

Report sponsor: Director of Corporate Governance, Property and Procurement
Report author: Head of Democracy

Appointment to the Independent Remuneration Panel

Purpose

- 1.1 The Council maintains an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) that makes recommendations on the allowances paid to councillors.
- 1.2 Two vacancies have arisen on the six-member panel. Following an advert placed on the Council's website, this report seeks approval to appoint two new members and re-appoint three existing members to the IRP.
- 1.3 A further report will be brought to the committee once a suitable candidate for the remaining vacancy has been identified.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To appoint David Pearson and Ron Priest to the Independent Remuneration Panel for four years, expiring on the date of the Annual General Meeting in May 2027.
- 2.2 To re-appoint Narinder Sharma, Trudy Hanson and Alan Larkins to the Independent Remuneration Panel for four years, also expiring on the date of the Annual General Meeting in May 2027.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Director of Corporate Governance, Property and Procurement to re-advertise and pro-actively seek suitable candidates for the remaining vacancy on the Panel with immediate effect.

Reasons

- 3.1 To ensure appropriate membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 3.2 Whilst statute requires the IRP to be formed of a minimum of three people, it is recommended that six members would provide the panel with the breadth of experience and capacity to undertake its work effectively.
- 3.3 It is anticipated that the IRP may be asked to produce a report to coincide with the adoption of a new Council Constitution from May 2024, which could result in alterations to levels and number of Special Responsibility Allowances received by councillors.
- 3.4 It is proposed that all appointments and re-appointments are made until the Annual General Meeting of May 2027, to coincide with the Council's electoral cycle.

Supporting information

- 4.1 There is no prescribed method as to how members of the IRP should be recruited. The broad objective is to identify individuals who are capable of considering a range of evidence and reach appropriate recommendations, without bias or pre-determination.
- 4.2 The Council advertised simultaneously for independent persons to be appointed to the Audit and Governance Committee, Standards Committee and IRP. Whilst more than one candidate expressed an interest in being appointed to the IRP, it is not permitted for co-opted members of other committees to be appointed to the Panel. Following successful appointments to the Audit and Governance Committee and Standards Committee, only one suitable candidate was identified for the IRP via external advertisement.

Recommended Appointments

- 4.4 David Pearson is the current Director of Partnerships at the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce. During the review undertaken by the IRP in 2021, David deputised for former IRP member Scott Knowles as a representative of the Chamber during several of the evidence gathering sessions. Owing to other commitments, Scott has recommended that David is appointed to the IRP permanently in his place.
- 4.5 Ron Priest is a longstanding member of the Council's Independent School Admission Appeals Panel, which requires similar skills of objectivity, impartiality and decision-making to the IRP. Following a career as an electrical engineer in both the Royal Air Force and private industry, Ron has gained significant experience in a range of voluntary roles with a particular focus on lifelong learning and the armed forces. Ron applied to the vacancy following the advertisement placed on the Council's website.

Recommended Re-Appointments

- 4.6 It is recommended that three existing members of the Panel are re-appointed to a further four-year term.
- 4.7 Narinder Sharma has served as the Chair of the IRP since 2017 and has more than 25 years' experience of senior leadership roles in the voluntary sector. Narinder is a former Chief Executive of the Derbyshire Carer's Association and has led several international blindness, rarer disease and older people organisations.
- 4.8 Trudie Hanson has served on the IRP since 2020. Trudie has previously worked overseas in the aviation industry and more recently as an Occupational Therapist in the NHS. Since 2010, Trudie has sat as a lay member in consideration of school admission and exclusion appeals, both for Derby City Council and other local authorities.
- 4.9 Alan Larkins has also served on the IRP since 2020. Alan is a former teacher having worked in schools in Derby, Burton and Bristol. Since retiring, Alan has sat as an experienced member of Derby City Council's Independent School Admission Appeals Panel.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Mr Pearson was recommended directly by former IRP member and Chief Executive of East Midlands Chamber, Scott Knowles. Mr Priest was interviewed by a panel comprising of the Director of Corporate Governance, Property and Procurement, Head of Democracy and a Democratic Services Officer, following an application submitted in response to an advert placed on the Council's website.

Other options

- 6.1 To not appoint the nominated candidates and re-advertise the vacancies. Failure to appoint a minimum of three members to the IRP would leave the Council in contravention of its statutory duties.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 There is no salary or allowance attached to membership of the IRP, although reasonable expenses are payable. This will be funded from within the existing budget for councillors' allowances and expenses.

Legal implications

- 8.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require an Independent Remuneration Panel to be established, comprising of at least three persons, to make recommendations on councillors' allowances.

Climate implications

- 9.1 None directly arising.

Socio-Economic implications

- 10.1 None directly arising.

Other significant implications

- 11.1 None directly arising.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		

Finance
Service Director(s)
Report sponsor
Other(s)

Emily Feenan

26 November 2023

Background papers:
List of appendices: