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**Meeting:** Council  
**Date:** 24 September 2009  
**Subject:** Independent Remuneration Panel - Membership  
**Report of:** Director of Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** The report proposes the appointment of a new Member to the Independent Remuneration Panel and fixing terms of office for the remaining Panel Members.

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Contact Officer: Stephen Cooke, Electoral/Members' Services Manager  
Public/Exempt: Public  
Wards Affected: All  
Function of: Council

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. that Mrs B Heley be offered an appointment to the Independent Remuneration Panel for the period ending 31 March 2012.**
- 2. that Mr C Bell and Mr G Lambert each be offered a further appointment to the Independent Remuneration Panel for the periods indicated below.**

<u>Name of Member</u>	<u>Period of Appointment</u>
Mr C Bell	Five Years expiring 31 March 2014
Mr G Lambert	Four Years expiring 31 March 2013

#### **Statutory Background**

1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (The Regulations) require that a local authority may not adopt or amend a Scheme of Members' Allowances without first having regard to recommendations made to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel.
2. The Regulations also require that each local authority must establish an independent remuneration panel consisting of at least three members who must not be a member of a committee or sub-committee of the authority or disqualified from being a member of an authority.

#### **The Present Independent Remuneration Panel**

3. The present Panel was appointed at the first meeting of the Shadow Council, and consisted of two members of each of the panels established by the legacy authorities.

4. Following the consultation concerning minor amendments to the existing Scheme of Allowances, which gave rise to a separate report to be considered at this meeting, members of the Panel were consulted as to whether they wished to continue in membership.
5. One of the members originally appointed has been unable to attend any of the meetings of the panel held to date, as a result of overseas business commitments. The member has indicated that given her work situation she is unlikely to be able to attend any meetings held for the foreseeable future. Three of the other members have indicated, for various reasons that they are no longer able to continue as a member.
6. Having noted the need to appoint a further member to the independent panel the Monitoring Officer recalled that when advertising to appoint co-opted members to the Standards Committee, the number of high calibre applicants caused a former Standards Committee co-opted member not to be offered a position. That former co-opted member did however express an interest, should an opportunity arise, to assist the Council in the future.
7. An informal approach was made to the person concerned who, understanding the nature of the duties of the independent remuneration panel, indicated that she would like to be considered for appointment.
8. The person concerned is Mrs B Heley, who resides in Central Bedfordshire. Mrs Heley is a serving Magistrate of many years. In addition to this community service Mrs Heley attended training for Ethics and Standards whilst serving as a co-opted Member for one of the legacy authorities. Such training is considered helpful in understanding the role and nature of the duties carried out by Councillors.
9. In view of the experience of Mrs Heley in local government matters, and her record of community service as a magistrate, it is suggested that she be offered an initial appointment to the independent remuneration panel for a period of three years, expiring on 31 March 2012.

#### **Period of Service for Panel Members**

10. When the Panel was originally established by the Shadow Council the term of office of members was not fixed. In guidance issued by the Secretary of State concerning the Regulations, it is recommended that local authorities consider fixing the term of office of panel members and that the year of retirement should be phased to avoid losing all members, and their experience, at the same time.
11. The two Panel Members remaining from the appointments first made by the Shadow Council are Mr C Bell and Mr G Lambert. A five year term of office appears to be an appropriate period of time for appointment to the Panel, and to ensure continuity in the future it is suggested that Members be offered an initial appointment as shown below and that when the initial term expires, new terms of five years be offered to re-appointed Panel Members.

Name of Member

Suggested Period of Appointment

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

None

### **Financial:**

At the present time Members of the Panel receive an allowance for each meeting attended which is at the same level as allowances paid to co-opted members. The allowances are currently £75 where a meeting lasts up to 4 hours and £150 where it is over 4 hours.

### **Legal:**

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

### **Risk Management:**

None

### **Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

None

### **Equalities/Human Rights:**

The Panel are required to make recommendation to the Council concerning a Scheme of Members' Allowances, and the Scheme is an essential part of the democratic process in ensuring that Membership of the Council is not limited by reason of financial considerations.

### **Community Safety:**

None

### **Sustainability:**

None

**Appendices:** None