

Report To:	COUNCIL
Date:	24 JULY 2023
Heading:	APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
Executive Lead Member:	NOT APPLICABLE
Ward/s:	ALL
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	NO

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is for Council to agree appointments to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a four-year term. Council is also asked to approve Terms of Reference and role descriptors for the appointed Independent Remuneration Panel.

Recommendation(s)

Council is recommended to:

- a. Approve the appointment of Dr Declan Hall as the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel for a four-year term.
- b. Approve the appointment of Paula Watkinson and Andrew Frogson as Lay Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel for a four-year term.
- c. Approve the Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference (Appendix A) and role descriptors for the Chair (Appendix B) and Lay Members (Appendix C).
- d. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to agree associated fees and expenses connected with the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

To ensure that a review of the Members' allowances Scheme is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations Act 2003.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options are considered to be appropriate other than to comply with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003.

Detailed Information

PREVIOUS REVIEW

The Council approved the existing Members' Allowances Scheme in April 2020, following consideration of a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel in accordance with the requirements prescribed by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003. The Independent Remuneration Panel comprised of Dr Declan Hall as Chair and Paula Watkinson and Mark Cawar as Lay Members.

APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL, 2023-2027

Council is recommended to make appointments to the Independent Remuneration Panel, as the Panel's previous four-year term has come to an end.

Dr Declan Hall has Chaired the Independent Remuneration Panel on numerous occasions. A former academic at the Institute of Local Government, University of Birmingham, with extensive experience of public sector member allowance reviews across the UK, Dr Hall is considered an appropriate candidate for the role of Chairman of the Panel. His appointment ensures academic expertise and continuity.

In addition, two prospective Lay Members have been contacted in accordance with the Regulations and have indicated a willingness to participate in the next Independent Remuneration Panel review.

Paula Watkinson is a local business director at Ashfield Effluent Services Ltd, a company providing expert advice and services on all aspects of sewage treatment and waste management. Paula was appointed by Council to previous Panel and can offer valuable previous experience of reviewing member allowances.

Andrew Frogson has worked for many years in the textile industry, and in partnership launched the successful Sauce and Brown brand in April 2014. Sauce and Brown is a men's clothing brand with a shop located in Annesley Woodhouse. Andrew has not previously been appointed to an Independent Remuneration Panel so will offer a fresh perspective to the review process.

The prospective Panel Members will receive out-of-pocket expenses, and the Chairman of the Panel will receive a fixed fee to be agreed with the Chief Executive.

It is recommended that the Panel be appointed for a four-year term to maintain consistency should the Panel need to be re-called or undertake any further review in the future (for example, the Panel will be consulted if the Council looks to establish new Committees to review appropriate allowances to Chairs/Vice Chairs).

REVIEW PROCESS

The Members' Allowances Scheme is index linked and adjusted annually, but this can only be relied upon for a period of 4 years before another review of the Scheme has to be carried out. The previous review was carried out in October 2019. It is intended that the newly appointed Panel will undertake a review in October/November 2023, with dates to be agreed with Panel Members following appointment.

An indicative timeline for the review process would be as follows:

- July 2023 – Appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel by Council
- October/November 2023 – Review to be carried out by the Independent Remuneration Panel
- January 2024 – Findings of the Panel submitted to the Chief Executive
- April 2024 – Report including findings and final recommendations presented to Council for incorporation into a revised Members' Allowances Scheme

During the course of the review, the Panel will be asked to make recommendations on:

- The level of the basic allowance payable to all Councillors
- Special responsibility allowances payable to those Members holding positions of particular responsibility
- Any co-optee allowances
- Travel and subsistence allowances
- Childcare/dependent carer's allowances

As part of the review process, the Panel will seek evidence from Members via questionnaires. The Panel will also interview a cross-section of Members, as well as the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, and other relevant Officers. Other local authorities identified as suitable comparators will also be used for benchmarking purposes.

Proposed Terms of Reference for the Independent Remuneration Panel are set out in Appendix A. Proposed role descriptors for the Chair and Lay Members of the Panel are set out in Appendices B and C.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel to carry out a review of Member Allowances is in accordance with the Council's key value of honesty as established within the Corporate Plan. Ensuring effective community leadership through good governance, transparency, accountability, and appropriate behaviours.

Legal:

The Council is obligated to comply with the requirements prescribed in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and arrange to adopt a revised Allowances Scheme following recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel no later than April 2024.

Finance:

The costs associated with the Independent Remuneration Panel undertaking a review of the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme will include travel and subsistence for all Panel Members along with a fixed fee for the appointed Chair, to be agreed through delegation by the Chief Executive. Any costs will be accommodated within the Member Services budget.

Budget Area	Implication
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General Fund – Revenue Budget	As above.
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
The four-year term for the previously appointed Independent Remuneration Panel comes to an end in July 2023. This means the Council would not have a Panel appointed to conduct a review of Members Allowances in accordance with the requirements set out within the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.	Council is recommended to appoint membership to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a new four-year term to enable a review of Member Allowances to take place in 2023 and a revised Members' Allowances Scheme to be adopted in 2024.

Human Resources:

There are no direct human resources implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Environmental/Sustainability:

There are no direct environmental or sustainability implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Equalities:

There are no direct equalities implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Other Implications:

There are no other implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None.

Reason(s) for Exemption

None.

Background Papers

None.

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