1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report asks the Committee to appoint to the Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the vacancies on the Remuneration Panel be filled and those listed in paragraph 4.2.1 of the report be confirmed as members of the Remuneration Panel.

2.2 That the appointments to the Remuneration Panel made at the Council AGM, as listed in paragraph 4.1.4, be reconfirmed.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Council, on 13 November 2001, set up an independent Remuneration Panel to review annually the Council’s scheme for Councillors’ Allowances and to make recommendations for a scheme of allowances.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position:

4.1.1 The Council, on 13 November 2001, set up an independent Remuneration Panel to review annually the Council’s scheme for Councillors’ Allowances and to make recommendations for a scheme of allowances to include:

   i) the amount of basic allowance to be paid to all Councillors;
   ii) the duties in respect of which Councillors should receive a special responsibility allowance, and the amount of such an allowance;
   iii) allowances for the care of children or dependants.
4.1.2 The Remuneration Panel was set up to include at least three and no more than five independent members appointed to represent, where possible, the following stakeholders with the Council:
(a) the local business community
(b) the local trades union movement
(c) the local voluntary sector
(d) the local media
(e) a person with past experience of local government

4.1.3 A number of vacancies on the Panel have arisen over the past few years.

4.1.4 The two existing members of the Panel were most recently appointed at the Council AGM on 23 May 2018. These members are:
Francis Connolly - member with experience of the local voluntary sector and local business
Dick Taylor - member with past experience of local government (officer)

4.1.5 The proposed panel members have been approached and have agreed to become members of the Remuneration Panel.

4.2 Options Proposed

4.2.1 It is proposed to confirm the appointment of the following people as members of the Remuneration Panel:
Linda Fort - member with experience of the local media
Mick Pollek - member with experience of the local trade union movement
Lady Audrey Durant - member with experience of the local voluntary sector

4.2.2 The persons listed above have been proposed as they represent the stakeholders set out in paragraph 4.1.2, which the Council has agreed would, where possible, be used to appoint to the Remuneration Panel.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The provision for the payment of allowances to Councillors gives local authorities the scope to set allowances schemes to suit local needs and to help ensure that Councillors are not financially disadvantaged in serving as elected Members.

5.2 Ensuring Councillors are recompensed fairly for their services will help to attract candidates of high calibre and help to retain them, thereby enhancing the stability and experience of Reading’s elected Councillors.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this decision.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
7.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to set up and maintain an independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations to the authority concerning the allowances to be paid to elected members.

7.2 The relevant regulations governing the payment of allowances to elected members are:

- The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) Regulations 1991 No. 351
- The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations 1995 No. 553
- The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2001
- Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001
- The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
- The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003

7.3 The Local Government Act 2000 (Commencement No 6), made on 15 February 2001, brought into force from 19 February 2001 all the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 which relate to allowances except the abolition of attendance allowance which was abolished from 28 July 2001.

7.4 The relevant regulations came into force on 4 May 2001 and from that date local authorities have been under a duty to set up an independent Remuneration Panel. Any decision to amend, revoke or replace an allowances scheme will have to be taken having regard to the recommendations of the Panel.

7.5 The 2003 Regulations do not specify how a local authority should go about finding members of its remuneration panel. However, the Council will need to follow the 2003 Regulations and take account of the associated Government guidance. Appointments to the independent Remuneration Panel must be independent, well qualified to discharge the functions of the Panel and representative of the local authority’s area. The recommended experience of members set out in 4.1.2 will assist the Council in meeting these objectives.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications to the appointment of panel members. The role of the Remuneration Panel members is voluntary. Panel members may claim out-of-pocket expenses if they wish. Any expenses claimed will be met from existing budgets.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003
Local Government Councillors and civic dignitaries in England: ODPM guidance: Part One: members’ allowances