## APPROPRIATION OF JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (REP1129)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Following a review of the current Independent Remuneration Panel arrangements across both Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council, to consider disbanding the existing Independent Remuneration Panels in place at each authority.

2. To consider the principle and recruitment arrangements for a joint pool of Independent Remuneration Panel Members for both local authorities.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the report Open or Exempt?</th>
<th>Open</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wards Affected:</td>
<td>None directly in relation to this report but any recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel would apply to all the Wards for each respective Council.</td>
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| Cabinet Member:               | Councillor Ray Herring – Leader of Suffolk Coastal District Council  
                              | Councillor Colin Law – Leader of Waveney District Council |
| Supporting Officer:           | Hilary Slater  
                              | Head of Legal & Democratic Services  
                              | (01394) 444336  
                              | Hilary.slater@east suffolk.gov.uk |
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require local authorities to have an approved Members Allowances Scheme in place for the payment of allowances to Elected Members.

1.2 The 2003 Regulations also require local authorities to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel and that the Council should have due regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel prior to considering the adoption or changes to its Members Allowances Scheme.

1.3 An Independent Remuneration Panel is comprised of community representatives completely independent of the Council and so the public can have confidence that the production of a report by the Panel on Members Allowances is undertaken on a completely impartial basis. Any recommendations from a Panel are referred to Full Council for consideration and so the process is also open and transparent.

1.4 The partnership arrangements between Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils has provided greater opportunity for improved ways of working and making efficiencies. A review of the separate Independent Remuneration Panel arrangements in place for each authority has been undertaken and following consultation with the Leaders of each Council, it is proposed that the existing Independent Remuneration Panel arrangements should cease and revised joint arrangements be put in place across both authorities.

Suffolk Coastal District Council – Existing Arrangements

1.5 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Suffolk Coastal is currently comprised of 3 independent persons. The Members Allowance Scheme for this authority was last reviewed, in full, in March 2012. Any new arrangements put in place are unlikely to be utilised until after the May 2015 District Council Elections but it is timely to instigate revised arrangements now so that the recruitment process is completed in plenty of time.

Waveney District Council – Existing Arrangements

1.5 Waveney District Council’s (WDC) Independent Remuneration Panel is also comprised of 3 independent persons, 2 of which are also on the Suffolk Coastal Panel. The Members Allowance Scheme for Waveney was last reviewed in January 2011 for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2015 so it coincided with the new four yearly election cycle. A review of the WDC scheme is therefore required so that any revisions can be budgeted for and put in place with effect from April 2014 and in readiness for the May 2015 Elections.

2 PROPOSED POOL OF JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

2.1 It is proposed that the pool of 5 persons be appointed as Joint Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Independent Remuneration Panel Members and that 3 persons from the approved pool be utilised to form an Independent Remuneration Panel for either authority to meet the requirements of the relevant legislation and as required. Each Independent Remuneration Panel would need to elect a Chairperson from its members for the purpose of specific reviews.

2.2 In order to ensure equality and diversity, a recruitment process will be held inviting individuals to apply to become an Independent Remuneration Panel Member. A copy of the proposed role description to be used to support recruitment is outlined on Appendix A, an application form is attached as Appendix B, whilst supporting documentation is attached as Appendix C.

2.3 Should the proposal for a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel be approved, then the vacancies will be advertised on each authority’s website and on Jobs Go Public for a 4 week period (deadline for applications being Friday 31 October 2014).

2.4 It is suggested that the Strategic Director (Arthur Charvonia) and Head of Legal & Democratic Services (Hilary Slater) be delegated authority, following consultation with the Leaders of the Council for each authority, to shortlist, interview and appoint the 5 independent persons.
2.5 The current payment for attendance at a meeting by an Independent Remuneration Panel Member is £100 for both authorities (ie £300 for 3 Members) plus travel expenses, but this fee arrangement has been in place for many years. In order to bring the payment structure more up-to-date and to attract individuals with the required skills and experience, it is suggested that the payment rate should be increased to £200 per review, plus travel expenses.

2.6 For clarity, each Council would only incur costs for any review undertaken for that specific authority and so there would be no joint or shared costs.

2.7 Both authorities have been well served by the existing Independent Remuneration Panel Members and those individuals will be able to apply to be part of the pool for the new arrangements.

3 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The establishment of Independent Remuneration Panels and the setting of Members Allowances are governed by the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Independent Remuneration Panel acts in accordance with the guidance issues to support the Regulations.

3.2 Statutory legislation provides for Members to be paid a Basic Allowance and a Special Responsibility Allowance for undertaking additional responsibilities. The role of the Independent Remuneration Panel is to review and make recommendations in respect of these and other allowances payable to Elected Members.

3.3 The payment of allowances and reimbursement of travel expenses for the newly appointed Independent Remuneration Panel Members can be met from existing resources.

4 OTHER KEY ISSUES

4.1 Appointment of the pool of Independent Remuneration Panel Members will be undertaken through a formal recruitment process to ensure equality, openness and transparency. Specific exclusions apply but these are clearly laid out in the application form and person specification.

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation was undertaken with other Suffolk authorities through the Monitoring Officers Group but there was no appetite for a Suffolk-wide pool of Independent Remuneration Panel members. The establishment of a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel for Suffolk Coastal and Waveney replicates the principle of Joint Independent Standards Members. This option would also minimise the travel costs that could be claimed as membership would be restricted to the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney areas.

6 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None. The existing arrangements and membership for the Independent Remuneration Panel for both authorities have been in place for a number of years and this review has been undertaken to ensure future resilience.

7 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

7.1 To disband the existing arrangements for the Independent Remuneration Panel and to establish a pool of Joint Independent Remuneration Panel Members across both authorities.
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the existing arrangements and membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel be revoked.

2. That the establishment of a joint pool of 5 Independent Remuneration Panel Members for Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils, with 3 persons being able to constitute an Independent Remuneration Panel, be approved.

3. That the recruitment process for a joint pool of 5 Independent Remuneration Panel Members across Suffolk Coastal and Waveney be approved.

4. That delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Director and Head of Legal & Democratic Services to shortlist, interview and appoint the pool of 5 independent persons following consultation with the Leaders of the Council for each authority.

5. That a fee of £200 per review plus travel expenses be paid to each Independent Remuneration Panel Member on completion of a specific reviews on Members Allowances.

APPENDICES

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<th>Appendix</th>
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<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>Independent Remuneration Panel Member – Person Specification</td>
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<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>Independent Remuneration Panel Member – Application Form</td>
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<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>Independent Remuneration Panel - Supporting Information</td>
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None