

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL**  
**24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2010**

Independent Remuneration Panel

OPEN	
<b>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:</b>	-
<b>CORPORATE PLAN AIM:</b>	A Well-Run and Responsive Council
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Anne Hingley
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Caroline Newlands Director of Legal and Corporate Services Ext. 2715
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Penelope Williams, Democratic Services Manager Ext 2728 Email: penelope.williams@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	None

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To ask the Council to join a multi - authority Independent Remuneration Panel in Worcestershire

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 The Council is asked to DECIDE:**

**To join a multi - authority Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council is required to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 3.2 These regulations require local authorities to set up and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances.
- 3.3. An audit of Members' expenses in November 2009 identified that a review of Members' expenses was required. The Director of Legal and Corporate Services has been in discussion with colleagues in Worcestershire about the possibility of participating in a joint panel. Since those discussions took place other Councils have expressed an interest in participating in a joint panel.
- 3.4 To date the following districts have shared an interest in establishing a joint Independent Remuneration Panel:
- Bromsgrove District Council
  - Malvern Hills District Council
  - Worcester City Council

- Wychavon District Council
- Wyre Forest District Council

**4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (Section 21 (b) allows independent remuneration panels to be created "jointly by any authorities in which case that panel shall exercise the functions specified in Regulation 21 in respect of the authorities which established it.
- 4.2 If Council approves participation in a joint Independent Remuneration Panel the next stage will be for the Panel to be reconstituted to take on board any new responsibilities as this has not been discussed formally by the interested parties.
- 4.3 To further progress a joint Independent Remuneration panel it is perceived that it would be pertinent for relevant Directors from each authority to progress this matter at a joint meeting.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 In 2004 the cost to Wyre Forest of establishing its own Independent Remuneration Panel was in excess of £3,000.
- 5.2. The costs of a shared scheme are not known at this stage. However, it is anticipated that economies of scale will be achieved as the cost of setting up a shared Independent Remuneration Panel will be shared out between the Councils.

**6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 (Section 5) states that "where an authority has regard to an index for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances it must not rely on that index for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the Independent Remuneration panel established in respect of that authority on the application of an index to its scheme.

**7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An equality Impact Needs Assessment has been undertaken and there are no discernable impacts on the six equality strands.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 The Council is required under Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to review its Members' Allowances Scheme every four years.
- 8.2 The need for a review of Wyre Forest District Council's Members' Allowances was established in an audit in November 2009 and it is therefore essential that the matter is progressed expediently.

8.3 The alternative should the Council not agree to participate in a shared scheme would be for the Council to reconvene its former panel at a cost which is likely to be in excess of £3,000.

**9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 Participation in a joint Independent Remuneration Panel is considered to be a positive move for the Council. Whilst embracing shared working initiatives it will also achieve savings for the Council through economies of scale.

**10. CONSULTEES**

- Chief Executive
- Leader of the Council

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (Section 5)
- Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, September 2004