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## **Corporate Policy Committee**

**12 June 2025**

### **Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel**

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**Report of: Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer**

**Report Reference No: CPC/31/25-26**

**Ward(s) Affected: All**

**For Decision**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To appoint three individuals to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 2 The report invites the Committee to approve the appointment of the three individuals named in the report to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a four-year term of office.
- 3 The report has been submitted to Corporate Policy Committee in line with paragraph 2.13 of its Terms of Reference 'To have oversight and monitoring of the Councillors' Allowances budget and keeping under review the scheme for the payment of allowances to Councillors through the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to advise full Council on the adoption and any proposed amendments to such scheme'.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Reappoint Mandy Ramsden and Jacquie Grinham to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years, to commence immediately until 2029.

2. Appoint Dylan Edward (known as Eddie) Watkins to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years, to commence immediately until 2029.
3. Consider and approve the appointment of Mandy Ramsden to the position of Chair of the Panel for a period of four years, to commence immediately until 2029.
4. Agree that an allowance (to be determined by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Group Leaders) be paid to the Chair in recognition of their role.

## **Background**

- 4 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires local authorities to have in place an Independent Remuneration Panel ('the Panel').
- 5 Panel members are appointed for a four-year period; therefore, the new Panel's term of office will run from June 2025 to June 2029.
- 6 Applications from interested parties were received in response to a press release on the Council's website. Having concluded the recruitment process, the nominees for appointment are Mandy Ramsden and Jacquie Grinham who are current members of the Panel, and Eddie Watkins who will be a new appointee.
- 7 Prof. Steve Leach held the post of Chair throughout his membership of the Panel and following his retirement, there is now a need for the Committee to appoint a new Chair. The role specification stipulates that the post holder must have previous experience of being a member of an Independent Remuneration Panel, and that knowledge of local government is desirable.
- 8 Informal discussions have taken place with the two established members of the Panel and Mandy Ramsden has offered to take on the role, should the Committee be minded to agree her appointment. Mandy was a Senior Manager in Democratic Services at a major local authority and has been a member of the Panel for seven years.
- 9 There are certain bars relating to individuals who can be appointed to the Panel (as described in paragraph 11 of the report), but the candidates named above are eligible for appointment.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 10 No consultation or engagement is required to be carried out to facilitate the appointment of the Panel.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 11 Being an Effective and Enabling Council: The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires local authorities to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel, which must consist of at least three members who cannot be:
- i) A member of the authority or a member of a committee or sub-committee of the authority.
  - ii) A member of any of the local authorities (borough, town or parish) in respect of which the Panel makes recommendations.
  - iii) Disqualified from being or becoming a member of the authority.
  - iv) A close relative or friend of any elected member of the Council.
  - v) A member of a political party.
- 12 The nominations comply with the above and fulfils the objective of having at least one member on the Panel who has experience of local government.

## **Other Options Considered**

- 13 The Council is legally obliged to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel with a minimum membership of three, to comply with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

## **Implications and Comments**

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance*

- 14 To comply with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 the authority is required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 15 The committee has authority under the Constitution for the oversight and monitoring of the Council's allowances scheme through the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel (the panel). It is therefore within the committee's remit to approve appointments to the panel.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 16 The authority will be required to meet the cost of the Panel members expenses i.e., £75 per meeting up to four hours, £150 per meeting over four hours, as set out in Cheshire East Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances. As the Panel will meet as and when required and is only expected to carry out one significant review over the course of its tenure, claims for meeting expenses can be met from existing budgetary provision within the Democratic Services budgets. Given that the former chair received an additional allowance in recognition of their role (aligned within the basic rates of pay made to other independent chairs or individuals), the payment of a similar allowance to the new Chair will not increase expenditure.

### *Human Resources*

- 17 There are no direct implications for human resources.

### *Risk Management*

- 18 The appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel will ensure that the Council is compliant with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and that it receives independent advice on the level of remuneration, which should be paid to Cheshire East Councillors in recognition of their responsibilities.

### *Impact on other Committees*

- 19 There is the potential for the outcome of the Panel's reviews to have an impact on the special responsibility allowances paid to committee chairs and vice chairs in accordance with Cheshire East's current Scheme of Members' Allowances.

### *Policy*

- 20 An effective and enabling Council: The appointment of an independent panel ensures that there is transparency in all aspects of Council decision making.

### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 21 There are no direct implications for equality, diversity and inclusion.

### *Other Implications*

- 22 There are no direct implications relating to rural communities, Children and young people, public health or climate change.

## Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy):</i>			
Sal Khan	Deputy S151 Officer	29/05/25	29/05/25
Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer	29/05/25	29/05/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Diane Moulson  diane.moulson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	<a href="#"><u>The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.</u></a>  Application forms submitted by the candidates for this appointment.