

## Council Meeting

13<sup>th</sup> January 2020

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

The ongoing review of the Council's governance arrangements will result in the introduction of a different set of roles and responsibilities for Members. At the meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019, the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee agreed that in order to maintain a robust Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) review process and to sustain a public perception of independence it was necessary that the membership of the IRP be refreshed. Consequently, the Committee resolved that the Head of Democratic and Member Services be authorised:

- (a) to advertise for candidates from the general public and a wide range of organisations, including the local business community and voluntary organisations, for up to five members of the IRP to serve for a period of four years and conduct the next review of Members' Allowances; and
- (b) to interview and recommend for selection (in consultation with political Group Leaders) up to five nominees for appointment to the IRP.

It was further agreed that the appointment to the IRP be subject to approval of the Council.

### RECOMMENDATION:

The Council is requested to appoint the following 6 persons to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of 4 years:-

Peter Bounds (Chair)  
Helen Brennan  
Jenny Chapman-Brown  
Tony Green  
Steve Griffiths  
Keryn Malthouse

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 If the Council wishes to make or amend a Scheme of Members' Allowances for Councillors it must appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to conduct such a review. Whilst the membership of the IRP was confirmed at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2019 and that Panel was beginning its review of Members' Allowances under the Council's current governance arrangements, the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee determined that in order to maintain a robust IRP review process and to sustain a public perception of independence it was necessary that the membership of the IRP be refreshed in advance of implementation of any new or revised governance arrangements, and that the new IRP be tasked with formulating a new Scheme of Members' Allowances.
- 1.2 Guidance identifies the need to ensure that Councillors' allowances both encourages people to come forward as elected members and helps to retain such service to the community. Achieving a Panel that is independent, well qualified, and representative of the diversity of communities in the Borough is essential to this aim. The recruitment process was critical to a successful refresh: the approach adopted utilised advertising and inviting organisations to put forward candidates.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 An advert was placed on the Council Website in early November 2019 and the Recruitment Team shared it with partners across the borough as well as utilising Social Media. The Panel must consist of at least 3 members, none of whom can be a member of the authority or who would otherwise be disqualified from becoming a member of the authority.
- 2.2 The Head of Democratic and Member Services and the Head of Legal Services met with each candidate in early December and consulted with all group leaders providing them with an opportunity to comment on the suggested appointments.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee agreed that the Chair receives an honorarium set at £500 per annum.

### **4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council must appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to review its Scheme of Members' Allowances in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

4.2 Whilst the IRP is required to make a recommendation, the IRP has always consulted all Political Group Leaders during each periodic review of Members' Allowances and then produced a written report for the Council to consider. It is the Council that decides whether or not to increase Members' allowances, not the IRP.

4.3 The Guidance referred to is that issued by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003, which this Council has followed, and states as follows:

*'5.1 A local authority should give very serious consideration not only to ensuring the independence of its independent remuneration panel but also the public perception of this independence. To maintain the credibility of its panel a local authority will need to consider the extent to which some, if not all, of its panel members are recognisable members of the local community. Political appointments, and appointments which are made through friendship or any other personal association of any members of the council should always be avoided.'*

*5.2 Local authorities should consider very carefully the extent of any candidate's connections to a political party and whether these are such as to risk the effective discharge of the panel's functions were the candidate to be appointed.*

*5.3 In appointing its panel, a local authority should consider candidates' knowledge of local government and the way it works although lack of familiarity with the functions of councils should not be a bar to appointment.'*

## **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

None.

## **8.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

If the IRP is not appointed at the January Council Meeting there is a risk that the IRP will have insufficient time to formulate and recommend a new Members' Allowances Scheme to the Council in readiness for the start of the new Municipal Year.

## **9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

Group Leaders were consulted.

## **10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

## **11.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None.

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## **APPENDICES**

None

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003  
Minutes of the Constitutional Oversight Committee – 26 September 2016

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee	26 Sept 2019
Council	14 May 2019