

TITLE	Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel Members
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 23 March 2017
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure transparency, openness and scrutiny of the Members' scheme of allowances and enable Wokingham Borough Council to fulfil its statutory obligation to review the remuneration paid to its elected Members.

RECOMMENDATION

Council is recommended to appoint Thomas Berman, David George and Nicholas Oxborough to the Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of 3 years, commencing on 24 March 2017.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Following the submission of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) report to Council on 17 November 2016 the IRP resigned en masse; which has resulted in vacancies on the panel.

This report advises Council that following a recent recruitment process, it is recommended that Thomas Berman, David George and Nicholas Oxborough be appointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Background

1. Section 18 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by section 99 of the Local Government Act 2000, makes provision in relation to basic, special responsibility, childcare and dependents' carers' allowances for Members of local authorities. The Secretary of State makes regulations under this section requiring local authorities to make a scheme of allowances for their Members and to establish and maintain a panel to make recommendations to the Council about the scheme.
2. Section 100 of Local Government Act 2000 allows the Secretary of State to make provision in relation to travel and subsistence allowance for Members of local authorities and an allowance for non-Councillors who are members of a Council's committee or sub-committee. This includes the amendment or repeal of provisions of sections 173 to 178 of the Local Government Act 1972.
3. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 have been made under these provisions. The Regulations provide that it is for each local authority to decide its scheme and the amounts to be paid under that scheme.
4. Councils are required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel which will broadly have the functions of providing the local authority with advice on its scheme and the amounts to be paid as allowances where relevant. Local authorities must have regard to this advice.
5. In November 2016, all of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel members resigned. The Council was therefore required to appoint a new Independent Remuneration Panel.
6. Following a recruitment process, carried out in accordance with the Constitution, members of the public came forward and following interviews with the Monitoring Officer and the Service Manager Democratic Services, it was recommended that the following be appointed to serve on the panel:

Tom Berman has been a resident of Wargrave for the past 40 years. He is married with two grown-up children and has been involved with various local voluntary groups over the years, of which Wargrave Surgery Patient Participation Group, Wokingham Area PPG Forum and Hennerton Backwater Association are the current main activities.

David George has been living in Wokingham Borough since 1982, firstly in Woodley and then since 1999 in Arborfield. He retired from Air Traffic Control in December 2016 aged 55 after nearly 36 years' service. In addition to his role in Air Traffic Control he was a Union representative in the Prospect Union which represents ATC staff. He held the position of National Treasurer for the Controllers section looking after a budget of approx £70 000 for several years.

Nicholas Oxborough has lived in Wokingham Borough since 1967. He attended Primary and Comprehensive schools in Wokingham and then a local college where he studied photography. He has worked in the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue

Service in an operational role for 34 years and now specialises as a Fire Safety Inspector. During his career in the service he has had opportunity to manage and be responsible for the delivery of the service to the community of Wokingham Borough, as well as working with members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. He is a Member of the Institute of Fire Engineers and has also achieved other management and technical qualifications associated with his roles in the Service.

7. The Council's Constitution states that the Independent Remuneration Panel shall consist of five members However as the Constitution Review Working Group is due to consider the process for reviewing the Members' Allowances Scheme in the near future it was considered prudent to only appoint three members at this stage and appoint additional members, if required, once the review was completed. This would take account of any changes that might come forward as a result of the review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

There are no financial implications related to this report.

Cross-Council Implications

There are no cross-Council implications related to this report.

List of Background Papers

- 1) Sections 173 to 178 of the Local Government Act 1972
- 2) Section 18 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (as amended by section 99 of the Local Government Act 2000)
- 3) Section 100 of the Local Government Act 2000
- 4) Part 3 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003
- 5) Regulation 26 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014

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