

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Review of Members Allowances – Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Joanna Swift, 01895 837229 joanna.swift@southbucks.gov.uk
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	

## 1. Purpose of Report

To advise on the requirement to set-up and appoint to a new Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendation on the Scheme of Members Allowances, and seek authority to make the necessary arrangements so the Panel can report to Full Council during 2016.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That an Independent Remuneration Panel be constituted comprising a minimum of 3 people appointed following a public advertisement for a term of 5 years.
2. That an annual allowance of £200 be paid to Panel members, together with travelling expenses and a discretionary meeting allowance
3. That authority be delegated to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services , to make the necessary arrangements :-
  - (a) To invite applications from local people to sit on the Panel and agree the appointment of a minimum of 3 eligible applicants ;
  - (b) To convene meetings of the Panel to review the Scheme of Members Allowances and make recommendations to Council.

## 2. Executive Summary

The Members Allowances Scheme was last reviewed in 2009 and under Regulations there is now a requirement for a fresh review to be undertaken by a duly appointed Independent Remuneration Panel.

## 3. Reasons for Recommendations

To meet statutory requirements in The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

## 4. Content of Report

- 4.1 The Members Allowances Scheme was last reviewed by an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in 2009 and under The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 the Council is now required to appoint a new Panel as a review of the Scheme of Members Allowances is required.

- 4.2 IRPs make recommendations about the level of basic allowance for all members, recommendations about the special responsibility allowances which can be paid and the levels of these allowances, recommendations about childcare and dependent carers' allowances and the level of these allowances and the level of any travel and subsistence allowances payable. The 2003 Regulations provide that an IRP must comprise at least three people. It is recommended that a small allowance of £200 is paid to Panel members together with reimbursement of any travelling expenses and a discretionary meeting allowance. This mirrors the arrangements agreed by Council in 2012 for Independent Persons advising on standards complaints.
- 4.3 Recruitment to the IRP involves publishing an advert in the local press and on the Council's website seeking expressions of interest. The advert will highlight the role of the IRP and the eligibility criteria – existing members of SBDC and members on Joint Committees are not eligible to apply. Nor are employees of South Bucks District Council or people with political affiliations.
- 4.4 Interviews would take place following receipt of expressions of interest to appoint at least 3 members to the IRP. It is recommended that appointments are for a period of 5 years. A meeting of the IRP will then be convened to meet as soon as practical and receive evidence (including submissions from members) in order to make its recommendations to Council during 2016.
- 4.5 It should be stressed that there is no requirement for the Council to accept any of the IRP's recommendations, only to have regard to them when agreeing Members Allowances Schemes. The Scheme could therefore remain unchanged from the existing scheme if members so wished. Once the IRP has reported its recommendations they must be considered each year when the Council agrees the Scheme of Allowances. However, unless the Council wishes to make significant changes to the Scheme it would not be necessary to carry out a further review of allowances until 2020. Uprating a scheme in each of the intervening years in line with an index recommended by the IRP is not regarded as a significant change.
- 4.6 Council is asked to delegate authority to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to make the necessary arrangements for setting up the IRP and convening necessary meetings.
- 4.7 Members will be kept informed of progress, including the process for submitting views and evidence to the IRP, via email and the Information bulletin.

## **5. Consultation**

Not applicable

## **6. Options**

The Council has no option on carrying out a review via an Independent Remuneration Panel. It does however have discretion on the appointments process and it is also not obliged to accept the recommendations of the Panel.

## 7. Corporate Implications

### Financial

The cost of advertising and paying an allowance to members of the IRP can be met from within existing budgets.

### Legal

There is a legal requirement to carry out an independent review of members allowances through an Independent Remuneration Panel

### Crime and Disorder, Environmental Issues, ICT, Partnership, Procurement, Social Inclusion, Sustainability

Not applicable

## 8. Links to Council Policy Objectives

This is a statutory requirement but also ensures that members' allowances are scrutinised by an independent panel of local people.

## 9. Next Steps

A notice will be published in the local press and on the Council's website seeking expressions of interest.

<b>Background Papers:</b>	The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
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