



Report to:	Council	22 September 2022
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance	
Lead Officer:	Peter Maddock, Chief Finance Officer	

Independent Remuneration Panel appointments

Executive Summary

1. To ask Council to approve the appointment of two members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Key Decision

2. No

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Council approves the appointment for a three year term of office, expiring on 30 September 2025, of Ged Dempsey and Amanda Orchard.

Reasons for Recommendations

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

Details

5. The Council is obliged under the above Regulations 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.

6. The IRP established by the Council currently comprises three members, Graham Jagger (Chair), Grant Osbourn and Jane Phillips. The term of office of Grant Osbourn and of Jane Phillips expires in May 2024.
7. The term of office of the Chair, Graham Jagger, expires on 30 September 2022. Mr Jagger has notified the Council that he is regrettably unable to seek a renewal of his term of office at present.
8. The Council must, before the beginning of each year, make a scheme for payment of basic allowance and special responsibility allowance, dependants' carers' allowance, travelling and subsistence allowance and co-optees' allowance.
9. The Council's current scheme of allowances provides for annual adjustments to its scheme of allowances to be indexed for up to four years, subject to annual review by the IRP in respect of any changes in responsibilities.
10. The Council at its meeting held on 26 September 2019 agreed that the basic allowance should be increased annually in line with the Council's staff pay award to the end of the 2021/22 financial year and that special responsibility allowances should also be increased annually in line with increases to the basic allowance to the end of that financial year.
11. 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 2022/23 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 terms of timings, ideally the Panel would conduct its review in October/November 2022, which at this stage is unlikely to give sufficient time to enable it to make recommendations to the November meeting of Council, resulting in the report having to go to the February Council meeting. In order to meet the timetable for preparing the 2023/24 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 2023/24 budget based on the recommendation being accepted.
12. Given this now significantly constrained timescale, and in view of the unexpected vacancy on the IRP which will arise at the end of 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 September meeting of full Council. Making an appointment will enable the IRP to commence its work and to conduct a review as soon as possible.
13. Accordingly, a recruitment process was conducted at short notice, to seek a replacement IRP member. The recruitment process involved advertising the vacancy via social media and websites of authorities within the Combined Authority area. Information provided in advertisements comprised a pack which is attached at Appendix 1.

14. Three candidates applied and all were shortlisted for interview. Interviews took place during the week commencing 12 September, conducted by a panel comprising the Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Manager and Senior Democratic Services Officer.
15. The interview panel were satisfied that two applicants, Ged Dempsey and Amanda Orchard, demonstrated fully that they possess the skills and experience which are requisite for the role of member of the IRP. Both have served as members or chairs of IRPs for a range of authorities (Fenland District Council, Peterborough City Council, Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council and Huntingdonshire Council in the case of Amanda Orchard; Fenland District Council, Wellingborough District Council, Peterborough City Council, North Northamptonshire Council, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority in the case of Ged Dempsey).
16. Whilst it has been the Council's established practice to appoint a panel of three IRP members, which is the minimum required by the relevant regulations, given the limited time now available for the IRP to carry out a full review of the scheme of allowances and to make recommendations upon which a budget assumption may be made, it is suggested that both these applicants be appointed.
17. If this recommendation were to be adopted the IRP would increase in number from three to four members. The reason for this suggestion is that it would enhance resilience going forward in the event of one of the IRP members becoming unavailable.

Options

1. To appoint both Ged Dempsey and Amanda Orchard to be members of the IRP for a three year term of office. This is recommended on the grounds of future resilience.
2. To appoint both candidates, with one appointed for a three year term of office and the other for only the current financial year in order to provide resilience in the short term to support the completion of the review which is required this year. This option is not recommended as resilience in future is clearly likely to be a positive measure to avoid the issue of having to recruit at short notice when the next annual review is required.
3. To appoint one candidate. This is not recommended as in view of the short time now available to carry out the necessary review of the Members' allowances scheme this Autumn, if any of the three IRP members were to become unavailable, the review would be at risk of delay whilst other arrangements were made, either in offering the position to the candidate not appointed on this occasion, which would require a further decision by the Council, or by seeking the assistance of the Local Government Association's contractual services at cost.

The availability of the LGA contractual support is limited, as it is not available until November.

4. To make no appointment. This option is not recommended as the requirement is for three IRP members as a minimum.

Implications

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

Financial

19. The Chief Finance Officer has been consulted and has confirmed that if the Panel can conduct its review in October/November 2022, the timing would be unlikely to enable recommendations of the IRP to be considered at the November meeting of Council, resulting in the report having to go to the February Council meeting. In order to meet the timetable for preparing the 2023/24 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 2023/24 budget based on the recommendation being accepted.

Legal

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

Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment pack for Independent Remuneration Panel

Report Author:

Rebecca Dobson – Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: (01954) 712942