



Council
12 July 2022

Report Title:	Independent Remuneration Panel Report – Independent Person on Audit & Governance Committee
Cabinet Portfolio	Finance and Governance
Cabinet Member	Councillor Martin Bond
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
Report of	Jan Bakewell Director of Legal & Governance janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Jan Bakewell Director of Legal & Governance janbakewell@sthelens.gov.uk

Borough priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	X

1. Summary

- 1.1 To present a recommendation to Council for consideration from the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to remuneration for an Independent Person on the Audit & Governance Committee.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Council is invited to:

- i. consider and approve the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel to offer remuneration to the Independent Person on the Audit & Governance of £500 per year and;
- ii. authorise the Monitoring Officer to amend the Members' Allowances Scheme in Part 6 of the Constitution to include a Co-Optees Allowance in this regard.

3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 To set out the Independent Remuneration Panel's ("IRP") recommendation.

4. Background /Reasons for the recommendations

- 4.1 At its Annual Council meeting on 30 September 2020, Council considered a report on constitutional issues with recommendations to amend the Terms of Reference for the Audit & Governance Committee ("the Committee") and to amend the make-up of the Committee to include an Independent Person ("IP"). Council agreed to commence the recruitment process to co-opt an IP to the Committee for a fixed term of up to 3 years.
- 4.2 This was to bring additional knowledge and expertise and to reinforce the political neutrality and independence of the committee in accordance with the CIPFA best practice guidance (Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2018 Edition). Council agreed to commence the recruitment process to co-opt an IP to the Committee for a fixed term of up to 3 years.

- 4.3 At its meeting on 23 November 2020, the Committee approved a role description and person specification for an IP to be co-opted to the Committee, following a recruitment process, with a view to a recommendation to Council to co-opt an IP in due course. It was not proposed at that time to pay remuneration for the role, other than expenses for attendance at meetings and training. A subsequent recruitment advert in December 2020 did not attract any suitable candidates with appropriate skills and experience. The intention is to publish a further recruitment advert imminently but to offer remuneration this time to attract suitable candidates. Some other local authorities have offered remuneration in recent recruitment adverts.
- 4.4 The recruitment process was agreed by Audit & Governance Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2020, including a role description and person specification. The vacancy is to be advertised on the Council's website, social media channels and in the local press. Interviews for short-listed suitable candidates will be carried out by a panel comprising the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, Portfolio Holder for Finance & Governance, Executive Director of Corporate Services, Director of Finance and Director of Legal & Governance
- 4.5 Subject to a successful recruitment process, it is planned to submit a recommendation to co-opt a preferred candidate to a future meeting of Council for consideration. Once co-opted, the IP will be required to undertake induction training prior to joining the Committee and participate in committee training and briefings during the municipal year.
- 4.6 The IRP met on 17 June 2022 to discuss the option of offering remuneration for this role. Their report and recommendation are attached at Appendix 1.

5. Consideration of Alternatives

- 5.1 Not to offer remuneration could impact on the successful recruitment for a suitable IP.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 To consider the recommendation from the IRP.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 At present, there are no statutory requirements on local authorities in England to appoint an independent person to an audit committee or to offer remuneration. Audit committees for combined authorities in England must have at least one independent person.

8. Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

- 8.1 None.

9. Social Value

- 9.1 None.

10. Sustainability and Environment

- 10.1 None.

11. Health and Wellbeing

- 11.1 None.

12. Equality and Human Rights

12.1 The application process will comply with the Council's existing policies.

13. Customer and Resident

13.1 None.

14. Asset and Property

14.1 None.

15. Staffing and Human Resources

15.1 None.

16. Risks

16.1 None.

17. Finance

17.1 The proposed remuneration of £500 per year, if approved, is to be met from the Council's existing members' allowances budget.

18. Policy Framework Implications

18.1 None.

19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

19.1 None.

20. Background Documents

20.1 CIPFA Publication: Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2018 Edition

Annual Council Report: 30 September 2020

Audit & Governance Committee Report: 23 November 2020

21. Appendices

Appendix 1: Independent Remuneration Panel Report – 17 June 2022