

 COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	ANNUAL COUNCIL - 26 MAY 2021
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 10
Subject	APPOINTMENT TO THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader Email: joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Monitoring Officer
Summary/Purpose	To appoint a person to be a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel and ask the Panel to carry out a review of councillor allowances
Annexes	None
Recommendation/s	<i>It is recommended that Council:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) Appoints Mr Richard Blamey as the third member of the Independent Remuneration Panel with immediate effect;</i> <i>b) Ask the Independent Remuneration Panel to carry out a review of councillor allowances and bring a report back to Council by September;</i> <i>c) Authorises a one off payment of £250 to be paid to all members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.</i>
Corporate priorities	N/A
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	None

I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1 The Council is required, under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to make recommendations to the Council on a Scheme of Members' Allowances for Adoption.
- I.2 The appointment and purpose of the Panel is to review the Members' Allowances Scheme ([here](#)) and make recommendations to Council about the allowances to be paid to elected councillors. The Council must have regard to the recommendations of the IRP when making or amending its Scheme.
- I.3 Public perception of the independence of the IRP and the robustness of the review process is important. The Regulations require that the Panel shall consist of at least three members, none of whom is formally connected with the Council. It is also essential for the Council to ensure the Panel remains representative and in touch with the issues and challenges face by those making decisions.
- I.4 The members of the Panel are:
- Mrs Jane Winstanley, M.B.E. - retired, independent Chair - who has served on the Panel since its original inception;
- Mr Michael Paget-Wilkes - the independent person who assists the Monitoring Officer in the consideration of Code of Conduct complaints relating to district/parish/town councillors;
- Mr Simon Harper - Head of Democratic Services, Gloucestershire County Council -who also served on the Panel since its original inception.
- I.5 Unfortunately, Mr Harper has had to stand down and therefore, the Council must appoint a third member to the IRP Panel.
- I.6 Mr Richard Blamey is the chair of both Gloucestershire County Council and Tewkesbury BC IRPs and has been carrying out this role for six years. He is prepared to be a member of the Cotswold District Council IRP. Mr Blamey has a great deal of knowledge of members' allowances and regularly attends meetings of the South West IRP Chairs' Network.
- I.7 The current scheme of allowances was agreed by Council in May 2019. The report, appendices and minutes can be accessed [here](#). The IRP made the following recommendations in relation to the basic allowance:-

*“(a) for 2018/19 - £4,500 per annum per councillor (backdated to 1/4/18);
(b) for 2019/20 - a minimum of £5,000 per annum per councillor (although the Panel believes that an increase to £5,500 could be justified);
(c) for 2020/21, 2021/22,2022/23 - the Basic Allowance to be increased annually in line with an agreed measure - CPI or staff pay awards”*

- 1.8 It is usual to review the Members Allowance Scheme from time to time to ensure that it reflects current practice and that the levels are appropriate. For example, Stroud District Council has recently reviewed the ICT allowance and increased it from £390 (set in 2010) to £702 to reflect the increased cost of IT.
- 1.9 Subject to Council approval, the Panel will be able to commence its work immediately and will consider the inclusion and level of the following different types of allowances:
- Basic (to be paid to all councillors)
 - Special responsibility
 - Dependents' carers
 - Travelling and subsistence
 - Parental leave
 - ICT allowance
- 1.10 The panel will provide an opportunity for Councillors and other interested persons to make representations either in person or in writing. It will then prepare a report of its findings and recommendations to Council and the individual appointed as Chair of the Panel will be requested to present the proposals.
- 1.11 The Council will determine the types and amounts of allowances to be paid but the IRP will provide advice on those matters to which the Council must have due regard before making a decision.
- 1.12 In recognition of the time commitment by members of the Panel, it is recommended that a payment of £250 be paid to each Panel member on a one off basis.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 It is proposed to make a one off payment of £250 per person to each member of the Panel, which would mean a total of £750. Any implications arising from future IRP recommendations regarding member's allowances would be set out in a future report to Council.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All legal implications are set out in the body of the report

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 There are no risks arising from the recommendations made in this report

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT (IF REQUIRED)

- 5.1 There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations made in this report

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 No alternative options have been considered. The Council must have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel when considering member allowances.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

(END)