

REPORT TO APPOINTMENTS BOARD

Open		Would any decisions proposed : Be entirely within the Board's powers to decide YES Need to be recommendations to Cabinet/Council NO			
Lead Member: Cllr Beales E-mail: <i>cllr.alistair.beales@west-norfolk.gov.uk</i>		Other Cabinet Members consulted: Cllrs Moriarty			
		Other Members consulted: Cllr Parish			
Lead Officer: Sam Winter E-mail: Direct Dial:		Other Officers consulted: Asst Dir B Box and Monitoring Officer			
Financial Implications YES	Policy/ Personnel Implications YES	Statutory Implications YES	Equal Impact Assessment NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES	Environmental Considerations NO

Date of meeting: 29 August 2024

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2025-26

<p>Summary</p> <p>The Council is required to undertake an Independent review of its Members Allowances Scheme for the 2025-26 Financial year. The Appointment Board is invited to consider the re-appointment of the existing Independent Panel to carry out the review for the forthcoming years.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>That the following Independent Persons be appointed to carry out the 2025-26 review of Members allowances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Palmer, South East Employers Organisation • David Dixon, Independent/ Media Representative • Mike Press, Independent/ Community Representative <p>Reason for Decision</p> <p>In order to carry out a review as required in time for the 2025-26 budget round.</p>
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1 Background

The Council operates a Members' Allowances Scheme which is updated in accordance with the Regulations which require that all local authorities must have regard to the recommendations of their Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) before making decisions on the Members' Allowances Scheme.

In addition to the review of the Borough Council's Allowances Scheme, the IRP is also required to review any Allowances Schemes of parish councils within the Borough and feed back to them on their recommendations.

An Independent Remuneration Panel must be made up of no less than 3 independent persons, none of whom is also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of such an authority; or is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority.

A Scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to such index as may be specified by the authority and where the only change made to a scheme in any year is that effected by such annual adjustment in accordance with such index the scheme shall be deemed not to have been amended. This process was agreed by Council in 2022 and has been carried out up to 2024. It can only be changed in such a way for a four year period, when a further review by an IRP is required. That review is due to be carried out for the 2025-26 financial year.

It is anticipated that the IRP would commence a review in early September, and feed back the results and their report into the December Cabinet meeting and the associated panel meeting, which will go to Council in January in order to feed into the budget process for the 2025-26 budget.

Within the procedures established by the Council, the Appointments Board is required to appoint persons to the Councillors' IRP.

The Council's IRP for the last review was made up of the following Independent Persons:

- Mark Palmer, South East Employers Organisation
- David Dixon, Independent/ Media Representative
- Mike Press, Independent/ Community Representative

Each of the Independent Persons has indicated that they would be happy to carry out the review for 2025-26. The Appointments Board is invited to consider the recommendation.

2 Policy Implications

The Council is required to undertake the Independent Remuneration Review at least every 4 years.

4 Financial Implications

The cost of the review is in the region of £5,000.

5 Personnel Implications

Democratic Services will be required to assist the Panel with its arrangements for interviewing councillors.

6 Environmental Considerations

None

7 Statutory Considerations

It is a statutory requirement for the Council to have regard to the comments and recommendations of the IRP prior to setting its Allowances for the 2025-26 financial year.

8 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Pre screening report template attached)

9 Risk Management Implications

If the Independent Review is not carried out this year it will not be compliant with the Members Allowances Regulations.

10 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None

11 Background Papers



Stage 1 - Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy/service/function	Appointment of Independent Panel for review of members allowances				
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function? <i>(tick as appropriate)</i>	New		Existing	x	
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations, and identify relevant legislation.	Appointment of Independent members to review Members Allowances – statutory requirement to do so				
Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only <i>(identify stakeholders consulted with)</i>	Asst Dir Central Service, Monitoring Officer, previous Leader and Deputy				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p> <p><i>If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.</i></p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			X	
	Disability			X	
	Sex			X	
	Gender Re-assignment			X	
	Marriage/civil partnership			X	
	Pregnancy & maternity			X	
	Race			X	
	Religion or belief			X	
	Sexual orientation			X	
Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)			x		

Question	Answer	Comments
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	No	
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	No	
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	No	
5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section	No	Actions:
		Actions agreed by EWG member:
If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary: Decision agreed by EWG member:		
Assessment completed by: Name		
Job title		
Date completed		

Complete EIA Pre-screening Form to be shared with Corporate Policy (corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk)