

Constitution Committee

Date of Meeting: 19 September 2019

Report Title: Appointment of Members to Independent Remuneration Panel

Senior Officer: Head of Democratic Services and Governance

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report asks the Committee to approve the appointment of three individuals to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Committee is asked to agree that:

- Professor Steve Leach be re-appointed as a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel;
- Amanda Ramsden be re-appointed as a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel;
- Jacqueline Grinham be appointed as the third member of the Independent Remuneration Panel;
- Professor Leach continue in his role as Chairman of the Panel;
- The individuals named above be appointed for a four year term of office, to commence immediately and to end in September 2023;
- Panel members be recompensed for expenses and that an allowance be paid to the Chairman in recognition of his role, as detailed in the financial implications.
- The Panel be asked to give consideration to making future provision for the Members' Allowances Scheme, by reference to an index, the adjustment to be applied on an annual basis for a period of up to four years;
- The Panel be asked to give consideration to developing a Members' Allowances Scheme to reflect a proposed new system of governance for the Council; co-ordinating its work with the Governance Working Group, with the Panel's report being considered by Council when it considers constitutional proposals for the proposed committee system;
- The Panel be asked to consider and make recommendations on the proposed Members' Parental Leave Policy;

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. It is suggested that the appointment of the Panel Members and the appointment of the Chairman of the Panel, be made by the Constitution Committee, upon the recommendations of the Head of Democratic Services and Governance. This will avoid any potential difficulties that could be caused by the Panel itself being required to appoint its own Chairman. This also preserves continuity and the good working arrangements of the Panel, which are already established.
- 3.2. With regard to the number of Panel members, the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires there to be at least three members appointed to the Panel.
- 3.3. The recommended appointments meet the objective of at least one Panel member having experience of the workings of local government.
- 3.4. In 2016, the Independent Remuneration Panel recommended that the Members' Allowances Scheme be adjusted on an annual basis by reference to an index, which was approved. This arrangement can only be applied for a period of four years before the Panel has to carry out a review. Accordingly, the Panel is asked to consider whether the same provision should apply up to March 2023, the nature of the index to be applied and confirm the period for which the adjustment should be applied.
- 3.5. The recent Notice of Motion, agreed by Council, requires detailed work in anticipation of a change to the Council's governance arrangements, specifically moving from a Cabinet system to a committee structure in May 2020. As a result, the Panel will be asked to carry out a significant piece of work, in order to develop proposals for a new Scheme of Allowances to reflect the proposed governance changes.
- 3.6. On 15 July 2019, Constitution Committee considered a Notice of Motion which proposed the adoption of a Parental Leave Policy for Members. The Committee, agreed the proposal in principle, subject to consultation with the Panel on the allowance elements referred to therein. The Panel will, therefore, be asked to consider and make recommendations on how relevant elements of such a policy might be incorporated into the current Members' Allowances Scheme, or into any new scheme, should a new model of governance be proposed.
- 3.7. The authority can determine expenses and allowances to be paid to Independent Remuneration Panel members. Past practice has been to recompense Panel members for expenses incurred and that an allowance of £500 per day be paid to the Chairman in recognition and in recompense of the additional activity and responsibility attached to the role.

- 3.8. The work of the Panel would normally constitute 3-4 days within their four-year term of appointment.

4. Background

- 4.1. The Regulations provide that an Independent Remuneration Panel shall consist of at least three members, who cannot be a member of the local authority; committee or sub-committee of the authority; or disqualified from becoming a member of the authority.
- 4.2. Before an authority makes or amends a Scheme of Allowances (before the beginning of a financial year); the authority must have regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 4.3. The Scheme of Members' Allowances covers the payment of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, dependent carers allowance, travel and subsistence and co-optees allowance.
- 4.4. The term of office of the current Panel is due to expire in November 2019. As the work of the Panel needs to commence immediately and, as it is unlikely to be completed before the tenure of the current Panel expires, it is prudent to have the new Panel in place before November, so that it has time to complete its work and report back to Council in May 2020.

5. Appointment Process

- 5.1 To ensure that the Panel is independent of the Council, restrictions are placed on who can apply. Individuals cannot be a member if they –
- Are a member of any of the local authorities (borough or parish) in respect of which the Independent Remuneration Panel makes recommendations;
 - Would be disqualified from being a Councillor of any local authority;
 - Are a member of a political party;
 - Are a close relative or friend of any elected member of the Council.
- 5.2 To advertise the vacancies on the Panel, a press release was issued, on the Council's website with a front page link, seeking expressions of interest from applicants.
- 5.3 A number of application packs, explaining the role of the Independent Remuneration Panel, and its Members were issued in response to enquiries received.
- 5.4 Interviews were carried out by the Acting Chief Executive, the interim Director of Governance and Compliance and the Head of Democratic Services and Governance. Having concluded the recruitment process, three candidates are recommended for appointment: Professor Steve Leach, Mrs Amanda Ramsden and Mrs Jacqueline Grinham.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1 Legal Implications

7.1.1 The Members' Allowances Regulations 2003 require that an Independent Remuneration Panel is established and maintained.

6.2 Finance Implications

6.2.1 The authority will be required to meet the cost of Panel expenses and the Chairman's allowance of £500 per day. This will be met from existing budget provision.

6.2.2 There is the potential for the outcome of the governance review and/or consideration of the Parental Leave Policy to have a financial impact on the Scheme.

6.3 Policy Implications

6.3.1 The work of the Panel will inform the Members' Parental Leave Policy.

6.4 Equality Implications

6.4.1 None

6.5 Human Resources Implications

6.5.1 None

6.6 Risk Management Implications

6.6.1 No risks have been identified.

6.6.2 The appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel will ensure that the Council receives independent advice on the level of remuneration, which should be paid to Councillors in recognition of their responsibilities.

6.7 Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

6.8 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

6.9 Public Health Implications

6.9.1 There are no direct implications for public health.

6.10 Climate Change Implications

6.10.1 There are no direct implications for climate change.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1 All Ward Members

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1 May emerge from work on the new governance model.

9. Access to Information

9.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

10. Contact Information

10.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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