

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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Report Originator	Councillor Jean Addison Paul Goult	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> N/A	
Wards Affected	ALL	16 th September 19	
Title	Independent Remuneration Panel Working Group – Interim Report		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

For Members to receive an interim report from the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel Working Group regarding progress made to date on the work of the group.

2. BACKGROUND

The North Northamptonshire Joint Committee agreed at its meeting on 24th June 2019 to establish a working group to draw-up proposals for the establishment of an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of a Panel would be to draw-up a recommended remuneration scheme for Shadow Councillors (i.e. Member Allowances).

Any recommendations would apply to the Shadow Council only and for 2020/2021. Any agreed scheme would not cover the new unitary authority after Vesting Day (1st April 2021); that will require a separate exercise.

Any proposed remuneration scheme would need to be determined by the Shadow Council at its inaugural meeting (likely to be May 2020).

Councillor Jean Addison (CBC) was appointed Chair of the Working Group. The other members of the Group include – Cllr Ken Harrington (BCW), Cllr David Brackenbury (ENC), Cllr Lesley Thurland (KBC) & Cllr Gill Mercer (NCC). The Group was supported by officers from CBC & BCW.

The Group's inaugural meeting was held in Corby on 30th August 2019.

3. REPORT

Any Structural Change Order (SCO) agreed by Parliament would likely include the following or similar:-

Each shadow authority must formulate proposals for the schemes of members' allowances to be adopted by North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council; and

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Each shadow authority must prepare and adopt a scheme for the payment of allowances to its members; and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 apply in relation to the shadow authority and its members as they apply in relation to district councils and their members.

The Working Group received a copy of a draft Scoping Report at their meeting on 30th August 2019. This was agreed by the Group and is attached for information.

The Working Group discussed the composition of the Panel. It was noted that statute required that the Panel comprised at least three independent members.

It was considered in the interests of expediency, to invite all existing Independent Panel members from across the five sovereign councils to be contacted, and to be requested to submit an expression of interest should they wish to be considered for appointment. The Working Group would then consider short listing. Any nominations for appointment would be forwarded to the Joint Committee for ratification.

The Working Group also requested various other items of information which may assist the Group in scoping its requirements for the Panel; these would be collated by officers. These included reports and similar from other authorities subject to reorganisation.

The Working Group also discussed the potential to request that the Panel consider any civic allowances applicable for the Shadow Council. Civic allowances are covered by separate legislation.

The Working Group agreed to meet again on 23rd September 2019. At its next meeting it will:-

- Consider any expressions of interest received for membership of the Independent Panel;
- Agree the proposed recommended composition of the Panel including appointment of Chair;
- Consider the scoping report to be presented to the Panel outlining the outcome required and providing an indicative timetable; and
- Consider appropriate fees and recompense for Panel members.

The Working Group would be seeking to provide its final report and recommendations to the Joint Committee meeting of 12th November 2019.

4. Financial Implications

There are currently no direct additional costs related to the work of the Working Group. Officer support will continue to be drawn from partner authorities.

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It was noted that there would be a need to cover the reasonable costs associated with meetings of the Independent Remuneration Panel and any fees or expenses of Panel members.

5. **Legal Implications**

The Working Group is tasked with compiling a process for the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel under appropriate statute. Any Panel appointed would report into the Shadow Authority only.

6. **Conclusion**

The Working Group had made good progress in agreeing its scoping report and identifying the next steps required. It was recognised that it was important that matters be progressed as soon as possible, in order that processes could be put in place for production by the Panel of final recommendations.

7. **RECOMMENDATION**

- i) **Note the progress made by the Independent Remuneration Panel Working Group and the agreed Scoping Report.**

Appendix:

Copy of approved Scoping Report