

## **Report to Council**

**Subject:** Independent Remuneration Panel - Report and recommendations for 2024/25

**Date:** 24 January 2024

**Author:** Democratic Services Manager

### **Purpose**

To inform Council of the latest report from the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) relating to member remuneration for 2024/25, to invite Council to consider the recommendations made by the Panel and to agree to launch a recruitment exercise to fill the current vacancy.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and whether to accept the recommendations contained in the report, or to propose an alternative; and**
- 2) Consequent on the IRP recommendations being accepted, to agree the schedule of members' allowances for 2024/25 as attached at Appendix 2 to this report; and**
- 3) To authorise the Monitoring Officer to make appropriate amendments to section 29 of the Constitution to reflect any changes to the members' allowances scheme agreed; and**
- 4) Agree to launch a recruitment exercise to fill the current vacancy on the Independent Remuneration Panel; and**
- 5) Agree to establish a cross party interview panel of 3 Members to interview suitable candidates for the Independent Remuneration Panel as detailed in the report and make recommendation to Council as to appointment.**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. The last IRP recommendations were agreed at Council in June 2023 and payment was made in November, being backdated to April 2023. For the 2023/24 years, allowances were increased by 3.5%, in line with the pay award to senior local government staff.

- 1.2. The Council will recall that, following a successful recruitment campaign, two new members were appointed to the IRP in September 2023. The two appointments meant the IRP had four members in total, giving much needed resilience.
- 1.3. The IRP met in November and December 2023 to carry out its annual review of members' allowances.
- 1.4. Following that meeting, the Panel prepared a report to members regarding the suggested level of members' allowances to be payable for 2024/25. As detailed in the report, the reviewed anonymised responses from members, as well as some benchmarking of allowances paid by surrounding councils of varying size and political control. Current and predicted financial information, such as inflation figures (CPI and RPI), were also reviewed to get a feel for the upcoming national financial picture.
- 1.5. Unfortunately, before the second meeting of the Panel was had, one of the members resigned. As such, there is a need to complete another recruitment exercise to fill the vacancy and secure the resilience on the IRP.

## **2. Proposal**

- 2.1 The Panel's report, including associated recommendations, is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Should Council be minded to accept the Panel's recommendations, then the level of allowances to be paid to members for 2024/25, subject to any pay award, will be as set out at Appendix 2.
- 2.3 Should Council be minded to accept the recommendation to recruit, then the recruitment for the vacant post will begin shortly.

## **3. Alternative Options**

- 3.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel is advisory in nature so Council could decide on an alternative scheme of allowances payable to members.
- 3.2 The law requires 3 members of the IRP so we are currently quorate, however an extra member would ensure future quoracy.

## **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Should Council accept the Panel's recommendations, then costs will be included in proposed budgets for 2024/25. Not all costs are known, due to the ad hoc nature of some of the suggested allowances, but it is estimated that the removal of the allowances for the Business Manager and Policy

Advisors would mean no increases are needed to budgets with the 3.8% increase on all members basic allowances.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) set out that local authorities must establish a panel to review and advise on the level of allowances payable to members. The Council must have regard to the recommendation made by the Panel, but ultimately do not have to accept them.

## **6. Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 The scheme as a whole seeks to support members by providing financial support for carers and parents.

## **7. Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 There are no environmental sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel 2024/25  
8.2 Appendix 2 – Proposed schedule of Members Allowances 2024/25

## **9. Background Papers**

- 9.1 None identified

<b>Statutory Officer approval</b>	
<b>Approved by: Mike Hill</b>	Financial Officer
<b>Date: 16.01.2024</b>	
<b>Approved by: Fran Whyley</b>	Monitoring Officer
<b>Date: 16.01.2024</b>	