

**Constitution Committee**  
**Independent Remuneration Panel Allowances**

Date: 16 January 2023

Agenda Item: 7

<b>Title of Report</b>	Independent Remuneration Panel Allowances
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To seek the Committee's views on various matters related to the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), including the rate of allowances paid to panel members, and their term of office.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the committee provides a steer on the issues set out within this report with a view to bringing back a worked-up recommendation to the next meeting of the committee on 13 March 2022.
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1. Every English District and County Council is required to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel whose role is to make recommendations to the authority regarding the Members Allowance Scheme<sup>1</sup>. The IRP must consist of at least three members, none of whom is a member of the authority itself, or is disqualified from being or becoming a member of the authority.
2. Panel members are appointed by the authority itself, and so long as the requirements of the regulations are satisfied, there is some scope for Councils to determine the membership of the panel and its terms of reference.
3. In Gloucestershire County Council's case, responsibility for that falls to the Constitution Committee. Panel members are not appointed for a particular term of office, but remain in place until they choose to step down and this doesn't appear to have been considered when the panel was first established in 2001.
4. The Independent Remuneration Panel currently comprises 4 members:
  - Richard Blamey (Chair of the panel) - Former head of pensions with a large multi-national industrial gas company. Currently a pensions' trustee and appointed chair of the Tewkesbury IRP. Also serves as treasurer and member of his local parish council.
  - Philip Lowery - Former adviser to the Social Services Committee. Member of the Independent Advisory Group to the Gloucestershire Constabulary.
  - Fiona Miles - Former Clinical Nurse Specialist in Respiratory Medicine. Involved in Gloucestershire Girl Guiding and a parish councillor.
  - Quentin Tallon - Former Secretary of Cheltenham and District TUC. Involved with the voluntary sector.
5. There is also scope for councils to determine how frequently member allowances should be reviewed. Some councils do this on a 4-yearly basis, unless significant issues occur in the meantime, others do it bi-annually, and still others, annually. In Gloucestershire County Council's case, the Panel carries out a review of member allowances on an annual basis. This involves them interviewing a cross section of members, before meeting to formulate their recommendations, based on the findings of those interviews alongside other relevant information, such as benchmarking against other local authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> This requirement is set out in Part 4 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) regulations 2003.

6. Councils can also determine the level at which allowances are set for Panel Members<sup>2</sup>. In Gloucestershire County Council's case, panel members receive an annual allowance of £250 per annum and the chair receives an annual allowance of £1000. There is currently no process in place for keeping these allowances under review.
7. Clearly, it would be problematic to directly link the panel's allowance to the Basic Allowance paid to councillors, as this would give panel members a conflict of interests in considering that allowance. However, in order to provide a point of comparison, that Basic Allowance has increased by approximately 22% over the past ten years.
8. The allowance paid to IRP members by Gloucestershire's District Councils ranges from £250 to £300 per year. However, the amount of work involved may mean these are not directly comparable.
9. This report is therefore seeking the Committee's steer as to whether there is an appetite to review the panel's arrangements, including the allowance paid to panel members, and if so, to agree the scope of that review, how it is to be conducted and what factors should be taken into account, including how the views of the members of the IPR are to be considered. Issues that the committee may wish to include in such a review include:
  - The amount of work involved for members of the IRP;
  - The allowance paid to IRP members, whether that should be subject to review on a regular basis, and what factors should be taken into account in setting that allowance;
  - Whether a fixed term of office should be introduced for panel members, and if so, how that should be introduced.

ENDS

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<sup>2</sup> Regulation 20 (3)