

FORMATION OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL TO REVIEW THE MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES**Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the need to refresh and convene a meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel to review the North Norfolk District Council Members' Scheme of Allowances, in accordance with the requirements of the Local authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003.

Conclusions:

North Norfolk District Council Members' Scheme of Allowances is now due for review. An Independent Remuneration Panel must be convened to undertake that review and report its findings and recommendations to Full Council. The Council is required to have due regard to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel in determining any amendments to the current Scheme. The revised Scheme should be adopted from May 2020.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Members approve the convening of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- (2) Members approve the Terms of Reference for the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- (3) Any representations that Members wish the Independent Remuneration Panel to take into consideration should be made in writing through the Group Leaders, to the Democratic Services Manager, by 10th January 2020.
- (4) The Independent Remuneration Panel reports its findings and recommendations for consideration by Full Council at its meeting in February 2020.
- (5) Members resolve to delegate to the Democratic Services Manager the appointment of the individual members to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Cabinet member(s):

All

Wards affected

All

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1. Requirement to undertake an independent review of the Members' Scheme of Allowances and convene the North Norfolk District Council Independent Remuneration Panel

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require each Council to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and to undertake a review of its members' allowances scheme at least every four years. The Council implemented its current Scheme in May 2016 following a review undertaken by its IRP. The regulations require each council to have regard to the recommendations of its IRP prior to amending, revoking or replacing its members' allowances scheme.
- 1.2 The 2003 Regulations require the panel to comprise at least three members, who cannot be elected councillors of any local authority, anyone who would be disqualified from being an elected member of a local authority or co-opted members of the Council's own committees.
- 1.3 Before the IRP can be convened, it is necessary to review the membership of the Panel. It is intended to use the same panel as used in 2016, with the exception of one member who has stood down. The Panel that has been selected sits as the IRP for several local authorities across East Anglia and is experienced in carrying out such reviews. Details of the proposed membership will be provided to the Group Leaders.
- 1.4 In November 2015 when the last Panel was established, Council agreed to pay an allowance of £200 plus travelling expenses to reflect the commitment of time being a member of the IRP will require. It is proposed that this altered in line with neighbouring authorities to £100 per meeting (with the expectation that two meetings are held).
- 1.6 The IRP will also need to have adequate administrative, information and technical support to inform the review. It is suggested this is fulfilled by the Monitoring Officer and the Democratic Services Manager.
- 1.7 In addition, Members may wish to make representations to the IRP on issues relating to the Scheme of Allowances. Should this be the case, it is recommended that such representations should be made in writing through the Group Leaders who would then be asked to submit them to the Democratic Services Manager. In order that such representations are available to the members of the IRP in good time, it is requested that they should be submitted to Democratic Services by 10th January 2020.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The Regulations provide that the IRP can make recommendations to the Council on the following matters:
- a) The amount of basic allowance which should be payable equally to each elected Member.
 - b) The roles and responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be payable and the amount of each such allowance.
 - c) Travelling and subsistence.
 - d) Co-optees' allowance.
 - e) Whether an allowance in respect of expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants should be included and, if appropriate, the amount of allowance and means by which it is determined.

- f) Backdating of allowances to the beginning of a financial year in which the scheme is amended.
- g) Annual adjustments of allowances.
- h) Which Members are to be eligible for contributory membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- i) Whether basic allowance or Special Responsibility Allowance are eligible.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The financial implications of the review of the Members' Scheme of Allowances are currently unknown. It will be a matter for the Council to determine any additional costs or savings in relation to the Scheme when the final report is considered and decisions taken on the adoption of any recommended changes.

4. Risks

- 4.1 The main risk associated with the review of the Members' Scheme of Allowances is reputational in nature. When Members consider the findings and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, there will be a need to evaluate them in the context of the prevailing circumstances. While Members are required to have due regard to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, it still a matter for the Council to decide whether it adopts the associated recommendations in full or part.

5. Sustainability

- 5.1 There are no direct sustainability implications associated with the review of the Members' Scheme of Allowances.

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 There are a limited number of equality and diversity implications associated with the review of the Members' Scheme of Allowances, the principal issue being any decisions relating to the Carers' Allowance.

7. Crime & Disorder

- 7.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications associated with the review of the Members' Scheme of Allowances.