

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 70

Subject: Review of Scheme for Member Allowances 2024-2028

Date of meeting: 30 January 2025

Report of: Director – Governance & Law

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 At its meeting on 16th May 2024 the Council formally resolved to adopt a new scheme for the payment of member allowances in accordance with the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).
- 1.2 The IRP proposed an early review of the Scheme to enable the Panel to survey members on the impact of the new governance arrangements once they have been in operation for a period of time. This report sets out the process for the review and recommends the proposed appointment and re-appointment of IRP Panel members.

2. Recommendations

That full Council

- 2.1 Notes the proposed review of the members allowances scheme to take place in March 2025;
- 2.2 Approves the appointment and re-appointment of IRP Panel members for a period of 3 years as set out at paragraph 3.7 – 3.8 of the report.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, all local authorities are required to set up an independent panel to consider all issues relating to the level of payments to councillors.
- 3.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) meets to review and to make independent recommendations to the Council regarding the level of payments made in connection with the following:-

- Members' Basic Allowances
- Special Responsibility Allowance
- Dependant Carers' Allowance
- Travel & Subsistence payments
- Co-opted members' allowances

- Allowances for parish councillors

- 3.3 On 16 May 2024 the IRP reported to full Council with its [Review of Members Allowances 2024-2028](#). The new Scheme proposed allowances which were agreed by full Council. Included in the final report from the Panel was the following recommendation:-

‘The Panel recommends that a further review of members allowances should be undertaken after a period of at least six months implementation of the new governance arrangements and roles. This recognises that there are new arrangements in place and that the Panel is not able to survey all Members on the impact of the new arrangements until they have been in operation for a period of time. The review should therefore be undertaken, survey all Members and offering the opportunity for all Members from all Groups to speak to the Panel.’

- 3.4 The proposed review is due to take place in March 2025. A survey will be shared with all members and members from all Groups will also be offered the opportunity to speak to the Panel. The recommendations from the review will be reported back to full Council.

IRP Panel Membership

- 3.5 Following the last review, John Bateman (Chair) and Martin Andrews (Panel Member) resigned their positions after many years serving the Council and its residents as members of the Panel. Both Mr Bateman and Mr Andrews were extremely diligent and experienced members of the Panel and the Council is extremely grateful to them for their dedicated and thoughtful service. The Council is required to have at least 3 Panel members on its Independent Remuneration Panel. This means there is a need to appoint at least one new Panel member to sit alongside Jaine Jolly and Rachel Potter, our existing Panel members.
- 3.6 At the last review, Mark Palmer from South East Employers supported the review, providing training for our Panel members and sharing benchmarking and best practice from other South East and London Authorities. Mark supports over 20 authorities in this way and, in most cases, is appointed formally as a member of the Panel and Chair. This ensures professional, independent support is in place for the Panel and its reviews and provides a degree of resilience which the BHCC Panel does not currently have.
- 3.7 This report proposes the appointment of Mark Palmer as a member of the IRP for an initial period of 3 years. Mark’s biography is set out below:

Biography Mark Palmer

‘With a strong focus on leadership and organisational development, Mark leads the Development Team at South East Employers. He plays a key role in facilitating and delivering programs that enhance governance, scrutiny, and accountability. Specialising in effective governance, political leadership, and change management, Mark is a passionate advocate for local

democracy with extensive experience working with councillors. Mark has extensive experience chairing, training and supporting IRP's and currently Chairs/supports over 20 IRP's across the South East and London. He also spearheads the implementation of the LGA Councillor Development Charter across the South East, East of England, and London, while providing quality assurance in Northern Ireland.'

- 3.8 In addition, it is proposed to confirm the re-appointments of our two existing Panel members, Jaine Jolly and Rachel Potter, to align all the Panel Member appointments so that a fixed Panel membership is in place for the next 3 years.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The Council resolved to change its governance arrangements and adopted a new Constitution in May 2024. It was agreed that there was a need to review its new Members Allowances Scheme after the new governance arrangements has been in operation for a period of time. Following the departure of Mr Bateman and Mr Andrews from the Panel, at least one new Panel member is required. The proposals in this report address this and secure resilience as well as regulatory compliance for the Panel.
- 4.2 The alternative would be to seek to recruit a new Panel member externally. However, this approach is not recommended because the Panel requires the support and expertise of South East Employers to undertake an effective and compliant review and, by appointing Mr Palmer as a member of the Panel, this both avoids duplication and secures a degree of resilience in terms of Panel membership.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 No additional consultation has been undertaken in view of the nature of the appointments.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Council recommended to approve the recommendations as set out in the report with immediate effect. Following the review and report will be presented to full Council with recommendations.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 Any changes proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) will be reported to full Council and the financial implications of any proposals will be addressed in that report. In the meantime, recommendations relating to any proposed uplift to member allowances for 2025/26 will be included in the budget report. There is no additional cost to the Council appointing Mr Palmer as a member of the IRP as against the appointment of external Panel members, which will be accommodated within existing Governance & Law budgets.

Name of finance officer consulted: Ishemupenyu Chagonda

Date consulted 21.01.2025

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The proposals in this report comply with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2005 and associated guidance

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date consulted 12/01/25

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report. The previous report of the Panel explicitly sought to make recommendations which would seek to encourage a wider cross-section of the community to become councillors and reduce the financial disincentives from serving as councillors.

10. Sustainability implications

- 12.1 There are no adverse sustainability implications arising from the proposals in the report.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. Appendix 1: Report on Scheme of Member Allowances 2024-2028.