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**Meeting:** Council  
**Date:** 24 November 2011  
**Subject:** Independent Remuneration Panel: Membership  
**Report of:** Cllr Maurice Jones , Executive Member for Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** This report

- sets out the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to increase the size of the membership of the Panel from three to four;
- proposes the re-appointment of Mrs B Heley, an existing Panel Member.

Contact Officer: John Atkinson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Public/Exempt: Public  
Wards Affected: All  
Function of: Council

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel is necessary in relation to the provision of a fair scheme of Members' Allowances which is essential to the democratic process in ensuring an equal opportunity to all to become a Councillor.

### **Financial:**

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. Historically the Panel has never met on more than 3 occasions in a financial year.

There would also be a cost of approximately £500 as a result of the recruitment process for a new member. It is considered that these costs could be absorbed within the total Members Allowances Budget for 2011/12.

### **Legal:**

The Council is required to establish and maintain an IRP under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

### **Risk Management:**

None resulting from this report

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

None resulting from this report

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

The Panel is 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:**

n/a.

**Sustainability:**

n/a

**Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:**

- Not applicable

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**That**

- 1) a recommendation by the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel to increase the size of the Panel membership from three to four members be approved and that the person appointed serve for the period ending 31 March 2016;**
- 2) Mrs B Heley be offered a further appointment to the Independent Remuneration Panel for the period ending 31 March 2015;**
- 3) the appointment process to fill vacancies on the Panel as set out in Paragraph 10 be approved.**

**1. Statutory Background**

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

- 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.

### 3. **Panel Membership – Renewal appointment**

The present Panel was appointed by Council on 24 September 2009 and membership is as follows:

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Period of Appointment</b>
Mrs B Heley	Expires 31 March 2012
Mr G Lambert	Expires 31 March 2013
Mr C Bell	Expires 31 March 2014

Mr Lambert and Mr Bell both served on the Panels of the legacy authorities and Mrs Heley, who is a serving Magistrate of many years and who has also served as a co-opted Member on a Standards Committee for one of the legacy authorities, was first appointed to the Panel in September 2009.

4. Given that her membership will expire next March, Mrs Heley was consulted as to whether she wished to continue as a member of the Panel and she has indicated that she wishes to do so.

5. Statutory Guidance on the 2003 Regulations stipulates that

*“The local authority will need to consider the term of office of members of the panel.... The panel may become more effective as its knowledge and understanding of members' allowances is increased.....Accordingly, local authorities may wish to consider appointing members of the panel for a term of office of several years, perhaps 3-5 years. Local authorities may also wish to consider phasing appointments to ensure that there is always one member of the panel who has some experience.....This could be achieved by differing lengths of appointment”.*

6. Mrs Heley has served less than 3 years on the Panel in her initial period and it is suggested that she be offered a further appointment to the Panel for the period expiring on 31 March 2015.

### 7. **Panel Membership – Additional Member**

As stated in Paragraph 2 above the Regulations require that Panels have at least 3 members. The Regulations also state that

*“a local authority will need to consider the appropriate size for its Panel to discharge its functions effectively given the particular local circumstances. Councils should avoid unduly large Panels which would be unable to be an effective and publicly accountable source of clear recommendations”.*

8. The Panel has made a recommendation to increase its size from 3 to 4 members as it believes that increased membership will assist the Panel with succession planning and continuity, to combat instances where Panel members are unavailable and to help spread workload and responsibilities amongst Panel members when undertaking reviews. If the recommendation is approved, officers propose that the appointment be for the period expiring 31 March 2016 so that the four Panel members have different appointment expiry dates.

9. Should Council support the Panel's recommendation, there would be a financial implication as Panel Members receive an allowance for each meeting attended which is at the same level as allowances paid to co-opted members. There will also be a cost attached to the recruitment process. However, it is anticipated that this can be met from within the existing budget provision.

10. **Appointment Process**

To preserve the necessary independence of the IRP it is proposed that for the vacancy (if approved) and future vacant posts for the IRP

- 1) the process for advertising and interviewing be delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services;
- 2) an Interview Panel be appointed comprising the Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, the Chairman of the Standards Committee and an officer nominated by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services with the remit to shortlist candidates, to undertake interviews and to submit a recommendation to Council from suitable applicants who either live or work in the Council's area.

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection) None

**Location of papers:** Not applicable