
THE ADDITION OF CANTERBURY TO THE JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

To: **Council – 9 October 2008**

By: **Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **Not applicable**

Summary: **Seeks Council's agreement to the addition of Canterbury to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.**

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The key responsibilities of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP) are to make recommendations on:

- Special and Basic Responsibility Allowances for District and Parish Councils
- Member travel and subsistence allowances
- Dependent carers allowances

1.2 The Council must have regard to the recommendations of the JIRP in reaching any decision in respect of Members' allowances.

1.3 In September 2007 Council received a report noting that Shepway District Council wished to join the existing joint arrangements between Thanet Council and Dover District Council. Council approved option 1 within the report, which admitted Shepway to those joint arrangements and created a six-member JIRP, with two members from each Council area.

2.0 Recent Developments

2.1 At the time of the report to Council in September 2007 Canterbury City Council had not decided whether to participate in the expanded joint arrangements. That Council has now indicated its willingness to join, subject to the approval of the other participating Councils.

2.2 All of the arguments presented to Council in 2007 noting the advantages of Shepway joining the JIRP apply to the possibility of Canterbury joining. Were Canterbury to join, the costs of administering the JIRP would be spread across four Councils rather than three, reducing the administrative costs faced by each Council. It would also be seen as further evidence of the willingness of east Kent Councils to undertake joint-working.

2.3 Canterbury City Council has suggested that were it to join, it would not necessarily seek to appoint two additional members of the JIRP from its area. However, should Canterbury City Council subsequently wish to seek such appointments, they would continue to be made on a staggered basis to ensure that no more than one representative of each authority be due for reappointment in any given municipal year, and the term of such an

appointment would continue to be four years (but one member from each authority would be appointed only for two years in the first instance).

- 2.4 Dover District Council will continue to undertake the central administration of the JIRP and recharge the other Councils. In 2008/09 this amounted to £1,200 for each participating Council.
- 2.5 Purely for information, it should be noted that the JIRP has commenced its work on the four-yearly reviews of the allowances schemes for Thanet and Dover, and that work will be completed prior to Canterbury joining the JIRP.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 There are two main alternatives available to the Council:
- a) Allow Canterbury City Council to join the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel
 - b) Not to allow Canterbury City Council to join the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel
- 3.2 As with the admission of Shepway District Council to the JIRP, were option (a) above supported, the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager would need to be authorised to formalise any future additional appointments to the JIRP on behalf of the Council. However, as stated above, Canterbury City Council has indicated that in the short term at least, it would not necessarily seek two additional appointments from within its own area.

4.0 Corporate Implications

4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 If Canterbury City Council joins the JIRP there will be no additional cost to the Council. Indeed, it is likely that Dover's central administrative charge would fall for 2009/10, as central administrative costs would be shared across four Councils instead of three.
- 4.1.2 The reduction in each Council's contribution is likely to be greater in the short term, given Canterbury City Council's indication that it would not necessarily seek additional appointments from within its own area.

4.2 Legal

- 4.2.1 The guidelines of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 identify the need for Local Authorities to establish a remuneration panel to consider Councillors; basic and special responsibility allowances.
- 4.2.2 The Council has a legal duty to make an allowances scheme each year. Payment of allowances to Members is only lawful if made pursuant to a scheme.
- 4.2.3 The Council has a duty to have a regard to the recommendations of the Remuneration Panel but it is not obliged to accept them.

4.3 Corporate

4.3.1 Discharging the above duties through joint arrangements can be seen as supporting the objective of fostering greater joint-working amongst the east-Kent Councils.

4.4 Equity and Equalities

4.4.1 There are no direct equity or equalities issues emerging from this report.

5.0 Recommendation(s)

Council is recommended to support option 3.1(b):

5.1 To admit Canterbury City Council to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, and,

5.2 To delegate to the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager the finalising of any appointment of up to two additional members to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, in consultation with the other participating Councils.

6.0 Decision Making Process

6.1 This is a Council decision.

Contact Officer:	<i>Glenn Back, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, ext.7187</i>
Reporting to:	<i>Richard Samuel, Chief Executive</i>

Annex List

<i>None</i>	
-------------	--

Background Papers

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

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Sarah Martin, Financial Services Manager
Legal	Peter Reilly, Acting Legal Services Manager