

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Audit & Governance Committee – 23 July 2024
SUBJECT:	Recruitment of Independent Remuneration Panel
LEAD OFFICER:	Jane Fulton – Committee Services Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Matt Stanley
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003 Section 20 requires any District Council to have an Independent Remuneration Panel properly appointed before it can undertake any review of that authority's Members' Allowances Scheme.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: The Chief Executive has responsibility to ensure that the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel is legally appointed.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: No financial implications are identified.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Committee has responsibility for reviewing Councillor Allowances based on reports received from the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel created under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003.
- 1.2 The Constitution at Part 3, Responsibility for Functions, at Paragraph 6 confirms that "the Committee has responsibility for approving arrangements for establishing an Independent Remuneration Panel, in accordance with statutory requirements, and instructing the Chief Executive to make any appointments to the Panel in line with their delegated authority".
- 1.2 This report sets out plans to enable the Council to recruit a new Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) as the existing Panel's Terms of Office expired on 31 March 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) Endorses the options for recruiting a new Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in Section 4.6 of this report;
- (2) Agrees that the Council seeks to recruit a Panel consisting of five members for a term of 4 years;
- (3) Agrees the guidance note and application pack as attached to the report as Appendix 1;
- (4) Agrees to appoint two Members of the Committee, one to be the Chair, to sit on the IRP's Interview Panel; and

(5) Notes that in line with the Constitution, the Chief Executive will make appointments to the Panel in line with their delegated authority.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 The Audit & Governance Committee has responsibility for considering the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel created under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to review the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

3.2 This report sets out plans to recruit a new IRP which the Committee is asked to approve.

4. DETAIL

4.1 At its meeting held on 28 February 2023, this Committee received a report and approved to extend the existing appointments of all five members of the Independent Remuneration Panel as these were due to expire on 31 March 2023. The appointments were extended to 31 March 2024. This decision was made to allow the Panel to commence work on undertaking its next review of the Members' Allowances Scheme immediately following the District Elections held in May 2023. A link to this and other relevant reports can be found in the Background Papers section of this report.

4.2 The Panel concluded its review of the Members' Allowances Scheme and presented its findings and recommendations to this Committee at its meeting held on 19 February 2024. The Committee's recommendation to approve the review undertaken by the IRP was agreed at Full Council on 13 March 2024.

4.3 It is now necessary to recruit a new IRP so that a Panel is in place should there be a requirement to review any aspects of the Members' Allowances Scheme ahead of the next planned review in 2027 and to comply with statutory requirements.

4.4 As highlighted in Section 1 of this report, the confirmed functions of this Committee include approving arrangements for establishing an Independent Remuneration Panel in accordance with statutory requirements.

4.5 In line with constitutional requirements, this report is consulting with the Committee and seeking its approval in terms of the plans in place to recruit a new IRP.

Plans for Recruitment

4.6 In order to invite applications, an advertisement will be placed in local newspapers that cover the district and on the Council's website. The Council wishes to advertise to attract as much interest as possible. This process will include:

- An advert to be placed in the Council's Business Partnership e-newsletter (organised by the Economy Section) which is circulated to around 3,500 businesses on a monthly basis
- Advert to be sent to Human Resources to be included in positions vacant page placed on the Council's web pages and JobsGo Public publicity pages
- Place an advert (draft attached) in the local press (public notices section) as this has generated interest in the past
- Make direct approaches to:
 - South East Employers
 - Federation of Small Businesses
 - NHS Trusts
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Other partnership contacts

4.7 It is clear from the approaches made from previous recruitment exercises that using these methods works and does attract interest.

4.8 The information pack that will be provided will consist of a guidance note setting out the role and Functions of the Independent Remuneration Panel and how and when to apply.

4.9 A draft information pack containing these items can be found at Appendices (a) and (b) to this report and the Committee's comments and approval are sought in relation to these documents.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Internal consultation has taken place with the Corporate Management Team.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1 Not having an IRP in place is not an option as it is a legislative requirement.

6.2 As this Council operates a committee system form of governance, it is not recommended to consider other options to investigate the creation of a Joint Panel with neighbouring authorities as they operate a Leader and Cabinet form of governance.

6.3 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 at Part 4 – Independent Remuneration Panels, stipulates that an Independent Remuneration Panel shall consist of at least three members. There are no proposals to change the size of the Panel from 5 to 3 as a Panel of 5 provides greater flexibility when undertaking a Members' Allowances Review and reduces risks in terms of lack of cover in the case of illness or leave. This is in recognition of the fact that a full review of the Members' Allowances Scheme can take several months to conclude.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1 There are no direct financial implications. Any expenditure in relation to the recruitment process will be met from existing budget.

7.2 The remuneration that a member of the IRP receives when conducting a review of the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme was considered as part of the last Members' Allowances Review approved by Council on 13 March 2024.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Appointing an IRP supports the Council's governance arrangements and is a requirement of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 Councils are statutorily obliged to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and the Regulations confirm the steps that must be taken in that process. Any request made to review the Council's Members' Allowances' Scheme cannot be undertaken without first consulting with the IRP.

9.2 The statutory regulations at Part 4 confirm that an IRP shall consist of at least three members appointed at any one time. The Committee is being asked to confirm and agree that a new IRP shall consist of a membership of at least five.

9.3 Members of the IRP cannot be Elected Members of any local authority (including Town and Parish Councils) and it is advised that they should not be connected to any political party.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 There are no human resources implications. This work will be carried out by officers under their day-to-day duties.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Report to Audit & Governance Committee – 28 February 2023 [Extending the Terms of Office for the Existing IRP]

[Report – 28 February 2023](#)

Report to Audit & Governance Committee – 25 July 2023 [Members' Allowances Scheme – Progressing the Next Review]

[Report – 25 July 2023](#)

Report to the Audit & Governance Committee – 19 February 2024 [Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel]

[Report – 19 February 2024](#)