

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL- 18 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND HEALTH AND ACTING HEAD  
OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

REPORT TITLE: APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE FOR INDEPENDENT  
REMUNERATION PANEL

WARD(S) AFFECTED:

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- To seek Council's approval of an approach to other Hertfordshire authorities to request the services of one of their Independent Remuneration Panel members, as there is a vacancy on the membership of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel. For reasons of resilience and contingency it is desirable that the vacancy is filled.

<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: that:</u></b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>it is approved that whenever a vacancy on the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel arises, other Hertfordshire authorities are approached in the first instance to request the services of the authorities' remuneration panel members to serve on the council's Panel; and</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<b>that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be granted delegated authority to consider and confirm appointments of Independent Panel Members approached in this way.</b>

## 1.0 Background

1.1 In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council is required to have regard to the recommendations made to it by an independent remuneration panel in respect of any review of its scheme of allowances. The Council's independent remuneration panel consists of between three and five members. Following the resignation of a member of the Panel earlier in 2019, due to her election as a Member of the Council, there is a vacancy on the Panel.

## 2.0 Report

2.1 The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel is appointed to consider Members' allowances. Whilst the quorum is three, it is advisable to maintain a Panel of five members so as to minimise the risk of inquorate meetings and therefore postponement of business.

2.2 It is accepted practice among authorities that appointments to independent remuneration panels may be made by approaching another authority within the county area to seek the services of that authority's panel members. This report proposes that East Herts Council participates in such an arrangement.

2.3 This proposal would enable a timely appointment to the vacancy to be made. The Members' allowances scheme currently in force at East Hertfordshire was agreed by the Council at its meeting on 25 July 2018 to have effect for a period of two years, with the next review in 2020. The Council's Constitution provides that the duration of the current scheme persists until 11 May 2020. Accordingly the work of the panel should commence in time to submit a report before the next annual meeting of the Council, which is scheduled to take place on 13 May 2020.

2.3 A consideration in making a decision to agree the proposed arrangement is the fact that it is necessary to ensure any member of an independence remuneration panel is a person of independence from the Council, so that there is confidence in their ability to make recommendations as to the allowances to be paid to Members. It would seem to be reasonable to place reliance upon the recruitment process followed by other local authorities in Hertfordshire in appointing panel members to serve on other authorities.

2.4 A further consideration is that it is necessary that such persons are not a close friend or relation of any East Hertfordshire District Councillor. In order to obtain assurance on this aspect, it is proposed that if Council approves the recommendation in this report, any panel member of other Hertfordshire authorities who is then approached would be required to confirm they are not in such a social or family relationship with any East Hertfordshire Members. It is proposed that this assessment be conducted by the Acting Head of Legal and Democratic Services, and that they should have the authority to confirm acceptance of that individual's services upon satisfactory assurance being received.

2.4 A number of alternative options have been considered.

- to continue without appointing to the vacancy on the panel – REJECTED because not making an appointment to the vacancy on the panel would risk Panel meetings being postponed due to unavailability of members and/or being inquorate
- to enter into a full recruitment process – REJECTED as there is a limited timeframe before the panel needs to prepare recommendations and submit a report which would be taken up with advertising for applicants and interviewing shortlisted applicants.

2.5 The recommended approach is seen as an expedient way to recruit new Panel members.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

#### Background Papers

Minutes of Council meeting of [25 July 2018](#)

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