



Thanet District Council Quadrennial Review

East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel

August 2014

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Section One

Foreword by the Chairman

An introduction to the review on behalf of the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel by the Chairman, Mr Kenneth London

Chairman's Foreword

Since 2003 an Independent panel has made recommendations upon the amount of remuneration that might reasonably be applied to the duties of members of councils and council committees. The current East Kent Joint Independent Panel was formed in May 2008 replacing the earlier individual council panels and during the past four years the panel has seen some change in its authority makeup, now three from the original four authorities.

The original debate in 2003 set the criteria for a system of remuneration included the recognition that some councillors have much greater calls on their time than others and that the levels of allowances should be regularly reviewed.

Within the criteria the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel has to 'determine a reasonable level of remuneration for the elected and Independent members of councils and council committees, accepting that a certain proportion of such remuneration shall be remitted in respect of the voluntary element of their work'.

The Panel's previous review has been regularly updated to reflect changing situations and the panel has now completed its main review, which has updated the scheme for the next four years.

The Panel is of the view that its duty is to base its recommendations upon what it considers to be a fair level of remuneration for the service carried out, albeit there are constraints that will dictate that fair level of remuneration. It must be up to the individual local authorities to decide what level they can or wish to pay in light of local government financial arrangements and the wider economic climate and the Panel accepts that some of its recommendations may not be adopted by the authority.

The panel has endeavoured to take into consideration evidence from the employment environment as a whole and in the South East and Kent in particular. The panel also took into account representations made by individual councillors both in interview and completed survey papers. It believes that the following report gives a reasonable summary of the value of an individual members input to their authority and constituents.

I commend this report to officers and members of the Thanet District Council.

Mr K London
Chairman

Section Two

Summary of Recommendations

*The summary of the recommendations of the East Kent Joint
Independent Remuneration Panel*

Summary of Recommendations

Overview

- 2.1 In forming these recommendations the Panel is mindful of the climate in which it is forming its recommendations and recognises that the situation in respect of local government finances has changed significantly since the last Quadrennial Review.
- 2.2 While the view of the Panel overall has remained unchanged in terms what it believes is an appropriate level of remuneration for the responsibilities taken on by councillors, the Panel also recognises that the reality of members' allowance schemes in Kent has been one of modest change over the last four years.
- 2.3 Accordingly, while the Panel would welcome moves towards achieving the allowance scheme set out in its recommendations it recognises that Thanet District Council may not choose to do so or alternatively, may choose to make phased increases in a general direction of travel that reflects the Panel's recommendations while not actual reaching the ultimate level recommended by the Panel.
- 2.3.1 A delay was required as part of the review process while clarification was sought on the impact of the decision on the taxation of members travel and subsistence allowances and the Department of Communities and Local Governments review of councillors' eligibility of local government pension schemes. These two issues have now been resolved and the Panel's recommendations have been amended where appropriate.
- 2.4 The Panel commends the Council for its regular consultation on changes to its Members' Allowances Scheme. The recommendations in this report are intended to take effect from 2014/15 unless otherwise specified.
- 2.5 A table on page 10 sets out a comparison of the current levels of Members' Allowances and the Panel's recommended levels.

Basic Allowance

- 2.5 The Panel recommends that the Basic Allowance be paid at **£7,590.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Chairman of the Council

2.6 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Council be paid at **£2,188.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Vice-Chairman of the Council

2.7 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Council be paid at **£1,530.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Leader of the Council

2.8 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Council be paid at **£18,974.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Deputy Leader of the Council

2.9 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council be paid at **£12,523.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Cabinet Members

2.10 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Cabinet be paid at **£11,384.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Leader of the Main Opposition Group (10 or more members)

2.11 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group with a membership of 10 or more members be paid at **£6,261.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Leader of an Opposition Group (5 to 9 members)

2.12 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of an Opposition Group with a membership of 5 to 9 members be paid at **£1,897.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Leader of an Opposition Group (5 or fewer members)

2.13 The Panel recommends that no Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Leader of an Opposition Group with a membership of fewer than 5 members.

Shadow Cabinet (including Opposition Deputy Leader)

2.14 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Shadow Cabinet be paid at **£3,795.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Chairman of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.15 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee be paid at **£11,384.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Chairman of a Major Committee

2.16 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of a Major Committee be paid at **£9,487.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

2.17 The Panel defines a Major Committee as the Governance and Audit Committee and the Planning Committee.

Chairman of a Minor Committee

2.18 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of a Minor Committee be paid at **£3,795.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

2.19 The Panel defines a Minor Committee as the Licensing Committee, Dover Joint Transportation Board and the Standards Committee.

Vice-Chairman of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.20 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chairman of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee be paid at **£3,795.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Vice-Chairman of a Major Committee

2.21 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chairman of a Major Committee be paid at **£3,795.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Vice-Chairman of a Minor Committee

2.22 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chairman of a Minor Committee be paid at **£1,897.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

Independent Member of the Standards Committee

2.23 The Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for an Independent Member of the Standards Committee be weighted as that of a Vice-Chairman of a Standards Committee and therefore be paid at **£300.00** per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.

'Independent Person' (Localism Act 2011)

2.24 Section 28(8)(d) of the Localism Act 2011 makes provision for the Independent Person to be paid "any amounts by way of allowances or expenses in connection with performing the duties of the appointment".

2.25 The Panel recommends that the Independent Person be set an allowance of **£250.00** per annum, subject to review in 2015/16.

Dependent Carers Allowance

2.26 The Panel recommends that the Dependent Carers Allowance for the municipal year 2014/15 be set at the hourly national minimum wage or a higher level to be determined by the authority.

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

2.27 The Panel recommends that the current travel and subsistence allowance scheme be continued with index linking in line with changes in Officer's allowances where appropriate.

2.28 The Panel endorses the 3-month time limit set for submitting travel and subsistence claims, subject to the appropriate officer having discretion to waive this rule in exceptional conditions.

2.29 The Panel recommends that Thanet District Council limits travel for councillor's 'home' location to an address within the electoral boundary of the authority or alternatively to an agreed radius beyond that boundary.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Position	Thanet District Council 2014/15 (£)	EKJIRP Proposed 2014/15 (£)
Basic Allowance	4,570	7,590
Chairman of the Council	2,188	2,188
Vice-Chairman of the Council	1,530	1,530
Leader	18,082	18,974
Deputy Leader	10,776	12,523
Cabinet Member	7,990	11,384
Opposition Group Leader (>10)	5,204	6,261
Opposition Group Leader (5-9)	0	1,897
Opposition Group Leader (<5)	0	0
Opposition Deputy Group Leader	2,304	3,795
Shadow Cabinet	2,304	3,795
Overview & Scrutiny Chairman	7,990	11,384
Overview & Scrutiny Vice-Chairman	3,216	3,795
MAJOR Committee Chairman (Planning / Governance & Audit)	5,204	9,487
MAJOR Committee Vice-Chairman (Planning / Governance & Audit)	1,216	3,795
MINOR Committee Chairman (Licensing, Standards Committee, Dover JTB)	3,216 (Licensing) 1,216 (rest)	3,795 (All)
MINOR Committee Vice-Chairman (Licensing, Standards Committee, Dover JTB)	805 (Licensing) 400 (Standards)	1,897 (All)
Standards Committee Independent Member (if not in receipt of other SRA)	250	250
Independent Person	250	250
Substitute Independent Person	100	100

Section Three

Quadrennial Review for Thanet District Council

*The process and recommendations of the East Kent Joint
Independent Remuneration Panel for the municipal years
2014/15 to 2017/18*

Quadrennial Review

Introduction

- 3.1 The East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel was formed on 1 May 2008 by Dover District Council, Shepway District Council and Thanet District Council and replaced the pre-existing Independent Remuneration Panel's in each authority. Canterbury City Council has since joined as a member and Shepway District Council left the group.
- 3.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel is appointed, and acts in accordance with, the provisions of the Local Authorities (Member's Allowances) (England) Regulations (as amended). This requires a minimum of three members who cannot be currently serving Officers or Councillors of a local authority.
- 3.3 The membership of the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel consists of two independent members appointed by each of the original two remaining authorities and one appointed by Canterbury City Council.
- 3.4 The Panel consists of the following members:
- **Mr Kenneth London**, Chairman of the Panel, who is a retired Local Government Civil Engineer, past Justice of the Peace and Chairman of the Kent Courts Board, he is currently involved in the Courts Witness Service and Local Charities.
 - **Mr William Ferrier**, who is a retired Master Mariner who was previously an independent member of the Dover District Council Standards Committee. He is presently a serving Justice of the Peace for the County of Kent and on the management team of Walmer RNLI Lifeboat station.
 - **Mr Alan Goodall**, who has a background in local and national government administration with Surrey County Council, Dover District Council and the Home Office. He retired from the UK Border Agency in 2011. Mr Goodall has previously served as a member of Dover District Council's Standards Committee, including 3 years as Chairman.

- **Mrs Ann Longden**, who is a management accountant with thirty years local government strategic and service finance experience. She is currently a Volunteer Auditor for Cancer Research UK and a volunteer relief manager for CRUK locally.
- **Mrs Kerry Sabin-Dawson**, who has lived and taught in Thanet for over 17 years. She has been the Chair of Governors for a school in Thanet for 8 years and is a Local Lead Governor for Kent.

Reviews

- 3.5 Each authority is required to undertake a review of its allowance schemes through an Independent Remuneration Panel. As part of this review, the Independent Remuneration Panel can make recommendations on allowances for a period of up to four years (known as the 'Quadrennial Review').
- 3.6 The Panel in recommending its proposed allowance scheme recognises that in many areas the local authority will not achieve these levels. However, they serve to define the upper level for which the Panel considers an appropriate level of allowances.

Methodology of Quadrennial Review

- 3.7 A questionnaire was circulated to all Councillors as part of the consultation process in reviewing the allowance scheme. The questioner sought to identify how much time members were required to spend on council business and their views on the current remuneration scheme.
- 3.8 The Panel members then conducted a series of interviews with councillors who had requested to meet with them as part of the questionnaire.
- 3.9 The Panel also collected evidence of remuneration schemes from other authorities in England for comparative purposes. Where appropriate, the Panel requested further supporting information from the authority that would assist it in forming its recommendations. The Panel also gave consideration to the Local Government Association (LGA) Daily Rate and the findings of the annual South East Employers (SEE) survey on Members' Allowances.

3.10 The submissions (oral and written) and evidence received during the consultation period were used this as the basis upon which to form its recommendations.

3.11 Finally, a delay was required as part of the three reviews while clarification was sought on the impact of the decision on the taxation of members travel and subsistence allowances and the Department of Communities and Local Governments review of councillors' eligibility of local government pension schemes.

Principles for Member Remuneration Schemes

3.12 The Councillors Commission recommended that member remuneration schemes should consider the following principles:

- The Basic Allowance should encourage people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills to serve as local Councillors.
- Those who participate in and contribute to the democratic process should not suffer unreasonable financial disadvantage.
- That Councillors should be compensated for their work and the compensation should have regard to the full range of commitment and complexity of their roles.
- The system should be transparent, simple to operate and understand.
- The system should not encourage the proliferation of meetings or provoke councillors into spending more time on Council business than is necessary.
- The level of remuneration should relate to a commonly accepted benchmark. In this case the Panel agreed to use the average of the three districts (Canterbury, Dover and Thanet) Median Full-time Male Resident Based Weekly Earnings for 2013. The average was chosen to minimise the impact of variations between the three districts. Overall, the East Kent average (£598.50) was only slightly lower than the Kent average (£610.40).

The Voluntary Component Principle (or Public Service Ethos)

3.13 In reviewing the remuneration schemes, the Panel had to give consideration to the voluntary component principle imbedded in the current structure. This is the principle that an important part of being a councillor is the desire to serve the public and as a

consequence, the allowance scheme should not recompense an elected Member for all of his or her time.

3.14 This principle was recognised by the Department for Communities and Local Government in its original guidance on Members Allowances and is supported by the Panel, which believes that the allowances paid to Members should not be of sufficient level so as to become a wage.

3.15 The counter argument to the voluntary component principle is that Member Allowances should not act as a barrier to access to members of the public who wished to stand for office but could not afford to give their time unrecompensed. To this end, while the Panel accepts the need for a voluntary component to be applied flexibly in respect of Special Responsibility Allowances to reflect the time component involved.

Prohibited Allowance Schemes

3.16 It is useful to note those types and applications of allowances that are prohibited under the Regulations prior to stating the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

- It is not permitted to pay an attendance allowance to councillors.
- It is not permitted to pay different Basic Allowance levels to councillors or withhold the Basic Allowance from a councillor, except where a Councillor has been suspended for misconduct.
- It is not permitted to pay Special Responsibility Allowances to only one political party where there are one or more political groups in an authority. A special responsibility allowance must be paid to a member of the opposition group where he or she is undertaking a specified role such as a committee chairmanship.

The Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendations

3.17 A summary of the Panel's recommendations can be found on pages 5-11.

(a) **Basic Allowance**

3.18 The Basic Allowance is "intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents

and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs, such as the use of their homes, telephone calls or visiting constituents"¹.

3.19 The Basic Allowance is intended to cover the full range of work expected of a ward councillor, together with members' incidental expenditure on matters such as:

- Stationery (Excluding headed stationery)
- Landline Telephone costs (Including line rental and call charges)
- Fax costs (Including line rental and call charges)
- Postage costs
- Mobile phone costs (Including line rental and call charges)
- Broadband costs

3.20 Underpinning the Basic Allowance is the principle that it is not intended to equate to a full time wage.

Methodology for Calculating the Basic Allowance

3.21 The original Basic Allowance methodology adopted in 2002/03 and restated at the time of the last Quadrennial Review was based upon the Average Gross Weekly Earnings for Full Time Employees on Adult Rates in Kent. This was used to calculate a daily rate which was multiplied by the number of hours spent on council business to formulate a basic allowance.

3.22 In calculating the Basic Allowance for the current Quadrennial review the Panel has followed this methodology, breaking it down into 3 components – time component and material costs, voluntary component and average weekly earnings.

(a) Time Component and Material Costs

3.23 As part of the survey sent to all councillors, Members were asked to estimate the amount of time that they spent on committee work, dealing with constituents and outside body appointments as well as the level of expenditure relating to the areas identified at paragraph 3.19 above. While the expenditure provides an indicative figure for the material costs in undertaking council business, it is only part of the overall cost in being a councillor and requires a time component to also be calculated. The time component is required to calculate the average annual number of working days spent on council work.

¹ ODPM Statutory Guidance issued 2003

3.24 The Panel, while noting the responses indicated a slight increase in the number of hours spent on council work, felt that there was not sufficient reason to change the average of a 17 hour week spent on council work used in the previous review.

(b) Average Weekly Earnings for Adult Males in Full-time Employment

3.25 Due to the wide variation in the Average Annual Salary for Adults in Full-time Employment in Kent, the Panel focussed on the levels for the three East Kent districts. Using the 2013 resident based weekly earnings for each district an East Kent average of £598.50 was determined.

(c) Voluntary Component

3.26 As part of the survey sent to Members, a question was asked to state their preferred level of voluntary component in the Basic Allowance, with a response range from 0% to 100% across the three authorities. The mean average of the responses from all authorities to this question was for a 47% voluntary component.

3.27 When the responses from Thanet Councillors only were considered, the response range was 30% to 90%. The mean average was slightly higher than the East Kent average at 50%. The most common response (the modal average) was for a 40% voluntary component, which was supported by the median average of responses which was also 40%. In light of this, it was the view of the Panel that the existing 40% voluntary component was about right.

3.28 On the basis of the responses received and comparisons with other allowance schemes, the Panel found no reason to change the basis upon which the Basic Allowance was originally calculated or the level of voluntary component.

(d) Recommended Basic Allowance

3.29 An hourly rate was determined as the starting point for calculating the Basic Allowance. The methodology for this was as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Average East Kent Male Full-time Weekly Earnings}}{37 \text{ hour working week}} = \text{Hourly Rate}$$

- 3.30 The hourly rate was then multiplied by the average number of hours the Panel estimated were spent on council business to reach a weekly figure for a level of 100% remunerated allowance. This was then multiplied by 46 weeks (the average number of working weeks a year) to derive an annual 100% remunerated figure. Finally, the 40% voluntary component discount was applied to reach the 60% remunerated annual Basic Allowance.
- 3.31 The level of Basic Allowance paid to Thanet District Councillors for the municipal year 2014/15 was £4,570.00. For comparison purposes, the average level surveyed by South East Employers (districts only) was £4,535.74.
- 3.32 On the basis of the previously mentioned methodology, the Panel recommends that an appropriate Basic Allowance would be £7,590.00. The Panel acknowledges that this represents a significant increase on the current Basic Allowance and sees it as the upper level against which any future increases in the current Basic Allowance should be judged. The Panel also recognises that the authority may not wish to set a Basic Allowance of £7,590.00 at this time.
- 3.33 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Basic Allowance be paid at £7,590.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15.**

(b) Special Responsibility Allowances

- 3.34 The Special Responsibility Allowance is paid to "those members of the council who have significant additional responsibilities, over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor. Those responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the authorities' functions".²
- 3.35 Nationally, the 'factor approach' is the most common basis of allowance schemes, although some authorities base the SRA calculations on the time involved or an analogous comparison to another private / public sector role. Nevertheless, there are local anomalies in Thanet, in particular the case of remuneration of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which need to be considered on an individual basis.
- 3.36 In its methodology for calculating Special Responsibility Allowances, the Panel to reflect the level of work involved adopted a mix of a factor approach (multiplying the Basic Allowance by a number) and variations to the level of voluntary component.

² ODPM Statutory Guidance issued 2003

Leader of the Council

- 3.37 In forming its recommendations, the Panel recognised the significant level of responsibility and time commitment involved in the position of Leader of the Council and acknowledged that if the position were to be remunerated at a commercial level it would be significantly higher.
- 3.38 In determining the level of Special Responsibility Allowance to be paid to the Leader of the Council the Average East Kent Male Full-time Weekly Earnings hourly wage was used as the starting basis. The Panel, taking into consideration the evidence received and the previous review, felt that a thirty-hour week (broadly equivalent to four days a week) would be an appropriate representation of the average time commitment and responsibility involved.
- 3.39 At 100% remunerated, the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Council on this basis would be £22,322.00 per annum. The Panel applied a 15% voluntary component ratio to these figures resulting in £18,974.00 per annum.
- 3.40 While the Panel accepted that the amount of responsibility and workload of the Leader of the Council could arguably be equated with 100% remuneration, it was felt that the public would expect the principle of a voluntary component to be maintained.
- 3.41 **The Panel therefore recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Council be paid at £18,974.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Deputy Leader of the Council

- 3.42 In forming the level of remuneration for the Deputy Leader of the Council, the Panel felt that the level of allowance should be greater than that of a Cabinet member to reflect the responsibilities of the Deputy Leader in the absence of the Leader. To this end it was felt that a level of two-thirds (66%) of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance would be appropriate.
- 3.43 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council be paid at £12,522.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index**

linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.

