



Report of Corporate Management Team

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To consider the appointments to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Executive summary

- 2 Under The Local Authorities (Member's Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("The Regulations") the Council must make a Scheme of Allowances for Members each year. The Regulations also provide that before the beginning of each financial year, the authority shall review the Scheme and before it confirms or amends the Scheme, it shall have regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel ("the Panel").
- 3 Also provided for in the regulations is that the Authority shall establish an Independent Remuneration Panel which must consist of at least three members.
- 4 In June 2019, Council agreed arrangements to refresh the Panel, and a new panel of up to seven was established with the term of office of its members being for a five year period to 30 September 2024.
- 5 Last year, the County Council resolved to retain the existing scheme in 2023/24 and 2024/25 and to ask the IRP to undertake a fundamental review in the summer of 2024 to inform the scheme for 2025/26 and beyond, which would coincide with implementation of the Local Government Boundary Review recommendations.
- 6 The terms of office of the current panel are due to expire on 30 September 2024.
- 7 The report sets out proposals to extend / re-appoint the existing IRP members (subject to their willingness to continue) for a further 12 months to ensure continuity whilst a new Member Allowance Scheme

for 2025/26 to 2028/29 is developed. A recruitment exercise will be undertaken in 2025 to seek nominations and appoint to the IRP for a five year period from 2025. Existing members of the IRP will be free to reapply if they wish at that stage.

Recommendation

- 5 County Council is recommended to:
- i. Record its thanks to the members of the Panel for their support to date in reviewing the Member Allowance Scheme.
 - ii. Support the proposal to re-appoint the existing IRP (subject to their willingness to continue) for a further twelve months to ensure continuity whilst a new Member Allowance Scheme for 2025/26 to 2028/29 is developed;
 - iii. Note the intention to undertake a recruitment exercise in 2025 for IRP members for a term of five years;
 - iv. In the event fewer than three members are able to continue on the Panel, request that the Corporate Director of Resources undertakes a recruitment exercise with a view to appointing new Members.

Background

- 6 Under The Local Authorities (Member's Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("The Regulations"), the Council must make a Scheme of Allowances for Members each year.
- 7 The Regulations also provide that before the beginning of each financial year, the authority shall review the Scheme and before it confirms or amends the Scheme, it shall have regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel ("the Panel"). The Scheme may be amended at any time during the financial year.
- 8 Also provided for in the Regulations is that the Authority shall establish an Independent Remuneration Panel which must consist of at least three members none of whom:
 - a) is also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of such an authority; or
 - b) is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority.
- 9 Local Authorities are to have regard to guidance that was issued on the regulations and to ensure that their appointments process commands public confidence. The guidance states that the Panel should be:
 - truly independent,
 - well qualified to discharge the functions of the Panel; and
 - representative of the diversity of the communities in the local authority's area.
- 10 The guidance also indicates that local authorities will need to consider the term of office of members of the Panel and recognises that the Panel may become more effective as its knowledge and understanding of members allowances is increased. Accordingly, local authorities may wish to consider appointing members of the panel for a term of office of several years, perhaps 3 to 5 years.
- 11 Local authorities may advertise for candidates in local newspapers or may ask particular stakeholders, for example for voluntary sector or the local business community to put forward candidates. In all cases the local authority is required to ensure its appointments process is open to public scrutiny.
- 12 To maintain credibility of its Panel a local authority must give due consideration to whether all its Panel members are recognised members of the local community. Political appointments and any

appointments which are made through friendship or any other personal association with members of the Authority are to be avoided.

Existing Independent Remuneration Panel

- 13 In 2019 Council agreed to establish a new panel of up to seven members with a five-year term of office. At that time, the IRP consisted of four Members. Appointments were offered to the two existing members appointed in 2015. The two panel members who had served since 2009 were not offered an extension to their appointments.
- 14 Following a recruitment exercise, three further appointments were made by the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council. The current members on the Panel, whose terms of office are due to expire on 30 September 2024, are:-
 - Joyce Drummond-Hill
 - Alan Fletcher
 - Steve Lothain
 - Raymond Morris
 - Ian Youll
- 15 Panel members do not receive an allowance, however they are reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in attending meetings.
- 16 Following the Local Government Boundary Commission Review, the Council is required to conduct a fundamental review of the Member Allowance Scheme to be implemented from May 2025.
- 17 In June 2023, Council agreed that there would be no further changes to the existing allowances scheme pending this review. It also agreed that once a new scheme is adopted, it will be subject to review every four years, in advance of the new council being elected each electoral cycle.
- 18 It is envisaged that the review of the existing scheme will commence in June 2024 and will still be ongoing around the same time that the terms of office of the existing Panel expire. The review will be concluded by December 2024 at the very latest so that Council can consider the position and factor any amendments into the 2025/26 base budget as appropriate.
- 19 Consideration has been given to undertaking a recruitment exercise with a view to appointing a new Panel. However, it is considered preferable to re-appoint the existing Panel for a further term. This will avoid any issues arising in the event there is limited interest in applying for the roles and will also ensure continuity. The IRP are familiar with the Council's arrangements and have a well-established approach for considering the Scheme of Allowances.

- 20 This proposal is subject to the existing Members being willing to continue in their role. In the event that some or all of them are unable to continue, a recruitment exercise will need to be undertaken.
- 21 If the Panel are willing to continue, it is proposed that a recruitment exercise is conducted in advance of the review, which will need to be conducted in 2028 for the period 2029/20 onwards.
- 22 Constitution Working Group at its meeting on 22 February 2024 advised of its support for the proposals.

Background papers

The Local Authorities (Member's Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

To comply with the Local Authorities (Member's Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("The Regulations").

Finance

Advertising costs of seeking applications and reimbursement of reasonable expenses.

Consultation and Engagement

None specific within this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None specific within this report.

Human Rights

None specific within this report.

Crime and Disorder

None specific within this report.

Staffing

None specific within this report.

Accommodation

None specific within this report.

Risk

None specific within this report.

Procurement

None specific within this report.