

Council Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Joint Strategic Director (Transformation and Governance)

Author: John Armstrong

Tel: 01483 444102

Email: john.armstrong@guildford.gov.uk

Lead Councillor responsible: Tom Hunt

Tel: 07495 040978

Email: tom.hunt@guildford.gov.uk

Date: 8 February 2023

Review of Councillors' Allowances – Appointment of a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel

Executive Summary

The Council is required to conduct the next review of councillors' allowances in 2023 following the local elections. Under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"), the Council must appoint an independent remuneration panel to make recommendations as to the type and level of allowances to be included in the next scheme of allowances for councillors. The Council has a duty to have regard to the panel's recommendations.

Waverley Borough Council is also committed to conduct a review of allowances for its councillors following next year's local elections.

Taking account of the current collaborative arrangements for joint working, both councils have agreed to establish a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP) to conduct separate reviews of the allowances payable to councillors of both authorities and make separate recommendations to both councils. The panel would also act as a parish remuneration panel and would be required to produce a separate report collectively for the parish councils in Guildford borough and another report for the town and parish councils in Waverley borough.

At its meeting on 11 October, the Council approved the terms of reference of the JIRP, and the re-appointment of three persons who had served previously on the independent remuneration panels for both Guildford and Waverley. Both councils expressed a wish to appoint a JIRP comprising five members. Accordingly the Democratic Services and Elections Manager was authorised to advertise for candidates from the general public and a wide range of organisations, including the

local business community and voluntary organisations, for the appointment of up to two other members of the JIRP to serve for a period of up to four years commencing with the 2023-24 municipal year. Following the advertisement, four candidates were shortlisted for interview by a panel comprising the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of both councils. After one of the candidates withdrew, the panel interviewed the three remaining candidates and have recommended that Rodney Bates and Paul Marcus be appointed to the JIRP.

Recommendation to Council

That Rodney Bates and Paul Marcus be appointed to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of up to four years commencing with the 2023-24 municipal year.

Reason for Recommendation:

To comply with the requirements of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, and both councils' wish to establish a JIRP comprising of five members.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report asks the Council to approve the appointment of two additional members of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP) to conduct the forthcoming review (later this year) of both Guildford's and Waverley's Scheme of Councillors' Allowances, together with the review of allowances paid to councillors of parish councils within this Borough and the town and parish councils within Waverley.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The appointment and purpose of an IRP is to review and make recommendations on the scheme of allowances. This demonstrates that the Council's work is publicly accountable and presented with openness and transparency. Furthermore, the members of an IRP are required to be independent, and its recommendations must be publicised.

3. Background

- 3.1 In accordance with the 2003 Regulations, local authorities must establish an IRP to review councillors' allowances. A council cannot determine or amend a scheme of allowances until it has considered and had regard to the recommendations of its IRP.

- 3.2 Although the 2003 Regulations do not prescribe how a council should appoint IRP members, the associated Guidance advises that the appointment process should ensure the IRP is independent, qualified to discharge its functions, and representative of the diversity of the communities in the local authority's area. Candidates' knowledge of local government structures and functions is important, but a lack of familiarity with such matters should not be a bar to appointment.
- 3.3 The 2003 Regulations require that an IRP must have at least three members, but do not specify a maximum number. The Guidance advises avoiding unduly large Panels that would be unable to be an effective and publicly accountable source of clear recommendations.
- 3.4 Two or more local authorities are able, under the 2003 Regulations, to establish and maintain a joint independent remuneration panel to advise them on their respective schemes. Such a panel must make separate recommendations to the appointing authorities.
- 3.5 Taking account of the current collaborative working arrangements between Guildford and Waverley and given that both councils are committed to conducting a review of their respective schemes of allowances following the local elections in May, both councils have agreed to establish a joint independent remuneration panel (JIRP) to conduct separate reviews of allowances payable to councillors of both authorities and make separate recommendations to both councils. The joint panel would also be expected, in their capacity as a parish remuneration panel, to produce a separate report for the parish councils in Guildford borough and another report for the town and parish councils in Waverley borough.
- 3.6 Both councils have also approved the terms of reference of the JIRP, and the re-appointment of three persons who had served previously on the independent remuneration panels for both Guildford and Waverley. Both councils expressed a wish to appoint a JIRP comprising five members.
- 3.7 Accordingly, we advertised for candidates from the general public and a wide range of organisations, including the local business community and voluntary organisations, for the appointment of up to two other members of the JIRP to serve for a period of up to four years commencing with the 2023-24 municipal year.
- 3.8 Following the advertisement, four candidates were shortlisted for interview by a panel comprising the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of both councils. After one of the candidates withdrew, the panel interviewed the three remaining candidates on 12 January 2023 and have recommended that Rodney Bates and Paul Marcus be appointed to the JIRP. Copies of their respective supporting statements and CVs are attached as "Not for Publication" Appendices 1 and 2.

4. **Timetable for Joint IRP to conduct the review of allowances**

4.1 The timetable for conducting the review is set out below:

Date	Action
tbc Jun 2023	Induction training / briefing and first meeting of the Joint IRP
3 Jul 2023 – 29 Sep 2023	Joint IRP to review Scheme of Allowances and draft report and recommendations
Nov 2023	Executive to consider Joint IRP draft report and recommendations
Dec 2023	Full Council to consider IRP draft report and to adopt new scheme of allowances
1 Apr 2024	New scheme of allowances comes into effect

5. **Financial Implications**

5.1 These were set out in the report to Council on 11 October. The estimated costs associated with the appointment of the Joint IRP and the conduct of the review of allowances are set out in the table below:

	Total Cost	Cost to GBC
	£	£
Appointment of Joint IRP:		
• Advert in local newspaper (approx.)	500	250
• External induction training for Joint IRP (approx.)	900	450
• Honoraria for up to five Joint IRP members	7,500	3,750
Conduct of the Review:		
• Statutory public notices (approx.)	4,000	2,000
Total:	12,900	6,450

5.2 With the exception of the £250 in respect of the advertisement referred to above, all of the other costs (approximately £6,200) will be incurred in the 2023-24 financial year, for which budgetary provision has been made.

6. **Legal Implications**

6.1 The Council must appoint an independent remuneration panel to review its scheme of allowances, and make recommendations thereon, in accordance with the 2003 Regulations referred to above. The Council is permitted to establish and maintain a joint independent remuneration panel with Waverley to advise both councils separately on their respective schemes.

7. Human Resource Implications

- 7.1 The administrative support to the Joint panel in respect of Guildford's review of allowances will be provided from within existing staffing resources in Democratic Services.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The public perception of the independence of the Joint IRP and the robustness of the review process is important. It is essential for the Council to ensure that the Joint Panel remains representative and in touch with the issues and challenges faced by those making decisions.

9. Background Papers

- The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel appointed to review the allowances paid to Councillors of Guildford Borough Council, November 2019
- Report to Council 3 December 2019 (Minute No. CO86)
- Report to Council 11 October 2022 (Minute No. CO59)

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Supporting statement and CV from Rodney Bates (Exempt)
Appendix 2: Supporting statement and CV from Paul Marcus (Exempt)