

Recommendations to the Council

Independent Remuneration Panel

1. 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. Two vacancies have arisen on the panel and a Special Panel of the Audit and Standards Committee was established to conduct a recruitment exercise to fill the vacancies.
2. The Audit and Standards Committee met on 24 March 2014 and considered the minutes of the Panel meeting when they had interviewed applicants for the position (Appendix 1).
3. The Committee **Recommends** – that Leslie Trigg and Michael Murray be offered appointments to the Independent Remuneration Panel (subject to receipt of satisfactory references.)

Proposed Changes to the Constitution

4. Paragraph 3 of Section 2 of the Constitution outlines that proposed changes to the Constitution should be considered by the Audit and Standards Committee prior to consideration by the Full County Council.
5. Accordingly, at its meeting on 24 March 2014, the Audit and Standards Committee considered the following reports detailing proposed changes to the Constitution:-
 - Suggested amended wording for procedural standing orders to reflect new legislative requirements in respect of recording votes at Council meetings where budget and precept decisions are taken (Appendix 2).
 - Suggested amendments to the Members Code of Conduct to include reference to registering Gifts and Hospitality, the planning protocol and the mechanisms in place to make complaints about Member Conduct (Appendix 3).
6. The Committee **Recommends** – that:-
 - a) The proposed amendments to paragraph 14.9 of Section 12 of the Constitution outlined in the report relating to the recording of votes at full County Council meetings on decisions on Budget and Precept setting.
 - b) The proposed amendments to the Local Code of Conduct relating to registration of gifts and hospitalities, reference to the Planning Protocol and mechanisms for complaints be approved.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Fire and Rescue Authority – Proposed Future Size of the Authority

7. The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Fire and Rescue Authority has recently been undertaking a process to examine the question of whether the size of the Authority, in respect of the number of elected members from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council, is appropriate for the efficient and effective discharge of the Authority's duties going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

8. In this regard, the Fire and Rescue Authority is to hold a special meeting on 7 May to receive a proposal from a Working Group of its Members that the Authority reduces its size from 25 to 21 seats. Currently, the Stoke-on-Trent City Council appoints 6 Members of the Authority and the County Council appoints 19 Members (10 Conservative, 7 Labour, 1 UKIP and 1 Staffordshire Independent). If the Working Group's proposals are approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority this will result in the County Council having 16 seats on the Authority which, taking into account the political balance of the Council, will be allocated as follows -
Conservatives 9 seats, Labour 6 seats and the remaining seat will go to either UKIP or the Staffordshire Independent Group.
9. The proposals to reduce the size of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Fire and Rescue Authority from 25 to 21 seats require the approval of the two Member Councils. If either (or both) Council(s) refuse to grant consent, the Fire and Rescue Authority may apply to the Department for Communities and Local Government for authority to implement the proposed change.
10. **Recommend** – The views of Members on the proposal to reduce the size of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Fire and Rescue Authority from 25 to 21 seats are requested.

**Minutes of the Special Panel of the Audit and Standards Committee
Meeting held on 26 February 2014**

Present:

Janet Eagland
Kevin Jackson
Philip Jones

Conor Wileman
Caroline Wood

PART ONE

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 February 2014

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

6. Exclusion of the Public

That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated below.

7. Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2014

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

8. Applications for Consideration

The Panel was set up to appoint to the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in the Constitution at Section 8 - Audit and Standards Committee, paragraph 3.2 - to deal with any other matter involving a regulatory, judicial, quasi-judicial or licensing function of the County Council which by law cannot be the responsibility of the Executive and for which no other provision is made in this Constitution.

Members interviewed six candidates and following careful consideration of the applications forms and the interviews agreed to recommend the appointment to the Independent Remuneration Panel of two applicants: Leslie Trigg and Michael Murray. The Chairman asked that the Clerk advise the other applicants that they were not successful and thank them for their interest in the position.

RECOMMEND TO AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE – that the Audit and Standards Committee recommend to the County Council that Leslie Trigg and Michael Murray be offered appointments to the Independent Remuneration Panel (subject to the receipt of satisfactory references).

Chairman

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL