

Ward: ALL

Portfolio: Cross Cutting

FROM: Group Manager of Law
and Governance and
Monitoring Officer

Date: 14 December 2020

SUBJECT: **Appointment of an Independent Person to the Somerset Joint Independent Remuneration Panel**

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Report Sign off	Seen by:	Name	Date
	Legal	Lesley Dolan	30.11.20
	Finance	Richard Bates	30.11.20
	Chief Executive Officer	Stuart Brown	30.11.20
	Group Manager	David Clark	30.11.20
Summary:	<p>Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 the Council must have regard to the report of an Independent Remuneration Panel before making its annual Scheme for Members Allowances and expenses - a Panel can advise more than one authority. Mendip District Council along with Somerset County Council and Somerset West & Taunton Council operate a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.</p> <p>Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel must be independent of the Council. They must not, however, be disqualified from being a member of a local authority. Independent Panel Members may bring to the role a range of experience, knowledge and skills, relevant to the role of reviewing members' allowances and expenses and preparing a report for consideration by the Council.</p> <p>Members may recall that the term of the office of Mendip's previous representative on the Panel has recently expired.</p> <p>The Council has carried out a recruitment exercise for the position and would now recommend that John Dodson be appointed for an initial 3-year term.</p>		
Recommendation:	<p>That Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appoint John Dodson as the Council's representative on Somerset's Joint Independent Remuneration Panel for an initial 3-year term commencing on 14 December 2020.		

Direct and/or indirect impact on service delivery to our customers and communities	The payment of a Member's allowance contributes to the Council's ability to attract a diverse range of Councillors, which is essential to ensure the views of a wide range of communities are represented.
Financial Implications:	The resource associated with this matter must be delivered within existing budgets. There is currently no remuneration payable to the Mendip District Council representative of the Panel. However, the Council can pay expenses to Panel members.
Climate Change Risks and Opportunities:	<p>This workstream does not involve any risk to climate change in respect of behaviour change, the built environment, food, additional money, nor any adverse impact on nature, water, or waste.</p> <p>With regard to transport and expenses, it is likely that meetings of the Panel will continue to be held on the MS Teams platform thus reducing the need to travel in future.</p>
Legal Implications:	As outlined in this report.
Crime and Disorder Implications:	None.
Equalities Implications:	There are no direct impacts in terms of the Equalities Act 2010 on Members, Officers or the provision of services as a result of the report.
Risk Assessment and Adverse Impact on Corporate Actions:	<p>The key risk is that the Council does not meet its statutory requirements in respect of Members' allowances.</p> <p>This report mitigates this risk.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Provisions in relation to allowances for elected Members including the role of the Independent Remuneration Panel, are set out in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

The Somerset Joint Independent Remuneration Panel was formed in February 2014. Mendip joined the Somerset Joint Independent Remuneration Panel in May 2014.

The only legislative requirement is that each Council must ensure that the panel commands public confidence in the locality, is truly independent of each Council, is well qualified to discharge the required functions and is representative of the diversity of the communities in the local authority's area. The Council must take these points into consideration when making its appointment to the Somerset Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

Members may recall that the term of the office of Mendip's previous representative on the Panel has recently expired.

Following a recent recruitment exercise for the position where the role was widely advertised Officers would now recommend that John Dodson be appointed for an initial 3-year term.

John Dodson lives in Street. He has an MAD degree from the Royal College of Art, London. He has studied industrial ceramic design and engineering. A full career has seen him travel the world.

More recently John has served as an Independent Member of the Shropshire County Council (lately a Unitary Authority) selection panel for senior posts relative to Adult Social Care and has served as an Independent Member of committees related to Adult Social Care and its relationship with the local NHS.

Mr. Dodson participated in a virtual interview with the current Chair of the Panel and the Monitoring Officers from both Somerset County Council and Mendip District Council on Wednesday 25 November 2020.

The interview concluded that John is very well qualified to contribute positively and ensure discharge of the legislative requirements associated with the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Appoint John Dodson as the Council's representative on Somerset's Joint Independent Remuneration Panel for an initial 3-year term commencing on 14 December 2020.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

To ensure the Council has a representative on the Somerset Joint Independent Remuneration Panel and to fulfil its obligations under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

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