Cabinet Portfolio Holder

- 3.44 As with the Deputy Leader of the Council, it was felt by the Panel that an appropriate level of remuneration should be calculated in reference to the Leader of the Council's Special Responsibility Allowance. To this end a multiplication of 60% of the Leader of the Council's Special Responsibility Allowance (which also equates to 1.5 times the Basic Allowance) was felt to be an appropriate level.
- 3.45 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Cabinet be paid at £11,384.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Lead Members

- 3.46 There is currently no Special Responsibility Allowance paid to Lead Members and the Panel does not recommend any change on the basis of the information provided to it.

Opposition Group Leaders

- 3.47 The Panel recognises the principle of remunerating members of the opposition in order to enable them to adequately devote time to hold the Council to account. A level of one-third of the Leader of the Council's Special Responsibility Allowance was felt to be an appropriate level.
- 3.48 As with the previous review the Panel felt that the level of allowance should reflect the size of the political group being led. While consideration was given to a per member rate, the Panel was of the view that there was insufficient evidence to warrant a change from the existing banding arrangement.
- 3.49 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the Main Opposition Group with a membership of 10 or more members be paid at £6,261.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

3.50 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of an Opposition Group with a membership of 5 to 9 members be paid at £1897.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

3.51 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that no Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Leader of an Opposition Group with a membership of fewer than 5 members.**

Shadow Cabinet

3.52 The shadow cabinet is comprised of members of the major (largest) opposition group. In the event of multiple opposition groups, it is the Panel's view that only the largest group should receive remuneration for its Shadow Cabinet.

3.53 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Shadow Cabinet be paid at £3,795.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Chairman of a Major Committee

3.54 In the course of its deliberations, the Panel found evidence to support the current position that there was a need to weight the committee chairmanships in light of the varying workloads and responsibilities. It was the view of the Panel that the existing major / minor committee weighting framework was sufficient to meet the needs of Council's committee structure.

3.55 The Panel felt that the following committees qualified as major committees:

- Planning Committee
- Governance and Audit Committee
- Overview and Scrutiny

3.56 In the case of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee it was recognised that the Committees responsibilities were sufficient to consider it separately from the other major committees.

- 3.57 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of a Major Committee other than Overview and Scrutiny be paid at £9,487.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.58 The Panel noted the development of the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Thanet District Council since the last review was undertaken. It was recognised that the current local structure placed a heavier than usual responsibility upon the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny in working with members from all groups to ensure that the Cabinet was held effectively to account.

- 3.59 The level of this Chairman's remuneration has been set as just below that of the Deputy Leader of the Council and members will note that it, and that of the Deputy Chairman, is thus not in line with the general principles of two classifications of committees - major and minor.

- 3.60 To regularise the situation, while still taking into account the level of responsibility and workload of the Committee, the Panel recommends that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be set in line with that of a Cabinet Member while the Vice-Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance be set as if it were the same as the Vice-Chairman of a Major Committee.

- 3.61 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee be paid at £11,384.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index-linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Chairman of a Minor Committee

- 3.62 The Panel felt that the following committees qualified as minor committees due to the workload and number of meetings:
- Standards Committee
 - Joint Transportation Board
 - Licensing Committee

3.63 Consideration was given as to whether the Licensing Committee should merit special status. However, on the basis of the evidence provided the Panel felt that the level of remuneration for a Minor Committee would be sufficient.

3.64 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of a Minor Committee be paid at £3,795.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3.65 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chairman of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee be paid at £3,795.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Vice-Chairman of a Major Committee

3.66 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chairman of Major Committees other than Overview and Scrutiny be paid at £3,795.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Vice-Chairman of a Minor Committee

3.67 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chairman of a Minor Committee be paid at £1,897.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Independent Member of the Standards Committee

3.68 While there is no longer a requirement to have Independent Members on Standards Committees it was the view of the Panel that if the Council was to appoint such members then consideration should be given to remuneration based on the workload and level of responsibility that the position involved. Where an Independent Member

is appointed as Chairman or Vice-Chairman, then it is the view of the Panel that they be remunerated as if they were a Member of the Council holding the same position.

