

# MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### **1. FUNCTION**

- 1.1 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, Local Authorities must establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations to the Local Authority about the allowances to be paid to its Members.

### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

- 2.1 The Regulations require that Independent Remuneration Panels should comprise at least three persons, who cannot be Members of any Local Authority in respect of which the Panel makes recommendations and must be independent of the Council.
- 2.2 The Head of Democratic Services will shortlist candidates and will recommend appointments to the Director of Law and Governance and the Leaders of Political Groups. A maximum of five and no fewer than three persons shall be appointed to the Panel.
- 2.3 Wherever possible, the members of the Panel shall be treated as separate and independent consultants who are responsible for their own tax, National Insurance, etc.

### **3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PANEL**

- 3.1 To make recommendations to the Council and Parish Councils as to the amount of Basic Allowance that should be payable to its elected members.
- 3.2 To make recommendations to the Council and Parish Councils about the responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance and the amount of such an allowance.
- 3.3 To make recommendations to the Council and Parish Councils as to the amount of travel and subsistence allowance payable to elected and co-opted members.
- 3.4 To make recommendations to the Council about allowances for care of children and other dependents.
- 3.5 To make recommendations about the 'approved duties' for which travel, subsistence, childcare and dependent carers payments can be made.
- 3.5 To make recommendations to the Council about allowances for IT equipment, phones and other equipment.
- 3.6 To make recommendations to the Council about the level of allowance paid to co-opted members of the Council's Audit Committee, Independent members of the Standards Committee and as agreed from time to time, of Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.7 To make recommendations to the Council as to the level of allowance paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the purpose of meeting the expenses of those offices (ie the Mayoral Allowance).
- 3.8 To make recommendations to the Council as to the adoption of a Maternity / Paternity Policy.

### **4. MEETINGS**

- 4.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel will meet in October 2021, to consider allowances for Members of Milton Keynes Council and again in November 2021 to consider Parish Allowances.
- 4.2 The date and timings of the meetings will be fixed in advance, following consultation with the Chair, Leaders of Political Groups and the Director of Law and Governance.

- 4.3 The meetings will be Chaired by Mark Palmer - Development Director (South East Employers). In the absence of the Chair, a replacement Chair will be elected for the duration of the meeting.
- 4.4 A quorum of two will apply for meetings.
- 4.6 Meetings will be independently clerked by Clive Parker.
- 4.7 The agenda and supporting papers shall be in a standard format and circulated in advance of meetings.
- 4.8 The Panel shall otherwise devise its own rules for the conduct of meetings providing that such are consistent with legislative requirements and good governance practice.
- 4.8 The Panel will use the following methodology in undertaking its review:
- a) The Panel will seek the views of Members (both written and oral) with an opportunity for selected Members<sup>1</sup> to meet and address the Panel.
  - b) The Panel will seek the views (both written and oral) of:
    - i) Milton Keynes Fawcett Society; and
    - ii) a representative of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils.
  - c) The Panel will seek written view of Parish Councillors.
  - d) The Panel will receive factual briefings from officers with respect of budgetary implications and the ease of administration of the scheme of allowances.
  - e) The Panel will have regard to and draft recommendations that conform to existing legislation (and anticipate likely future legislation so far as possible) including:
    - i) Statutory Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances 2006; and
    - ii) the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations.
  - f) In drafting its recommendations, the Panel will recognise the following principles:
    - i) that the work of a Councillor is undertaken for the sake of public service and not for personal gain;
    - ii) that the demands placed upon Councillors by their differing roles and responsibilities within the Council be recognised;
    - iii) the need to fairly and equitably compensate Councillors so far as the Panel thinks appropriate for the time and effort required for their work as a member of the Council; and
    - iv) that individual Councillors should not be disadvantaged by virtue of the ward or party (if any) which they represent, or the geographic spread within the Borough of the places where Council business is conducted.
  - g) The Panel will be mindful that their report and recommendations should be easy to understand and adequately justifiable to the electorate.
- 4.8 The Panel will prepare draft recommendations during November 2021.
- 4.9 Final recommendations will be available for the consideration of Council on 19 January 2022 (publication date no later than 7 January 2022).
- 4.10 A revised scheme of Councillor's allowances will be implemented from 1 April 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> Leaders of Political Groups (or appointed substitute), Cabinet members, Chairs of Political Groups (or appointed substitute), and Committee Chairs. Individual Councillors will be invited to meet the Panel in group sessions.