

Gloucester City Council

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| Meeting: | Council | Date: | 1 December 2016 |
| Subject: | Appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel | | |
| Report Of: | Corporate Director | | |
| Wards Affected: | All | | |
| Key Decision: | No | Budget/Policy Framework: | No |
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| Appendices: | None | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a process for the appointment of a new Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- (1) Authority to appoint individuals to the Independent Remuneration Panel for the 2017 review be delegated to the Corporate Director, in consultation with Group Leaders.
- (2) The recruitment process be extended to allow, where possible, the Panel's make-up to reflect the diverse nature of the City's communities.
- (3) Appointment of the Panel for the 2018 review be brought back to Council for approval in advance of that review.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Council is required, under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations to the Council on a Scheme of Members' Allowances for adoption.
- 3.2 The Regulations specify that there must be at least three panel members and the guidance suggests that, as far as possible, the make-up of the panel should be representative of the diversity of the communities in the local authority area. The Regulations require that a scheme be approved by Council and in place in advance of the period to which it will apply; therefore, a Scheme of Allowances for 2017-18 must be approved by Council at its meeting on 23 March 2017 at the latest.

- 3.3 Following the last detailed review of Members' Allowances in 2014, Group Leaders agreed to refresh the Panel and seek to appoint on a voluntary basis. The option of sharing an IRP with Gloucestershire County Council was explored and the County Council's Panel oversaw the 2016 minor review; however, it was subsequently decided that the City Council would recruit its own dedicated IRP.
- 3.4 An advert was included in the summer edition of City Life and on the Council's website. Six individuals expressed an interest in the position, all of whom were male; however, two did not return the application form and one was ruled out because they currently work for the County Council and, given that we have a number of 'twin-hatted' Councillors, it was deemed that their appointment would not offer the required degree of independence.
- 3.5 The three applications that fulfil the criteria were received in October and November, therefore it has not been possible to complete a selection process in time for Council to agree the appointments at its meeting on 1 December 2016. It is therefore proposed that, rather than wait until the next Council meeting on 26 January 2017 to make the appointments, authority to appoint the Panel be delegated to the Corporate Director following consultation with Group Leaders, to prevent any further delay to the commencement of the minor review process for 2017. The appointment would be for one year only, ensuring that the Council has the opportunity to appoint the Panel in advance of the 2018 review.
- 3.6 The applications from the three eligible individuals have been circulated to Group Leaders for information and although initial assessment of all three applications has been positive, concerns have been raised about the gender balance of the Panel in the event of all three individuals being formally appointed. While it is important for the Panel to reflect the diversity of the communities in the local authority area, it is also necessary to undertake the review and approve a Scheme of Allowances before 1 April 2017, therefore a pragmatic approach is needed.
- 3.7 In order to try and secure a more representative Panel it is proposed that the recruitment process be extended with the aim of appointing one or two more individuals to the membership, should suitable applicants come forward, but that irrespective of the this, the 2017 review should proceed once the minimum number of Panel Members have been appointed, to ensure that it can be completed within the available timescale.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

- 4.1 It is important that the make-up of the Panel is representative of the diversity of the communities in the local authority area and applications from all sectors of the community are encouraged for this important role.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 The alternative to delegating authority to the Corporate Director to appoint the IRP would be to bring the appointment back to Council on 26 January; however, this is not recommended as it would delay the review process and make it unlikely that a revised Scheme would be in place by 1 April 2017, as required by the Regulations.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Delegating authority to appoint the IRP to the Corporate Director is proposed in order to enable the 2017 review to be completed within the available timescales.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 7.1 If the recommendations are approved the suitability of the three existing applicants will be assessed while the roles are simultaneously readvertised, including the publication of a press release. In the interests of expediency and pragmatism, it is proposed that the Corporate Director and Democratic and Electoral Services Manager oversee the selection process and report their findings to Group Leaders before appointments are made by the Corporate Director.
- 7.2 The review will commence as soon as three Panel Members have been appointed, with the ability to increase the membership of the Panel at any time if suitable individuals are identified. The Panel will report its recommendations for a Scheme of Allowances for 2017-18 to Council on 23 March 2017.
- 7.3 A report will be brought back to Council seeking approval to appoint a Panel in advance of the 2018 review.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations in the report as the Panel will be appointed on a voluntary basis.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The legal implications are detailed in the body of the report.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 10.1 If the recommendations are not approved, there is a risk that the Council will not be able to approve a revised Scheme of Allowances within the timescales required by the Regulations.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 11.1 While the importance of appointing a representative Panel has been identified, the PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact in respect of the specific recommendations within this report because the roles are open to all prospective applicants; therefore a full PIA was not required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

12.1 There are no community Safety implications arising out of the recommendations in this report.

Sustainability

12.2 There are no sustainability implications arising out of the recommendations in this report.

Staffing & Trade Union

12.3 There are no Staffing and Trade Union implications arising out of the recommendations in this report.

Background Documents: None