

Title of Report:	Independent Remuneration Panel 2011
Report to be considered by:	Council
Date of Meeting:	31 January 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	C2204

Purpose of Report:

- 1) To agree the membership of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 2) To re-appoint Mr John Marsh as the Panel's Chairman.
- 3) To agree the scope of the allowances it will consider at its next meeting.

Recommended Action:

- 1) That the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) be agreed.
- 2) That Members agree that the IRP consider the whole Members Allowances Scheme (as set out below) at their next meeting:
 - Basic Allowance.
 - Special Responsibility Allowances.
 - Co-optees Allowance (including the independent members of the Standards Committee).
 - Childcare and Dependent Carers Allowance.
 - Appeals Allowance.
 - ICT Allowance.
 - Travelling Allowance.
 - Subsistence Allowance.
 - Conference Allowance.
 - Pensions.
 - The administration of the scheme.

Reason for decision to be taken:

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require Councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. In light of the forthcoming District Council Elections in May 2011 and the need for the Council to set its budget, it is proposed that the IRP meet in February 2011 to review the whole Scheme of Members Allowances. The report of the IRP will then be considered by Full Council in March 2011 in order to coincide with budget setting arrangements.

Key background documentation:

None

The establishment and maintenance of the IRP is a statutory requirement.
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Portfolio Member Details	
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Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	1/1/2011

Contact Officer Details	
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Implications

Policy:	None
Financial:	There will be financial implications arising from this report. The s151 Officer will be consulted on the findings of the IRP Panel and the full implications included in the Independent Remuneration Panel's report to Council.
Personnel:	None
Legal/Procurement:	It is a statutory requirement that the Council establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel.
Property:	None
Risk Management:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	One of the purposes of reviewing the Allowances Scheme is to ensure that financial considerations are not a barrier to any person entering public office or assuming a particular role on the Council. By the same token the levels of allowances should be such that financial gain is not seen as an incentive for taking up public office.

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require Councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The IRP will broadly have the functions of providing the Council with advice on its Members Allowances Scheme, the amounts to be paid and the pensionability of allowances where relevant. The Council has to have regard to the advice of the IRP.
- 1.2 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) the Council is required to ensure that the composition of the Panel meets the following requirements:
- (a) The Panel should consist of at least three members.
 - (b) The Panel members cannot be members of any local authority in respect of which that Panel makes recommendations. Anyone who would be disqualified from being elected as an elected member of a local authority is also disqualified from being a member of the Panel.
 - (c) The members of the Panel cannot also be members of a Committee or Sub-Committee of an authority in respect of which the Panel makes recommendations. This includes Co-opted members and members of the Standards Committee.
- 1.3 Before the last meeting of the panel in August 2009, the Council advertised the then vacant position on the panel. Unfortunately, no responses were received. The Council then approached Mr Mike Harris, a qualified Solicitor and former Local Government Director to join the panel and he accepted the position. Due to the unavailability of Mr Geoffrey Mayes in August 2009, Mr Geoff Wilde, an experienced IRP member with Wokingham Borough Council also joined the panel on that occasion.
- 1.4 Based on the statutory requirements, the proposed membership of the Panel for February 2011 is as follows:
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|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) Mr J Marsh | Retired Local Government Officer |
| 2) Mr Geoffrey Mayes | Chartered Civil Engineer |
| 3) Mr Robin Cops | Chairman of the Wokingham IRP |

2. Scope of Potential Changes to be discussed by the IRP

- 2.1 In light of the forthcoming District Council Elections in May 2011 and the need for the Council to set its budget, it is proposed that the IRP will meet in February 2011 to consider the whole Members Allowances Scheme as follows:

- a) Basic Allowance.
- b) Special Responsibility Allowances.
- c) Allowances for co-optees (including the independent members of the Standards Committee).
- d) Childcare and Dependent Carers Allowance.
- e) Appeals Allowance.
- f) ICT Allowance.
- g) Travelling Allowance.
- h) Subsistence Allowance.
- i) Conference Allowance.
- j) Pensions.
- k) The administration of the scheme (including the renunciation and suspension of allowances).

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 A report setting out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel will be brought to Full Council in March 2011.

Appendices

There are no Appendices to this report.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: None

Officers Consulted: Andy Day, David Holling and Moira Fraser.

Trade Union: Not consulted