



INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Cabinet will be aware that, before making or amending a scheme of members' allowances, it is necessary to obtain a recommendation from an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). Members' allowances issues, including the process of recruitment of IRP members, was previously overseen by the Standards Committee. The current Panel (see 2.1 below) was appointed until May 2011.
- 1.2 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provide that where an authority relies on an index for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances, it must not do so for longer than 4 years without a recommendation from its Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council's scheme links adjustments for most allowances to the local government employees' national pay award annual percentage increase. This provision has been in place since April 2010 and it is therefore necessary for a review to be undertaken by the IRP for the scheme to apply from April 2014. The Panel should also be asked to consider parish and town council allowances where councils already, or wish to, pay allowances to their members.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Panel currently comprises:
 - Dr Declan Hall (Panel Chairman) – former lecturer at the Institute of Local Government, University of Birmingham, who specialises in Councillors' roles, remuneration and support. Dr Hall has chaired the IRP for the Council several times in the past.
 - Mrs Christine Ames – Steering Group Member of New Forest Tourism Association and former Board Member of New Forest Business Partnership.
 - A representative from South East Employers (SEE) (to be nominated by them). SEE have a wealth of external knowledge, benchmarking data from across the region and considerable experience with undertaking reviews.
 - Mrs Yvonne LeBrun - former Director of Care Services, NHS. Mrs LeBrun was not able to attend the last review and has never sat on the Panel.

3. SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD

- 3.1 The current Panel members have built up considerable knowledge and understanding of the Authority and the roles and responsibilities of members, and it is felt that it is both practical and advantageous to retain the members who participated in the last review (Dr Hall, Mrs Ames, and a representative from SEE). The previous terms of reference remain appropriate and could also be retained.
- 3.2 The Cabinet should fix a period for the term each member should serve on the Panel. It is recommended that this be four years from the date the Panel first sits.

- 3.3 Officers will write to Parish and Town Councils in due course to inform them of the pending review and enquiring whether they wish the Panel to make recommendations for allowances to their councillors. Any costs of the Panel sitting as a Parish Remuneration Panel for this purpose must be borne by the Parish and Town Councils affected.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Payments to three IRP members will cost in the region of £4,000. This cost can be met from existing budgets.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL, EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY AND CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 6.1 That Dr Declan Hall, Mrs Christine Ames and a representative of South East Employers be appointed as the District Council's Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years from the date of their first meeting in the autumn of 2013;
- 6.2 That the terms of reference of the Panel be:
1. To review New Forest District Council's Members' Allowances Scheme when requested by the Cabinet, but at least every four years, and to make recommendations to the Cabinet for any changes to the Scheme that the Panel considers appropriate.
 2. To make recommendations for the level of any further allowances that might be referred to the Panel by the Cabinet from time to time.
 3. As and when requested by the Cabinet, to sit as the Independent Remuneration Panel for Parish and Town Councils in the District, and to make appropriate recommendations to Parish and Town Councils on the level of allowances to apply to their Councillors.
- 6.3 That Parish and Town Councils be informed of the review and be requested to indicate whether or not they wish to participate in the review.

Further information:

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Background papers:

Published Documents