

# Interim Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

## Scheme of Members' Allowances for Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council

### 1. Introduction

This report has been prepared by the Independent Remuneration Panel (the **Panel**) for Bournemouth Poole and Christchurch Council (the **Council**) comprising three individuals drawn from the community:

- (i) John Quinton (Chairman);
- (ii) Keith Broughton; and
- (iii) Martin Varley.

### 2. Legal Basis

- 2.1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the **Regulations**) apply to all local authorities.
- 2.2. The Regulations require a relevant authority to make a scheme providing for the payment of a basic allowance to each member of that authority.
- 2.3. Before a relevant authority may make or amend a scheme of allowances it must have regard to recommendations made in relation to such a scheme by an independent remuneration panel.

### 3. Context of the Review

- 3.1. The Panel last reviewed the overall members' allowance scheme for the Council (the **Scheme**) in 2019.
- 3.2. Since then, the Scheme had been amended in 2021 to reflect a new administration within the Council.
- 3.3. Following the elections in 2023 the Leader of the Council has asked for the Scheme to be reviewed in four key areas: -

A) To reflect the establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Board;

- B) To reflect a new Planning Committee structure;
- C) The creation of three new Lead Member roles to assist the Cabinet;  
and
- D) The appointment of Independent Members on the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### **4. Role of the Panel**

- 4.1. Regulation 20(2) requires that an independent remuneration panel shall consist of at least three members none of whom:
  - (i) is also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of such an authority; or
  - (ii) is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority.
- 4.2. The three members of the Panel are individuals, none of whom is disqualified from being or becoming a member of a relevant authority.

#### **5. Evidence**

- 5.1. To inform its recommendations, the Panel was provided with the following evidence:
  - (i) the Regulations;
  - (ii) the report to the Constitution Review Working Group to the Audit and Governance Committee on 7 September 2023 in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements;
  - (iii) the report to the Constitution Review Working Group to the Audit and Governance Committee on 30 November 2023 in relation to the proposed establishment of an area-based Planning Committee structure;
  - (iv) the Guidance;
  - (v) a role description and advertisement prepared for the role of the Independent Member of the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
  - (vi) the existing Scheme of allowances;
- 5.2. The Panel also had the opportunity to interview those individuals named at paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3.

## **6. Methodology for the review**

- 6.1. The Panel met on five occasions on 9,17, 24 and 25 April and 1 May 2024.
- 6.2. The Panel interviewed the following Councillors:
  - (i) Councillor Vikki Slade, Leader of the Council;
  - (ii) Councillor Stephen Bartlett, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board;
  - (iii) Councillor Margaret Phipps, Lead Member for Local Plan Delivery;
  - (iv) Councillor Christopher Rigby, Chairman Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
  - (v) Councillor Marion LePoidevin, Chair of Planning
- 6.3. In addition, the Panel interviewed:
  - (i) Janie Berry, Monitoring Officer;
  - (ii) Lindsay Marshall, Scrutiny Officer.
- 6.4. The Panel wishes to record its thanks to those individuals who gave evidence.

## **7. Deliberations and Conclusions**

- 7.1 The review commenced with an interview with the Leader of the Council and this established the context and parameters for the review.
- 7.2 It was clear to the Panel that there were a number areas that required further information to enable the Panel to form a judgement on the roles and accountabilities in question.
- 7.3 In relation to the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Panel received conflicting evidence as to the responsibility of the Chairman's role. Some interviewees thought it senior to the other three Chairmen within the Overview and Scrutiny function, others felt that it just met more often. The Panel felt therefore that this role required further consideration in the context of the overall scheme and the various roles within it. As this role already featured within the current Allowance scheme the Panel is of the view that the Special Responsibility Allowance should remain at that level until such time as a further review is undertaken.
- 7.4 The Panel received more conclusive evidence with regard to the revised Planning Committee area-based structure which would be introduced in September 2024. On the basis of the evidence received, the Panel is of the view that the new area-based role would be similar to that of the current Council wide Committee, albeit with a reduced workload for the Committee. The Panel therefore recommends a

Special Responsibility Allowance of £8,125 per annum until such time as the new structure has bedded in and a further review is undertaken.

- 7.5 The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Lead Member role already exists within the current Allowances Scheme. The Leader was clear however, that this was a new and significantly different role to the previous one. The Leader was keen to establish some flexibility within the Scheme to enable her to appoint Lead Members to a variety of roles to add to the capacity of her Cabinet. These might be ongoing in nature whereas others might fulfil ad hoc roles that would cease to exist after a period of time. The Panel agreed that this was something that they could consider but that a role description would be required to facilitate this consideration. This would be considered as part of the future review of the scheme of Allowances.
- 7.6 The Panel received little evidence in relation to the appointment of Independent Members on the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It did however receive details of the role as included within the advertisement asking for suitably qualified persons to apply for the role. What evidence the Panel did receive indicated that the role would be similar in nature and time commitment to the independent roles that already existed within the current Allowances scheme. The Panel therefore recommended a similar allowance of £1,158 per annum for the new role of Independent Members of the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **8. The Basic Allowance**

- 8.1 The Basic Allowance has not been reviewed by the Panel since 2019. Although some indexation has been applied this did not commence until 2022/23. Both the Leader of the Council and the Monitoring Officer were of the view that this allowance required review and that this should form part of an overall review of allowances in 2024/5.

## **9. INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Panel recommends that, on an interim basis: -**

- A) The Chairmen of the area-based Planning Committees receive an SRA of £8,674 per annum;**
- B) The Independent Members of the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee be paid an allowance of £1,158 per annum;**
- C) All remaining allowances continue to be paid at the current rate provided for within the current scheme of allowances until such time as a full review is undertaken in 2024/5.**