

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	19 September 2018

## REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

**1.0 Purpose of the report:**

- 1.1 To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to consideration of an allowance for the Second Opposition Group Leader.

**2.0 Recommendation(s):**

- 2.1 To consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out at Appendix 7(a).
- 2.2 That subject to the decision of Council, the Monitoring Officer be authorised to update the Members' Allowances Scheme accordingly (if necessary).
- 2.3 That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to advertise for an additional member of the Independent Remuneration Panel following the vacancy indicated at paragraph 5.4 below and to liaise with the three Group Leaders after undertaking this recruitment and then to make a recommendation to Council. The criteria for appointment being the same as previously applied.
- 2.4 To agree that the Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Council write to Mr Whitehead to thank him for his dedicated years' of service and leadership as a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

**3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

- 3.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel was asked by Council at its last meeting to consider whether an allowance should be paid to the Second Opposition Group Leader. This report is the Panel's recommendations to Council. The Council has a duty to consider the recommendations of the Panel, but may make its own decisions.

**4.0 Background Information**

- 4.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel was formed by the Council in 2001 and has a duty to provide the Council with recommendations on its scheme of members' allowances and amounts to be paid.

- 4.2 The Panel's terms of reference are to consider and make recommendations to the Council on the following:

**basic allowance** – the amount to be paid to all members of the Council.

**special responsibility allowance** – the roles for which this allowance should be paid and the levels of the allowance in each case.

**travel and subsistence allowance** – the duties for which this allowance should be paid and the amount.

**co-optees allowance** – whether this allowance should be paid and at what level.

**childcare and dependent carer's allowance** – whether this allowance should be paid, at what level and how it should be calculated.

**backdating allowances** – whether any allowance should be backdated to the beginning of the financial year in the event of the scheme being amended.

**annual adjustment of allowances** – whether annual adjustments may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, how long such a measure should run.

- 4.3 The Panel met on 5 September to consider this issue and attached at Appendix 7(a) is the report of the Panel, including its recommendations.
- 4.4 Following the resignation of the former Chairman of the Panel, Mr Peter Whitehead the Council is asked to consider advertising for a replacement.
- 4.5 Mr Whitehead has been on the Independent Remuneration Panel since it was originally formed in November 2001 and has acted as Chairman in recent years. Mr Whitehead is the last remaining member from the original appointments. The Panel wished to place on record its thanks to Mr Whitehead. They noted that the Panel will lose a lot of knowledge and experience, but understood Mr Whitehead's work commitments and wished him well for the future.
- 4.6 The Regulations require that the Independent Remuneration Panel must consist of at least three members, in order to reduce the risk of being inquorate, the Council has at the last appointment increased the Panel membership to four. The Guidance states that in appointing the Panel, serious consideration should be given to both ensuring its independence and public perception of its independence. At the same time, to maintain the credibility of the Panel, consideration should be given to the extent to which some, if not all, Panel members are recognisable members of the local community. The Guidance adds that political appointments and appointments which are made through friendship or any other personal association of any member

of the Council, should always be avoided.

- 4.7 Authorities are advised to consider carefully the extent of any candidate's connections to a political party and whether these are such as to risk the effective discharge of the panel's functions were the candidate to be appointed. The guidance also states that, in appointing its panel, an authority should consider candidates' knowledge of local government although lack of familiarity with the functions of Councils should not be a bar to appointment.
- 4.8 At the time of the last vacancy in 2016, Council agreed for the Monitoring Officer (supported by the Deputy Monitoring Officer) to advertise and interview for interested applicants and to then consult with the Group Leaders on the selection and final recommendation. It is recommended that this process be repeated and consultation take place with the three Group Leaders on the final recommendation.

## **5.0 List of Appendices**

- 5.1 Appendix 7(a) – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

## **6.0 Legal considerations:**

- 6.1 The Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent regulations set out the process to establish and maintain a Members Allowances scheme. The Independent Remuneration Panel appointed under that legislation has a duty to provide the Council with recommendations on its scheme of members' allowances and amounts to be paid. The current Members Allowances Scheme is part of the Council's Constitution at this link. <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/The-Council/Council-constitution-and-plans/Council-constitution.aspx>

## **7.0 Equalities Considerations**

- 7.1 One of the roles of the Independent Remuneration Panel under the Local Government Act 2000 and associated legislation is to recommend what it considers fair and appropriate allowances in relation to levels paid to members working in comparable authorities.

## **8.0 Financial considerations:**

- 8.1 If the proposals of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme were agreed then the additional amounts can be contained within the current year's revenue budget, due to slippages in the payment of other allowances previously allocated for.