

## NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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<b>Report Originator</b>	Councillor Jean Addison Paul Goult	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> N/A	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	ALL	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Independent Remuneration Panel Working Group – Report</b>		

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

For Members to receive a report from the Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel Working Group regarding recommendations made by the Group for the Joint Committee to determine and an update on the work of the group.

### 2. BACKGROUND

The North Northamptonshire Joint Committee agreed at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 to establish a working group to draw-up proposals for the establishment of an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of a Panel would be to draw-up a recommended remuneration scheme for Shadow Councillors (i.e. Member Allowances).

Any recommendations would apply to the Shadow Council only and for 2020/2021. Any agreed scheme would not cover the new unitary authority after Vesting Day (1<sup>st</sup> April 2021); that will require a separate exercise.

Any proposed remuneration scheme would need to be determined by the Shadow Council at its inaugural meeting (likely to be May 2020).

The Group has held three meetings in Corby on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

### 3. REPORT

The Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2019 currently being considered by Parliament includes reference requiring -

*The shadow authority for North Northamptonshire must formulate proposals for the schemes of members' allowances to be adopted by North Northamptonshire Council; and*

Further details regarding the application of any agreed Scheme are provided under s.10 of the Order.

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The Working Group received a copy of a draft Scoping Report at their meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019. This was agreed by the Group and reported to the previous meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Working Group had previously discussed the composition of the Panel. It was noted that statute required that the Panel comprised at least three independent members.

It was considered in the interests of expediency, to invite all existing Independent Panel members from across the five sovereign councils to be contacted, and to be requested to submit an expression of interest should they wish to be considered for appointment.

### Panel Members

Officers, on behalf of the Panel, wrote to all Independent Panel Members serving the five principal authorities. Expressions of interest were invited to join the Shadow Council Panel. Expressions of interest were received from 3 of those invited.

The working group considered the expressions of interest received at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The standard of application was high, and the Group resolved to recommend all three applicants be appointed.

In relation to the position of Chair of the Panel, the Group agreed to recommend that Professor Steve Leach be approached to act as Chair.

It was suggested that the Panel would need to commence its work early in the New Year, with completion of a final report by the end of March 2019 at the latest. Any final report compiled by the Panel would be submitted to the Shadow Full Council meeting in May 2020 for determination.

Officers have commenced drafting the Scoping Report to be presented to the Independent Panel. The draft would be circulated to members of the Group for consideration, before being tabled at the Joint Committee meeting in February 2020. It was noted that the content of the Scoping Report would be defined by outcomes from the Governance Working Group, legislation and statutory guidance. It was further stressed that any Scheme drawn-up would apply to the Shadow Period only.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

There will be the need for the reasonable costs/fees of the Panel Members to be covered. Until there is formal discussion with the Panel regarding timescales etc these can only be estimated to be around £600 - £700/day.

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### 5. Legal Implications

The Working Group is tasked with compiling a process for the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel under appropriate statute. Any Panel appointed would report into the Shadow Authority only.

### 6. Conclusion

The Working Group had made good progress in agreeing its scoping report and identifying the next steps required. It was recognised that it was important that matters be progressed as soon as possible, in order that processes could be put in place for production by the Panel of final recommendations.

### 7. RECOMMENDATION

i) That the Joint Committee delegate to the lead Monitoring Officer authorisation to contact:-

- Professor Steve Leach
- Ms Sue Watts
- Mr Gerard Dempsey

To confirm their acceptance of a position on the Independent Remuneration Panel for the North Northamptonshire Shadow Council;

ii) To confirm that Professor Steve Leach be invited to act as Chair of the Panel;

iii) That the lead Monitoring Officer liaise with the Panel Members to arrange for the conduct of the review exercise, within the timetable set for the establishment of a Shadow Council;

iv) That the Panel, at a minimum, be invited to accept representations from the Independent Remuneration Panel Working Group;

v) That the reasonable costs of Panel Members be met from the Local Government Reorganisation programme, following discussion between the lead Monitoring Officer and the lead Chief Finance Officer; and

vi) That should a need arise, delegation is given to the lead Monitoring Officer to liaise with Independent Members from other local authorities to fill any vacancy that may arise in Panel membership.