

Wiltshire Council

Council

23 February 2021

Subject: Appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel

Cabinet Member: Cllr Richard Clewer- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts and Tourism, Housing and Communities.
Member

Key Decision: Non-Key

Executive Summary

The report recommends appointments to an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to review the Wiltshire Council Members' Allowance Scheme, for implementation in the new council term.

Proposal(s)

That Council:

a) Notes the process undertaken to recruit members to an Independent Remuneration Panel and approves the appointment of:

**John Quinton – Panel Chairman
Bernadette Fitzmaurice – Panel Member**

b) Delegates authority to the Director of Legal and Governance, in consultation with Group Leaders (or their nominated representative), to undertake the selection process and appointment of the final Panel member, and if subsequent vacancies may arise during the course of a review.

c) Notes that Panel members are appointed for a 4-year term.

Reason for Proposal(s)

To ensure an Independent Remuneration Panel can be convened and undertake research in advance of the new council term.

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Purpose of Report

1. The report recommends appointments to an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to review the Members Allowance Scheme, for implementation in the new council term.

Background

2. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 specify that members' allowances must be reviewed every 4 years. Full Council is ultimately responsible for agreeing members' allowances, however Council can only determine members' allowances following review by an Independent Remuneration Panel ('the Panel').
3. A report to Council on [20 October 2020](#) explained the Council no longer had a Panel and Council agreed arrangements for recruitment. It is best practice that a Panel be appointed for 4 years, and after a thorough review of the Members' Allowance Scheme at the start of each term, produce annual reports considering any in-year changes required. Changes may be prompted by amendments to roles, responsibilities, governance arrangements or government guidance that would warrant a review of a specific area of the scheme and the Panel may be convened upon request.
4. The Panel will recommend arrangements on members' allowances following an evidence-led approach which normally includes (but is not limited to): reviewing the number and duration of committee meetings and governance arrangements; comparing allowances with similar authorities; surveying members; and conducting interviews with members to understand more about their roles.
5. The Council has previously favoured the approach of undertaking a review that spans two council terms to ensure both outgoing and new councillors can submit evidence. To allow the Panel to begin its work prior to the May 2021 elections, recommendations for Panel appointments are submitted to this meeting.

Main Considerations

6. Following the decision of Council to recruit Panel members, an advert for the roles was issued for 7 weeks on the Council's website and was promoted via social media.

The advert was also promoted with the following contacts to attract a variety of applicants: South West Councils, School Governors, School Appeal Panel members, Deputy Lieutenants, previous IRP Panel members, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Community Engagement Managers, and Voluntary and Community Sector contacts.

7. Following the advertisement campaign, representatives from each of the political groups on the council participated in an interview process of shortlisted candidates with the Monitoring Officer and recommended the appointment of three panel members. Unfortunately, since that time, one of the candidates has had to withdraw leaving a vacancy.
8. The candidates recommended to Full Council are therefore:

John Quinton

John lives in Dorset and is now retired following a long career in local government, including a working as Head of Democratic Services for Wiltshire Council 2003-2013. John's experience means he has sound knowledge the council's governance arrangements and Wiltshire's communities. Prior to working for Wiltshire Council, John performed a similar role at Surrey County Council, developing experience of working in large political organisations, managing budgets, and complex projects. Since his retirement, John has served on, and chaired, IRPs for former district councils within Dorset and Bournemouth, both successor and unitary councils, and for the Dorset and Wiltshire Combined Fire Authority.

Bernadette Fitzmaurice

Bernadette lives in Salisbury and is recently retired from a career in contract management, compliance and commissioning, including for a period with Wiltshire Council and Aster Communities in Devizes. Bernadette's previous experience also includes a time as Service Manager for Action for Blind People (Wiltshire Hampshire and Dorset).

9. Since the Panel is required to meet in the spring of 2021, and there is not a Council meeting before this time, it is recommended that Council delegate to the Director of Legal and Governance, in consultation with Group Leaders (or their nominated representative), to undertake the selection process and appointment of the final member of the panel. This delegation would also include where any vacancies may arise during the course of a review and there is not a Council meeting within sufficient timescales to recommend appointments.
10. The Panel will be supported by the Monitoring Officer and officers within the Democracy service who will provide administrative support to the Panel and gather evidence requested. Political Group representatives recommended that John Quinton be appointed Chair of the Panel in light of his previous experience chairing such panels.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

11. The Panel will undertake an independent review of members' allowances, prior to determination by Full Council, therefore Overview and Scrutiny engagement is not required.

Safeguarding Implications

12. There are no safeguarding implications.

Public Health Implications

13. The work of the Panel will take place virtually in accordance with public health advice in respect of Covid-19.

Procurement Implications

14. There are no procurement implications.

Equalities implications

15. The recruitment and selection of Panel members has been undertaken to ensure those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are treated equally in this process.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

16. There are no environmental implications.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is or isn't taken and actions that will be taken to mitigate these risks

17. Should the Council not appoint an IRP it would be unable to fulfil its duties under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

Financial implications

18. Provision for the payment of Panel members is made within the existing budget.
19. The recommendations of the IRP will come to Full Council to consider at the final stage.

Legal implications

20. Without an IRP the council is not able to fulfil its duties under the Local Authorities (Member's Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

Workforce implications

21. Staff resource will be provided from within existing staffing structures, primarily from the Democracy service, to support the recruitment of Panel members, provide training and supply evidence requested

Conclusions

22. The Council is required to review the Members' Allowance Scheme for the new Council term, as such it is recommended an Independent Remuneration Panel be appointed, as set out in this report.

Lead Director – Ian Gibbons – Director of Legal and Governance, and Monitoring Officer.

Report Author: Libby Johnstone (Democracy Manager)

05.02.21