

Report to: Council



Date of Meeting 26 February 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Appointment of a member to the Independent Remuneration Panel and co-option of an Independent Person to the Audit and Governance Committee

Report summary:

This report outlines the appointment of a new member to the Independent Remuneration Panel, following an open recruitment process and interviews, conducted by the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel and the Corporate Lead Democratic Services & Scrutiny.

The report also confirms the continued appointment of three independent persons to the Independent Remuneration Panel until March 2027.

This report also outlines the appointment of an independent person to the Audit & Governance Committee, following an open recruitment process and interview, conducted by the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, Director of Finance and Corporate Lead Democratic Services & Scrutiny.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Approve the appointment of Charles Summers to serve on the Independent Remuneration Panel with effective until 31 March 2028.
2. Approves the continued appointment of Nigel Arnold, Ken Bryant and Andy Cockeram until 31 March 2027.
3. Approve that Robert Wood is co-opted as an Independent Person to serve on the Audit & Governance Committee effective until 31 March 2028.

Reason for recommendation:

The Independent Remuneration Panel plays a crucial role in maintaining the integrity and fairness of remuneration policies. The panel is composed of individuals with diverse expertise and experience, ensuring well-rounded and impartial advice.

The Panel is required to be appointed by the Council, although it is independent of the Council.

The appointment of a co-opted independent member to the committee ensures that the committee has an independent person with the additional knowledge and expertise to reinforce its political neutrality and independence to supporting good governance.

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☒ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☒ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Finance and Assets
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) when making decisions and setting policies. While there are no specific equalities implications arising from this report, the recruitment process has sought to find a variety of candidates that whilst meeting the profile, offer a variety of different backgrounds and experiences.

Climate change Low Impact

Whilst an impact assessment has not been undertaken, it is considered that there are no climate change implications associated with this report.

Risk: Low Risk; It is important that the Council maintains an Independent Remuneration Panel to provide impartial and independent advice regarding the Members' Allowance Scheme.

Links to background information None.

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ A supported and engaged community
- ☒ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- ☒ Resilient economy that supports local business
- ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require the district council to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel, and to have regard to the recommendations of the panel before making or amending the Members' Allowance Scheme.

The panel's Terms of Reference provide that panel members are appointed for a fixed four-year period and may serve a further term of four years, subject to Full Council approval of their re-appointment. The panel's Terms of Reference also provide that the panel shall consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of five members. In that regard, Full Council will note that there is currently one unfilled position on the panel and further recruitment will be undertaken in 2025.

Following an open recruitment process in November 2024, an interview was held in December 2024 with a panel comprising the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel and the Corporate Lead Democratic Services & Scrutiny and Charles Summer has been selected as a suitable appointment to join the existing panel.

The existing panel comprising Nigel Arnold, Ken Bryant and Andy Cockeram have been in post since 2023 and have indicated that they will continue as panel members until 31 March 2027 at which point their term of office can either be extended or terminated.

The Audit & Governance Committee is seeking the co-option of up to two independent members to the Committee which will help to bring additional knowledge and expertise and will also reinforce its political neutrality and independence. Co-opted members to Council committees are not members of the Council itself and have no voting rights. Co-opted members would instead be consulted during committee meetings and their views taken into account by voting members of the committee.

Following a review by Sir Tony Redmond, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA) recommended that “each authority’s audit committee should include at least two co-opted independent members”.

Following an open recruitment process in November 2024, an interview was held in February 2025 with a panel comprising the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, the Director of Finance and the Corporate Lead Democratic Services & Scrutiny and Robert Wood has been selected as suitable to be co-opted to the committee.

Financial implications:

Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel receive an annual allowance of £400 plus mileage expenses. Allowances paid to panel members are funded from the Member Allowances budget and there is already sufficient funding with that budget to support the appointment of the additional member.

Independent Members of the Audit & Governance Committee are able to claim travelling expenses for attending meetings and any claims can be funded from the Member Allowances budget.

Legal implications:

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to report and make recommendations on Members Allowances and this appointment supports this.