

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council Meeting – 30 September 2014

Proposed Membership of Joint Independent Remuneration Panel

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams)

An opportunity has arisen for Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) to join a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

Each Council has to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to advise on the scheme of Members Allowances. In this respect TDBC has an Independent Panel consisting of three Members. The legislation nevertheless allows the creation of a Joint Panel supporting more than one Council and puts no limit on the number of Councils that can be supported by an individual Panel.

The legislation recognises that a Joint Panel arrangement can be an appropriate and cost effective local arrangement. In this regard, following discussions across the County, the County Council, West Somerset Council and Mendip District Council have already agreed to have a Joint Panel and this paper recommends that TDBC should also join.

The Panel will consist of three Independent Persons appointed by the County Council and three Independent Persons appointed by the three District/Borough Councils.

The Panel would report separately to each of the four Councils to ensure continued sovereignty in terms of decision making. Each Council can therefore continue to make its own decision on Remuneration Rates as it sees fit in the light of the particular circumstances that pertain to that Authority.

Given that each Council is responsible for costs in relation to its appointees, whilst financial costs are modest, the Council should realise savings from this proposal given that currently it is necessary to budget for expenses of three appointees whereas in the new arrangement it will be only be necessary to budget for the expenses of one appointee.

The most significant benefits from the proposal will be accrued via access to County-wide officer expertise and the provision of greater resilience and increased efficiencies in terms of the use of TDBC officer time.

This proposal was considered at the meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 14 August 2014 when it was recommended that the Council should agree to join the Panel.

It is therefore **recommended** that Taunton Deane Borough Council becomes a Member of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel alongside with Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council and West Somerset Council and that arrangements be made to appoint an Independent person to represent Taunton Deane Borough Council on the Joint Panel.

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