

Recommendations to the Council

(a) Members' Allowances Scheme - Independent Remuneration Panel Report

The County Council is required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to provide advice and recommendations to the Council on its Members' Allowances Scheme. Any decision on the nature and level of allowances are a matter for the full Council, but the Council must have regard to any recommendations submitted by the Independent Remuneration Panel before establishing or amending the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel meets each year to consider the recommendations to be made to the Council in respect of the level and nature of the forthcoming year's allowances.

The Independent Remuneration Panel's report of March 2019, including recommendations on the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2019/20, is attached.

As part of their deliberations and in response to feedback from Members of the Council, in addition to the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Opposition Leader, the Panel have proposed a change to the County Council's Constitution to include three new roles of Opposition Select Committee Vice-Chairmen created from the single Shadow Cabinet Member Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA). The Independent Remuneration Panel proposes that the Opposition Deputy Leader will hold the Opposition Select Committee vice-chairmanship on the Corporate Review Select Committee and the three Opposition Select Committee posts will hold the Opposition Select Committee vice-chairmanships on the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee, Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee and the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee.

In the report, the Panel have also proposed to the Council that the Chairman of the County Council, in consultation with the relevant group leader, be given delegated authority to increase the allowance paid to the Vice-Chairmen of a Committee to the level of the corresponding Chairman's allowance if they are required to take on the responsibilities of the Chairman for a sustained period. The Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chairman of the Committee will be suspended during this period.

At the County Council meeting on 21 March 2019 it was resolved that "The Council does not accept at this moment in time their recommendation for an increase in overall allowances of 2% in line with the NJC pay award to staff." It was also resolved that "The Council also feels in a time of change, that the recommendations of the Panel to make changes to the levels of remuneration be deferred for further consideration later this year, as the recommendations do not reflect the future ongoing developing roles of Members."

Since the County Council meeting in March 2019, the changes to the Council's political structures introduced at the annual Council meeting in May 2018 have started to become embedded in the Authority and it is therefore now the view of the Leader of the Council that the IRP report of March 2019 should be revisited.

The Council will also be aware that there were minor changes to the Council's political structures introduced at the last Council meeting in May this year which saw a reduction in the number of APWG Chairmen from four to two and the increase in the number of Cabinet Support Members from one to four.

Recommend – (a) That the Council's views on the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel's report of March 2019 are requested.

(b) That, if the Council are minded to support the recommendations of the Panel:

- (i) the Council's Constitution be amended to include the provision of a Shadow Select Committee Vice-Chairman.
- (ii) the Council's Constitution be amended to give delegated authority to the Chairman of the County Council, following consultation with the relevant group leader, to increase the allowance paid to the Vice-Chairmen of a Committee to the level of the corresponding Chair's allowance if they are required to take on the responsibilities of the Chair for a sustained period; and that when this power is utilised, the Chairmen's allowance be suspended during this period.

(b) Independent Remuneration Panel – Appointment of New Members

The County Council is required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel of between three and five members to provide advice and recommendations to the Council on its Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel meets each year to consider the recommendations to be made to the Council in respect of the level and nature of the forthcoming year's allowances.

At the County Council meeting held on 21 March 2019, it was agreed "That the Audit and Standards Committee be requested to carry out a further recruitment process for the Independent Remuneration Panel as soon as possible" so as to increase the Panel's Membership from three to five. This process has recently been completed and the Special Panel of the Audit and Standards Committee recommend to the Council that Mr William Read and Mr Anthony Styles be appointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years ending 31 March 2023.

Recommend –That the Council approve the recommendation of the Special Panel of the Audit and Standards Committee to appoint Mr William Read and Mr Anthony Styles to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of four years ending 31 March 2023.