

Divisions affected – All

COUNCIL

8 JULY 2025

APPOINTMENTS TO AND FORMATION OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Report of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Council is RECOMMENDED to:** -
 - a) confirm the appointment of Benjamin Anim-Antwi, Martyn Hocking, Stephen McKechnie and Dave Shelmerdine as Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel and
 - b) to form the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of two years.

Independent Remuneration Panel

2. This report provides details of the arrangements for the forthcoming review of members' allowances to be completed in the current Council Year 2025/26 and implemented from 1 April 2026.
3. The last full review of the allowances agreed by members was in November 2021. The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) had made recommendations to the Council in December 2020 but members agreed to defer consideration of any changes until the new Council had been elected in May 2021. The current Scheme of Allowances was implemented from 1 April 2022 and provided for indexation for the maximum period of time permitted under the Members' Allowances (Local Authorities) (England) Regulations 2003, until 31 March 2026.
4. A further review of allowances is now required with any recommended changes to be implemented in a new Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2026.
5. In order to undertake a review, the Council needed to renew the Independent Remuneration Panel. Positions on the Independent Remuneration Panel to consider the review were advertised on the Council's website and LinkedIn during the period 21 April to 11 May 2025. Eight applications were received including two from members of the previous panel interested in continuing.

Interviews were held on 25 and 26 June 2025 and the interview panel comprised the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources, the Monitoring Officer and the Interim Head of Legal and Governance. Four were selected to be recommended to the Council for appointment to the panel.

Timetable for review

6. The timetable for the work to be undertaken by the Independent Remuneration Panel will be as follows: -

July 2025 – Panel to review legislation, current political structure and agree a plan for the review.

Distribute questionnaire to members including invitation to be available for interview.

August and September 2025 – Panel to review questionnaire responses and research, and to set up programme of councillor interviews.

Conduct councillor interviews.

September and October 2025 – Panel to agree any recommended revisions to scheme.

4 November 2025 – Council to consider report and recommendations.

7. An initial task for the Independent Remuneration Panel will be to consider making a recommendation on the allowances payable in the event (as now), that there are two main Opposition Groups with an equal number of members.
8. In addition, the Council is receiving a Parental Leave Policy at its meeting on 8 July 2025 and, as a consequence, the IRP will be asked to confirm their agreement to the continued payment of allowances to councillors whilst they are on Parental Leave as set out in the Parental Leave Policy.

Corporate policies and priorities

9. Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel are an important part of the Council's corporate governance assurance framework.

Financial implications

10. There is existing provision for payment of allowances of £500 per annum to members of the Independent Remuneration Panel in the Council's 2025-26 revenue budget. Provision will need to be made in the 2026-27 Revenue Budget estimates for any changes to the scheme of members' allowances approved by the Council.

Comments checked by: Tom James, Head of Financial Services.

Legal implications

11. The Council is required to adopt a Scheme of Allowances ahead of 1 April 2026 to apply from that date. Under the Members' Allowances (Local Authorities) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel when making or revising a scheme of allowances. Any decision not to follow the Panel's recommendations must be published. Consequently, Full Council should consider the Panel's recommendations, but it is for Council itself to agree its own scheme.
12. Therefore, Council can: (a) Follow the Panel's recommendations in whole or in part (b) Agree a revised scheme of allowances, either in whole or in part, including a 'status quo' arrangement

Comments checked by: Kim Sawyer, Interim Head of Legal and Governance

Employee implications

13. There are no direct implications affecting employees arising from this report.

Equality and inclusion implications

14. **Local residents of all backgrounds**, including those from minority and protected characteristic groups, are **actively encouraged to apply for co-opted positions** at the Council. The Council is **committed to removing any barriers** related to personal background or experience and will provide **reasonable adjustments** as needed to ensure **fair, inclusive access** to these roles, reflecting the **diversity of the communities we serve**. This approach aligns with the Council's public sector equality duties to *advance equality of opportunity* between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not, ensuring no group is disadvantaged in participating in local governance.

Anita Bradley

Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

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