- 3.69 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for an Independent Member of the Standards Committee be set at £250.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and thereafter index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

Independent Person

- 3.70 The role of 'Independent Person' created under the Localism Act 2011 in respect of the assessment of complaints against councillors is a statutory position with important responsibilities. While the position is a voluntary one, it is the view of the Panel that it is one that should be remunerated and kept under review.
- 3.71 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Special Responsibility Allowance for an Independent Person be set at £250.00 per annum for the municipal year 2014/15 and for the Substitute Independent Person be set at £100.00 per annum. The allowance should thereafter be index linked to the annual officer pay increase for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

(c) Dependent Carers Allowance

- 3.72 In the course of its deliberations, the Panel met with members at Dover District Council that had had cause to claim the Dependent Carers Allowance. It was noted that in both authorities the take-up of the allowance was very low.
- 3.73 The Panel expressed the view that although it would be convenient to have a co-ordinated Dependent Carers Allowance across all four East Kent authorities, it accepted that local economic variations meant that this might not be practicable.
- 3.74 It was agreed by the Panel that, as a basic principle, the level of Dependent Carers Allowance should be at least equal to the hourly level of the national minimum wage. In respect of any limit on the number of hours claimed per quarter under the Dependent Carers Allowance the Panel felt that, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, there was insufficient justification to do so as such a limit could be seen as arbitrary or discriminatory.

3.75 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the Dependent Carers allowance for the municipal year 2014/15 be set at the hourly national minimum wage or a higher level determined by the Council, and thereafter index linked so as to remain at the hourly national minimum wage or higher for a period up to and including the municipal year 2018/19.**

(d) Travel and Subsistence

3.76 The Panel acknowledged that there was some variation in the approach taken between the East Kent authorities in paying travel and subsistence allowances to Members. It is the view of the Panel that a preferred position in the longer term would be to work towards greater consistency of method between the authorities.

3.77 The Panel notes the recent clarification provided by HMRC in respect of what constitutes homeworking for the provision of tax relief on travel and subsistence claims for attending meetings. In light of this, the Panel is of the view that it's previous recommendation that allowances be set at or below the recommended HMRC level.

3.78 The Panel in keeping with previous recommendations supports a three month time limit on travel and subsistence claims being made and a restriction on the starting point of any mileage claim to be from within the authority's administrative area.

2.3 In keeping with recommendations previously made by the Panel since the last Review, the Panel also recommends that Thanet District Council limits travel for councillor's 'home' location to an address within the electoral boundary of the authority or alternatively to an agreed radius beyond that boundary.

3.1 **The Panel recommends to Thanet District Council that the current travel and subsistence allowance scheme be continued with index linking in line with changes in the HMRC levels.**

3.2 **The Panel endorses the 3-month time limit set for submitting travel and subsistence claims, subject to the appropriate officer having discretion to waive this rule in exceptional conditions.**

3.3 **The Panel recommends that Thanet District Council limits travel for councillor's 'home' location to an address within the electoral boundary of the authority or alternatively to an agreed radius beyond that boundary.**

(e) Local Government Pension Scheme

3.73 Recent changes in legislation have removed the option of councillors joining the Local Government Pension Scheme.

(f) Co-Optees' Allowances

3.74 Where a co-opted member is either the chairman or vice-chairman of a committee, he or she should receive the same Special Responsibility Allowance as would an elected member occupying the position.

3.75 In addition, all co-opted members should be entitled to claim travel, subsistence, and Dependant Carers' Allowance at the appropriate rates for councillors as published from time to time by the Thanet District Council.