

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting15th March 2007

1. Title of Item/Report

Independent Remuneration Panel

2. Record of the Decision

Members were reminded that The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 required Councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel, so that the Panel could provide recommendations on Members' Allowances Schemes and the amounts to be paid to Members. An Authority was not able to introduce new or revised Schemes without first having had regard to its Panel's recommendations in that respect. A Panel must be in place and ready to act, even if an Authority proposed not to change its existing Allowances Scheme.

The terms of office of Stockton's current Independent Remuneration Panel members are due to expire in May this year. It was necessary therefore to reconstitute the Panel.

As regards the composition of the present Panel, the three members had indicated that they would be willing to serve again on a new Panel established by the Council. Details of the three members who were willing to sit on the new Panel were provided.

Under the Regulations and Guidance, a Panel of three persons would be acceptable. None of the Panel members must be elected Members of a Local Authority or be disqualified from being an elected Member. The three current Panel members satisfied these requirements. The functions of the Panel, as previously reported to Cabinet, were provided.

There was no specific appointments process specified in the Regulations and Guidance. The Council did however originally go through an appointments process for the inaugural Panel. In May, 2003, Cabinet and Council agreed to retain the present Panel Members. The Authority must be satisfied that re-appointing the three persons identified again, to its new Panel, would still result in the membership of the Panel being independent, well qualified to discharge the functions of the Panel and

representative of the diversity of the communities in the Council's area. It was considered that nothing had changed in this regard since the last decision in May 2003 and that the three persons specified would ensure that these considerations were met.

The Allowances Guidance indicated that Authorities should consider:-

- the extent to which some or all of the candidates were recognisable members of the community;
- the extent of any candidate's connections to a political party; and
- a candidate's knowledge of local government.

The Guidance also provides that when appointing a Panel, Councils should consider:-

- whether to appoint one member of the Panel as Chair or allow the Panel to do so;
- the term of office of members of the Panel;
- incorporating provision for removal of a Panel member by the Council at any time in the event that there is sufficient reason to do so and subject to the requirements of natural justice;
- whether to pay the Panel allowances.

Those provisions were addressed in the May 2003 Cabinet report and it was proposed that, as before, Richard Bell be the Chair of the Panel and the other two members be Brent Godfrey and Paul McGee. It was suggested that their terms of office be for the period up to May, 2011 (the Guidance suggests 3 – 5 years, subject to the electoral cycle); and that their appointments are subject to termination as indicated in the preceding paragraph. Proposed payment to the Panel for its work was provided to Members.

RECOMMENDED to Council that

1. The independent remuneration panel be re-established comprising the Chair and the two other persons specified at paragraph 8 and Appendix 2 (exempt) of the report.
2. The terms of office of the three Panel Members be for the period up to May 2011.
3. The Council reserves the right to remove any one or more of the Panel Members at any time as indicated at paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The terms of office of the current Panel members expired in May, 2007. Whether or not any review of allowances takes place in 2007/08, the Council was under a duty to maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not applicable

Proper Officer
19 March 2007