

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

12 January 2016

Appointment to Independent Remuneration Panel

1. Summary Statement

- 1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require the Council to have a scheme for the allowances it can choose to pay its elected members. As part of this, the Council has to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel whose role it is to make recommendations to the Council about the scheme and the amount of allowances to be paid to members.
- 1.2 Good practice requires authorities to review and refresh membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel every three to four years.
- 1.3 Advertisements were placed on the Council website outlining the Panel's independent role in reviewing member's allowances and expenses. Applicants were invited to apply for the role of an Independent Remuneration Panel member. Shortlisted candidates were invited and interviewed by a panel of senior officers from within the Governance Directorate.
- 1.4 The interview panel considers that the following candidates are suitable to act as the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel:
- Mr Stewart Towe CBE;
 - Dr Nand Srivistava MBE;
 - Mrs Sylvia Parkin MBE; and
 - Mr Ashley Savell-Boss.

2. **Recommendation**

That the following persons be appointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel for the period January 2016 to December 2019:

Mr Stewart Towe CBE;
Dr Nand Srivistava MBE,
Mrs Sylvia Parkin MBE; and
Mr Ashley Savell-Boss.

Neeraj Sharma
Director - Governance

Contact Officer
Mark Satchwell
Registration Services Manager

3. **Strategic Resource Implications**

- 3.1 The Council may pay members of the Independent Remuneration Panel expenses incurred to carry out its functions and such amount may be determined by the Council.
- 3.2 The rates at which members are paid are contained within the Scheme of Allowances. The amount received by individual members is published each year after the Council's accounts have been closed.

4. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 4.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the Regulations") make provision for the establishment and maintenance of an Independent Remuneration Panel whose function is to make recommendations to the members concerning allowances.

The Panel must produce a report making recommendations as to the payment and amount of all forms of allowances, the duties to which special responsibility allowances should attach and whether allowances should be index linked. The Panel is required to make recommendations to the Council whenever the Council decides to either revoke or significantly amend its current scheme. It is for the Council to decide on the Members' Allowances Scheme that is put in place, having regard to the Panel's advice and recommendations.

5. Implications for the Council's Scorecard Priorities

- 5.1 Ensuring members are remunerated fairly is an important part of good corporate governance.
- 5.2 The payment of members has been recognised by the Government as a means of attracting good quality representation for the constituents of a local authority area. Having good quality representation allows the engagement of citizens in achieving the Council's scorecard priorities.

6. Background Details

- 6.1 The Local Government Act 2000 introduced various reforms to the scheme of allowances for elected members, including in particular the requirement for local authorities to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 6.2 A Panel must consist of at least three members. Panel members cannot be elected members of any authority and cannot be disqualified from being an elected member of a local authority. Whilst the process for selection and recruitment is not prescribed in the regulations or guidance, authorities are required to adopt a process that it considers is best able to result in membership being independent and well qualified to discharge its functions.

This process has been undertaken and it is recommended that Mr Stewart Towe CBE, Dr Nand Srivistava MBE, Mrs Sylvia Parkin MBE and Mr Ashley Savell-Boss are appointed to the Panel.

6.3 The Panel's terms of reference are set out below:

- to make recommendations to the authority as to the amount of basic allowance that should be payable to its elected members;
- to make recommendations to the authority about the roles and responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be payable and as to the amount of each such allowance;
- to make recommendations as to whether the authority's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and, if such a recommendation is made, the amount of this allowance and the means by which it is determined;
- to make recommendations on other allowances (i.e. travel and subsistence allowance and allowances for attendance at certain meetings and conferences);
- to make recommendations as to the amount of co-optees' allowance;
- to make recommendations on whether any allowance should be backdated to the beginning of a financial year in the event of the scheme being amended; and
- to make recommendations as to whether annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should run.