

Policy Committee

03 April 2023



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel Members
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Michael Graham Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Lead councillor	Cllr Jason Brock Leader of the Council Cllr Liz Terry Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources
Corporate priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	The Committee agrees to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appoint Jeanette Skeats and Sally Swift as members of the Independent Remuneration Panel for a term of four years.2. Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to advertise for a further member of the Independent Remuneration Panel.3. Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader, to appoint a further member to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The Independent Remuneration Panel was established by the Council on 13 November 2001, to review annually the Council's scheme for Councillors' Allowances and to make recommendations for a scheme of allowances.
- 1.2. This report asks Policy Committee to appoint further members to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

2. Policy context

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
 - Healthy Environment
 - Thriving Communities
 - Inclusive Economy
- 2.2. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:
 - People first
 - Digital transformation
 - Building self-reliance
 - Getting the best value
 - Collaborating with others

- 2.3. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.
- 2.4. Local authorities are required to set up and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel and must take the Panel's recommendations into account when making its scheme concerning the allowances to be paid to elected members. The maintenance and support of the Panel is therefore essential to the good corporate governance of the authority.

3. The proposal

- 3.1. The Independent Remuneration Panel was set up on 13 November 2001 to review annually the Council's scheme for Councillors' Allowances and to make recommendations for a scheme to include:
- i) The amount of basic allowance to be paid to all Councillors
 - ii) The duties in respect of which Councillors should receive a special responsibility allowance, and the amount of such an allowance
 - iii) Allowances for the care of children or dependents
- 3.2. The Independent Remuneration Panel was set up to include at least three and no more than five independent members appointed to represent where possible, the following stakeholders with the Council:
- (a) The local business community
 - (b) The local trades union movement
 - (c) The local voluntary sector
 - (d) The local media
 - (e) A person with past experience of local government
- 3.3. The current membership of the panel is:
- Linda Fort – member with experience of the local media (retiring on 30.3.2023)
 - Mick Pollek – member with experience of the local trade union movement
 - Lady Audrey Durant – member with experience of the local voluntary sector
- 3.4. As one of the panel members will be retiring at the end of March 2023 and to retain a quorum of three members, two new panel members have been identified:
- Jeanette Skeats – member with past experience of local government
- Sally Swift – member with experience of the local media
- 3.5. The persons listed above have been proposed as they represented the stakeholders set out in paragraph 3.2, which the Council has agreed would, where possible, be used to appoint to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

4. Contribution to strategic aims

- 4.1. This report does not directly contribute to the strategic aims of the Council, however it is necessary to ensure compliance with the law to have an Independent Remuneration Panel which will be able to discharge its functions later this year when allowances will be reviewed.

5. Environmental and climate implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. There are no environmental or climate implications arising from this decision.

6. Community engagement

- 6.1. There has been no consultation, community engagement or publicity for this matter. Guidance indicates that local authorities should be transparent about their appointments, and it is for this reason that the appointments are made at Policy Committee. Guidance also indicates that authorities may seek their members from a variety of sources including local networks, voluntary and business sector. It is also noted that authorities may wish to advertise for members. It is proposed to use all these channels when seeking further appointments.

7. Equality impact assessment

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- 7.2. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision.

8. Other relevant considerations

- 8.1. There are no other relevant considerations to report.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to set up and maintain an independent remuneration panel to make recommendations to the authority concerning the allowances to be paid to elected members.
- 9.2. The relevant regulations came into force on 4 May 2001 and from that date local authorities have been under a duty to set up an Independent Remuneration Panel. Any decision to amend, revoke or replace an allowances scheme will have to be taken having regard to the recommendations of the Panel.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. There are no financial implications arising from the appointment of panel members as the role is voluntary. Panel members may claim out-of-pocket expenses if they wish. Any expenses claimed will be met from existing budgets.

11. Timetable for implementation

- 11.1. The decision will be implemented immediately if the Committee approves and will be confirmed in writing to the new Independent Remuneration Panel members.
- 11.2. It is anticipated that an advertisement for a further member will be placed in September 2023 to allow for recruitment and induction before the Independent Remuneration Panel is called to consider councillors allowances in autumn 2023.

12. Background papers

- 12.1. There are none.