

Report for: Full Council

Date of Meeting:	29 th October 2025
Subject:	Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel Members
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Luke Taylor, Leader of the Council
Responsible Officer:	Maria De Leburne, Director of Legal, People and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To approve the recommended appointments to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Members' Allowances in Mid Devon

Recommendation(s):

- 1. That Kelly-Anne Phillips, Graham Russell and David Hindle be appointed to the Mid Devon Independent Remuneration Panel to join John Smith.**
- 2. That, when necessary, the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be paid travelling expenses for attendance at meetings of the Panel at the same rates as those paid to councillors and officers from time to time, mindful that the majority of meetings will be held online.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council must have an Independent Remuneration Panel to review members' allowances and the Panel must comprise at least three members.**

The Panel also acts as the relevant Parish Remuneration Panel within the district.

- 1.2 Central Government guidance emphasises that the membership of the Panel must be fully independent and perceived to be such. Political appointments and those made through any personal association with the Council should always be avoided.
- 1.3 Further, it is desirable that there is continuity of experience in the Panel – with appointments being made for a period of several years and to ensure that there is always at least one member of the Panel with sufficient experience of the role.

2.0 Current Membership

- 2.1 By law, the minimum number of panel members is three. Following the resignation of two panel members in 2024/25, there now only remains one Panel member. The one current member is:

- John Smith

2.0 New Appointments

- 2.1 In the past, the Council has sought to recruit new Panel members by placing an advert in the local press and on social media platforms. This has traditionally been followed up by a shortlisting process and interviews.
- 2.2 Potential candidates must be able to satisfy the following criteria:
 - Must not be a Member of the Mid Devon District Council.
 - Must not currently be a Town or Parish Councillor.
 - Must not currently be an officer of Mid Devon District Council.
 - Must not actively be engaged in political party activity.
 - Must not have any unspent criminal convictions.
 - Must be over 21 years of age.
- 2.3 Traditional methods of recruitment have not proven successful in recent years with very few, in any, applicants coming forwards. This may well be as a consequence of the role being unremunerated. As a result and following advice from colleagues across similar Council's in the South West, a more direct approach has been employed in targeting potentially interested individuals with relevant knowledge and experience. It should be noted that a similar problem with regards to recruitment to IRP's is being experienced across many Councils.

- 2.4 The previous Chair of the Panel, Karen Stone, retired in December 2024. Having worked for South West Councils, her employer sought a replacement on our behalf and **Kelly-Anne Phillips** put herself forward for the role. She is currently the Director of Policy and Internal Services at South West Councils and has a great deal of relevant knowledge and experience of the local government sector.
- 2.5 Jeremy Filmer-Bennett retired from the Panel for personal reasons in the summer of 2024.
- 2.6 An IRP Chair's and Advisers meeting was hosted by South West Council's in September 2025 and the vacancies within the IRP at Mid Devon were highlighted to those present. Following that meeting two existing IRP members for other local authorities expressed an interest to join the Mid Devon IRP:

Graham Russell is a retired Head of Democratic Services officer from Bath & North East Somerset, a marriage celebrant and is a member of a number of IRP's in the region and Chair of others. He developed some expertise in the whole subject of members' allowances and was commissioned by South West Councils to produce on-line guidance on the subject for IRP members, their support officers and councillors.

David Hindle is a retired Planning Officer and Team Leader. He is currently a member of the Cotswold District Council IRP which has recently undergone a rigorous recent Fundamental Review of both the District Scheme and a local Town and Parish Council. He therefore brings with him a good deal of recent experience across a range of Councils.

- 2.7 An online meeting was held with each of the recommended candidates to ascertain their level of experience and suitability for the role and as a result each of the following are recommended to Council for appointment:
- Kelly-Anne Phillips
 - Graham Russell
 - David Hindle
- 3.8 Although the legislation requires 3 members on the Panel, having a 4th member will provide some resilience should another member be unavailable. It will also provide a broader perspective and range of input.

4. **Length of appointment and Local Government Reorganisation**

- 4.1 Guidance and good practice protocols state that Panel members can serve anything up to 2 terms in office, a term being the life of Council, therefore, if

Panel members wish to continue it is hoped they can do so up to and beyond the next election in 2027.

- 4.2 With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon it is not yet known how many IRP's will be required to cover the County of Devon or how the Members Allowances review process will be managed beyond LGR. It is anticipated however, that given the likely increase / change in the workloads of Town and Parish Councillors requests to review local Allowances Schemes may increase and in the very near future.

Financial Implications: It is recommended that the Council continues its current practice of paying travelling expenses when Panel members attend their meetings in person. The cost can be met within existing budgets. In all other respects the Panel are not remunerated for their work.

Legal Implications: The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 set out the requirements relating to the appointment of Independent Remuneration Panels.

Risk Assessment: The Council must have an Independent Remuneration Panel of a least three members.

Impact on Climate Change: N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment: None directly arising from this report.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: None

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 21.10.25

Cabinet member notified: (yes/no)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Maria De Leburne, Director of Legal, People, Governance and Monitoring Officer.
Email: mdeleburne@middevon.gov.uk
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Background papers:

- The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003