it is necessary for the Panel to commence its work now to meet the deadlines required for their report and recommendations.
- 7.5 There are a few operational matters concerning the Panel which need to be addressed, as follows:-
- (a) the Chairmanship of the Panel, as the Government's Guidance on constituting Panels indicates that this Committee may designate a Chairman, or leave it to the Panel to appoint one of their number;
 - (b) the period of office of Panel Members, where the Guidance suggests between 3-5 years;

- (c) what any allowance additional to travel and expenses should be paid, eg – it would be possible to pay each Panellist an allowance per meeting;
- (d) enabling Panel Members to attend elected Member Development events appropriate to their work, and to assist the Panel's understanding of elected Members' roles and responsibilities in the new Authority.

7.6 The Committee is asked to consider these operational matters and decide how they should apply to the Cheshire East Remuneration Panel.

For further information:

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Background Documents:

None