



# COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>COUNCIL – 16 JULY 2025</b>
Subject	<b>APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL MEMBER(S)</b>
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Every, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk">mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To seek approval to appoint members of the public to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel, which is responsible for assessing and making recommendations on the allowances paid to councillors.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: 1. Approve the appointment of Nikki Clark, Nick Craxton, David Hindle and Graham Russell to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering Good Services</li><li>• Supporting Communities</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	An open recruitment exercise was undertaken between February and June 2025.



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** Council is recommended to appoint four members of the public to its Independent Remuneration Panel following a recruitment exercise. This will ensure that the Panel is quorate and can undertake a mid-term review of the Member Allowance Scheme 2023/24 to 2026/27 over the coming months.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 ("The Regulations") provides for local authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The Council's IRP is responsible for the monitoring of the Councillors' Allowances Scheme and making recommendations to the Council regarding the scheme.
- 2.2** The Regulations require that an IRP comprising at least three independent members of the public review and assess councillors' allowances and make a recommendation on the scheme to be adopted by the Council. The Panel produces a report making recommendations about the payment and amount of allowances, the duties to which special responsibility allowance are applicable, and whether allowances should be index-linked. The IRP also makes recommendations to the Council whenever the Council decides to either revoke or amend its current scheme. The Council is under a duty to have due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) when determining its members' allowances.
- 2.3** The Council has adopted a four-year Members' Allowances Scheme, effective from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2027. In accordance with good governance practice, the scheme is scheduled for a mid-term review.
- 2.4** One of the Council's three IRP Members, Jane Winstanley, resigned from the Panel for personal reasons on 6 January 2025.

## **3. RECRUITMENT OF PANEL MEMBERS**

- 3.1** The Council is legally required to advertise any vacancy for Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) members in a manner it considers likely to bring the vacancy to the attention of the public. It must also invite applications to fill the vacancy and ensure that any proposed appointment is approved by full Council



**3.2** Accordingly, the role of Independent Remuneration Panel Members was advertised on a number of platforms including the Council's website. The recruitment campaign closed on 24 February 2025.

**3.3** Four applicants were assessed as meeting the required criteria and were subsequently invited to attend an interview:

- Graham Russell is a former Head of Democratic Services at a local authority in the South West region and a current member of a number of Independent Remuneration Panels in the region.
- Nick Craxton works in the telecommunications industry and has a background in reward and more recently risk management and governance. Nick currently sits on his organisation's Ethics Forum.
- Nikki Clark, a local resident, offers strong governance and compliance experience, including chairing committees and leading recruitment panels as a school governor. Her background in HR and contract management also demonstrates sound judgment, process awareness, and a clear understanding of public accountability.
- David Hindle, now retired, offers over 20 years of senior local government experience, a deep understanding of councillors' roles, strong ethical standards, financial and analytical expertise, full eligibility and independence, and a demonstrated commitment to public service, making him well-aligned with the requirements of the role.

**3.4** Of the four candidates, two reside within the District, while the remaining two live outside the District but within a commutable distance of the Council's offices.

**3.5** The appointment of four additional Panel Members will bring the total membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to six, exceeding the statutory minimum of three. This approach enhances the Panel's resilience, supports a broader diversity of perspectives, and helps distribute workload more effectively across its members.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**4.1** Council could choose not to confirm the proposed appointments. However, this option is not recommended. Independent Remuneration Panel roles are often



challenging to recruit to, and the Council currently has the opportunity to appoint four strong and suitably qualified candidates.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 1.1.** At its meeting on 26 May 2021, Full Council resolved that each Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) member should receive a one-off annual payment of £250 in recognition of their time commitment. Subject to the approval of the proposed appointments, the newly appointed Panel Members will be entitled to this payment. The annual payments will be met from existing budget provision.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) members is a matter for Full Council. Individuals meeting any of the disqualifying criteria outlined below are not eligible for appointment. These eligibility requirements were clearly stated in the public advertisement for the role:

- An elected Member of the local authority
- A member of any committees of the local authority (including co-opted members)
- Anyone disqualified from becoming a member of the local authority
- Anyone with a close personal relationship with a member or officer of the Council
- Anyone working for an organisation that receives grants from the Council
- Anyone under 18 years of age

- 6.2** All candidates confirmed at interview that they are eligible for appointment.

## **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1** Failure to maintain a properly appointed Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) with at least three public members would prevent the Council from undertaking a mid-term review of the Members' Allowances Scheme at a future meeting, potentially resulting in non-compliance with governance expectations and legislative requirements.

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**



**8.1** In appointing members to the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), the Council must have due regard to its statutory duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. This duty extends to ensuring fair and inclusive consideration of candidates in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

By adhering to these criteria, the Council demonstrates its commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the appointment process.

## **9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** There are no climate or ecological implications arising directly from this report.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**10.1** None.

(END)