



Report to:	Council	30 November 2023
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance	
Lead Officer:	Peter Maddock, Chief Finance Officer	
Key Decision:	No	

Independent Remuneration Panel Appointment

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that Council approves the appointment of Nicky Blanning to the South Cambridgeshire District Council Independent Remuneration Panel for a three-year term of office, expiring on 30 November 2026.

Details

2. The Council is obliged under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to establish an independent remuneration panel, which must consist of at least three members. The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) makes recommendations to the Council in respect of Members' allowances. The Council has a duty to have regard to the recommendations of the IRP before making or amending a scheme of Members' allowances.
3. The IRP established by the Council currently comprises of two members: Ged Dempsey and Amanda Orchard. Their terms of office expire in September 2025.
4. Grant Osbourn resigned from the Panel in September 2023.
5. The Council must make a scheme for payment of basic allowance and special responsibility allowance, dependants' carers' allowance, travelling and subsistence allowance and co-optees' allowance.
6. Accordingly, a full review of the Members' scheme of allowances is required as soon as practical, to enable recommendations to be received from the IRP in respect of the current financial year 2023/24 and the next financial year (or years if the IRP recommends allowances are subject to indexation, which is an option open to the IRP to recommend, for up to four years). In order to meet the timetable for preparing the 2024/25 budget, it will be necessary to have an indication of what the IRP's recommendation is going to be and the additional cost, if any, by early December. Therefore, the Panel will need to conclude its review in December 2023,

with a recommendation to be put before Council at its February 2023 meeting. This would allow for an assumption to be made in the 2024/25 budget based on the recommendation being accepted.

7. Given this timescale, and in view of the unexpected vacancy on the IRP that arose in September, it has been necessary to seek a replacement IRP member in time for Council to approve the appointment of a third IRP member at the November meeting of full Council. Making an appointment will enable the IRP to conclude the review as soon as possible.
8. Accordingly, a recruitment process was conducted to seek a replacement IRP member. The recruitment process involved advertising the vacancy via social media and the website of the Council. Information provided in advertisements comprised a pack which is attached at Appendix 1.
9. One candidate applied and was shortlisted for interview, which took place on Wednesday 25 October. This was conducted by a panel comprising of the Democratic Services Team Leader and Senior Democratic Services Officer.
10. The interview panel were satisfied that the applicant, Nicky Blanning, demonstrated fully that she possessed the skills and experience which are requisite for the role of member of the IRP. She has served as a member of IRPs for a range of authorities: Cambridgeshire Fire Authority, Cambridgeshire Mayor, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Fenland District and Huntingdon Council.

Reasons for Recommendations

11. To comply with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 and to increase resilience of the Panel appointed by the Council.

Options

1. To appoint Nicky Blanning as a member of the IRP for a three-year term of office. This is recommended on the grounds of future resilience.
2. To make no appointment. This option is not recommended as the requirement is for three IRP members as a minimum.

Implications

12. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, health and wellbeing, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

Financial and Fraud Risk

13. The Chief Finance Officer has been consulted and has confirmed that if the Panel can conclude its review in December 2023, the timing would result in the report having to go to the February Council meeting. In order to meet the timetable for preparing the 2024/25 budget, it will be necessary to have an indication of what the IRP's recommendation is going to be and the additional cost, if any, by early December. This would allow for an assumption to be made in the 2024/25 budget based on the recommendation being accepted.

Legal

14. Details of the arrangements for allowances are set out in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

Background Papers

Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

Members' Allowance Scheme 2022/23

Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment pack for Independent Remuneration Panel

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