

Agenda Item No:

Report No:

**Report Title: Members' Allowances Scheme –
Independent Remuneration Panel**

Report To: Cabinet

Date: 29 September 2014

Cabinet Member: Councillor Rob Blackman

Ward(s) Affected: All

Report By: Catherine Knight, Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Contact Officer(s)-

**Name(s): Zoe Downton
Post Title(s): Committee Officer
E-mail(s): zoe.downton@lewes.gov.uk
Tel No(s): 01273 471600**

Purpose of Report:

To agree to the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel to review the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 To recommend to Council that an Independent Remuneration Panel be appointed as detailed in this Report to meet in December 2014 and report back to Cabinet and Council in early 2015.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 To meet the statutory requirement for Council to have regard to the recommendations made to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel before it adopts a revised Members' Allowances Scheme in 2015.

Information

- 2 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require the Council to have regard to the recommendations made to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) before it agrees its Members' Allowances Scheme (Regulation 19.1).
- 3 The IRP met and conducted its last full review of allowances in November 2010. The rates agreed should not be relied upon for more than four years (Regulation 10.5) and therefore a review of the Council's current arrangements is due.

- 4** Provisional arrangements are for the IRP to meet and conduct a full review in December 2014.
- 5** Regulation 20.2(a) requires an IRP to comprise a minimum of three members. Since 2011, Mr Mark Palmer, Development Director at South East Employers, has replaced Ms Susie Bonfield, South East Employers Democracy and Governance Policy Officer. It is anticipated that Mr Palmer will Chair the Panel and write the Panel's report of its recommendations.
- 6** The second Panel member, Ms Rosey Eggar, is a trustee, non-executive director and manager of various local charity and voluntary organisations, and has been an IRP member since before the introduction of the 2003 Regulations. It is anticipated that she will continue to serve on the Panel.
- 7** The third Panel member, Mr Alasdair Smith, resides in Lewes and is the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex. He has served on the Prison Service Pay Review Body, the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration and currently acts as Chair of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. He has been a member of the IRP since 2010 and it is anticipated that he will continue to serve on the Panel.
- 8** Town and Parish Councils within the District will be informed of the IRP review dates and will therefore be given the opportunity to raise any issues for the Panel to consider.
- 9** The format of the IRP Review is anticipated to be;
 - Review of current allowances scheme and the Council's arrangements.
 - Consideration of any proposed changes to scheme and changes in circumstances since 2010;
 - Result of questionnaire to all councillors (to be circulated in advance);
 - Benchmarking information;
 - Interviews with Group Leaders and other councillors as appropriate;
 - Consideration of Town and Parish Council issues raised as appropriate;
 - Final Report to Council (and to Town and Parish Councils if required).
- 10** The adoption of an allowances scheme is a function of Council but it is likely that Council would welcome the views of Cabinet in the first instance.

Financial Appraisal

- 11 The estimated cost of the Panel meeting in person plus a final report is anticipated to total in the region of £3,000. This will be met from within existing resources in the Revenue Equalisation and Asset Management Reserve.

Legal Implications

The Legal Services Department has made the following comments:

- 12 As mentioned above, it is a statutory requirement that a local authority has regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel before it makes or amends a members' allowances scheme.

Sustainability Implications

- 13 I have not completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire as this Report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report.

Risk Management Implications

- 14 I have completed a risk assessment in accordance with the Council's Risk Management methodology and the following risks and mitigating factors have been identified: Council is obliged by statute to have regard to the recommendations made to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel before it adopts a new Members' Allowances Scheme, due in 2014/15, and this obligation is met by agreeing the above recommendations.

Equality Screening

- 15 I have given due regard to equalities issues and, as this is a progress report with no key decisions, screening for equalities is not required.

Background Papers

- 16 Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/1021/part/4/made>

Members' Allowances Report to Cabinet and Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting on 5 January 2011 - <http://cmispublic.lewes.gov.uk/Public/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=367>

Appendices

- 17 None