
APPOINTMENT OF AN EAST KENT JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

To: **Council – 3 December 2015**

By: **Director of Corporate Governance**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: **To appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel as required under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended).**

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) for the purpose of making recommendations to the Council in respect of its Members' Allowances Scheme.

2.0 The Current Situation

2.1 Since 2002 the Council has operated a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel with neighbouring authorities and in 2007 the first East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel was formed by Dover District Council, Shepway District Council and Thanet District Council. Shepway District Council then ended their involvement in 2008. The current Panel was then formed later in 2008 and consists of 5 members appointed jointly by Canterbury City Council (who joined shortly after Shepway District Council had left), Dover District Council and Thanet District Council. The term of office of the current Panel members expired in May 2015.

2.2 Following the May 2015 elections, consultation was undertaken with the leadership in each of the partner authorities in the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel about continuing with the arrangements for a shared Panel and this report seeks to confirm the Council's continuing participation.

3.0 Panel Arrangements

3.1 The key responsibilities of the Panel as set out in the Regulations are to make recommendations as to the responsibilities or duties in respect of which the following allowances should be made available and the amount of allowance:

- Basic Allowance;
- Special Responsibility Allowances;
- Member Travel and Subsistence allowances;
- Dependent Carers Allowances; and
- Index linking arrangements for allowances.

3.2 The Council has a duty to have regard to the recommendations of the Panel when making a decision in respect of any of the allowances set out above but does not have to adopt the recommendations of the Panel.

- 3.3 In addition, the Panel also makes recommendations to Town and Parish Council's in respect of the level of Parish Basic Allowance and Parish Chairman's allowance.
- 3.4 The Regulations require that the Panel be composed of "at least three members none of whom... is also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations... or... is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority".
- 3.5 The Panel membership is currently appointed on the following basis:
- 1 member appointed by Canterbury City Council
 - 2 member appointed by Dover District Council
 - 2 members appointed by Thanet District Council
- 3.6 The quorum for the Panel is 3 members.
- 3.7 The proposed term length of the members of the Panel is for four years, from the 1 December 2015 running until 30 November 2019. The Panel will be responsible for appointing its own Chairman from amongst the membership on an annual basis.
- 3.8 It is proposed to re-appoint the two Thanet representatives from the last Panel, Mrs Kerry Sabin-Dawson and Mrs Sue Longden, to the Panel for a third term on the basis of the experience they have accumulated in role as members of the Panel and their knowledge of the area.
- 3.9 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) make provision for the members of the Panel to be paid an allowance and expenses for carrying out the Panel's functions at a level the authorities determine.
- 3.10 The current allowance arrangements for the members of the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel were set in 2007. Each Panel member receives an allowance of £300 per annum plus an attendance fee of £75 per meeting. A further allowance of £250 per annum is paid to the Panel's Chairman. The costs of the Panel members' allowances are split equally between the partner authorities.
- 3.11 It is not proposed to change the allowance arrangements for the members of the Panel for the duration of the term of office running until 30 November 2019.
- 3.12 The Central administrative support for the Panel is currently provided by Dover District Council's Democratic Support team and it is proposed that this will continue.
- 4.0 Options**
- 4.1 Option 1: To confirm the Council's continued participation in the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel with Canterbury City Council and Dover District Council.
- 4.2 Option 2: To form an Independent Remuneration Panel for Thanet District Council only.
- 4.3 Option 1 is the recommended choice and it continues the existing arrangements that have worked successfully since 2008 and bring resilience to the Panel through the pooling of resources and the resultant economies of scale. Option 2 is not recommended as it would take longer to implement and would lose the benefits gained through the sharing of a Panel.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial and VAT

- 5.1.1 The Council currently pays Dover District Council an annual fee for their services administering the EKJIRP. The fee also covers the cost the allowances described in paragraph 3.10. If Option one is agreed then there would be no financial implications as there would be sufficient existing budgets to cover the proposed costs.
- 5.1.2 If option 2 is chosen, there would not be sufficient existing funds to facilitate organising and running an Independent Remuneration Panel in the existing budget. Council would need to identify alternative sources of funding in order to facilitate this option.

5.2 Legal

- 5.2.1 The Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) for the purpose of making recommendations to the Council in respect of its Members' Allowances Scheme. The Council is then required to have regard to those recommendations in making a scheme of allowances, but it is not obliged to accept them.

5.3 Corporate

- 5.3.1 The level of Councillor allowances may be seen as both impacting on the public's perception of the Council and a factor in making public services as a Councillor attractive to a broad range of potential candidates.

5.4 Equity and Equalities

- 5.4.1 There are no direct equalities implications to this report as although there are Councillors from the protected groups, the allowances schemes that the EKJIRP will consider will apply to all Councillors equally.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 To confirm the Council's continued participation in the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel until 30 November 2019.
- 6.2 To appoint Mrs Kerry Sabin-Dawson and Mrs Sue Longden as Thanet District Council's appointees to the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel for a four year term from the 1 December 2015.

Future Meeting if applicable: n/a	Date:
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Contact Officer:	Nicholas Hughes, Committee Services Manager
Reporting to:	Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance

Annex List

Annex 1	EKJIRP – Proposed Terms of Reference
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Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
<i>None</i>	

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Nicola Walker, Head of Financial services
Legal	Ciara Feeney, Head of Legal Services
Communications	Hannah Thorpe, Head of Communications