

# Public Document Pack



Democratic Services  
White Cliffs Business Park  
Dover  
Kent CT16 3PJ

Telephone: (01304) 821199  
Website: [www.dover.gov.uk](http://www.dover.gov.uk)  
e-mail: [democraticservices@dover.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@dover.gov.uk)

24 January 2025

Dear Councillor

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the meeting of the **COUNCIL** on Wednesday 29 January 2025 at 6.00 pm, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

2 **MINUTES** (Pages 2 - 17)

That Council be asked to agree an amendment to the Minutes of the full Council meeting held on 17 July 2024 at Minute No. 74 as set out in the agenda papers.

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024.

9 **COUNCIL TAX BASE AND COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025/26**  
(Pages 18 - 50)

To consider the report of the Strategic Director (Finance and Housing).

Recorded Vote

A recorded vote will be required in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.6 (Voting on Budget Decisions).

12 **EAST KENT JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL** (Pages 51 - 58)

To consider the report of the Head of Corporate Services and Democracy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Nicky", written over a white background.

Chief Executive

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

At the meeting of the Council for the District of Dover held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 16 October 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor G Cowan

Councillors:

J S Back	M F Hibbert	M J Nee
T J Bartlett	S Hill	D J Parks
M Bates	N S Kenton	M P Porter
D G Beaney	R M Knight	O C de R Richardson
S H Beer	J P Loffman	M W Rose
E A Biggs	S M S Mamjan	C A Vinson
S B Blair	S C Manion	H M Williams
P M Brivio	K Mills	C F Woodgate
D G Cronk	M W Moorhouse	L M Wright
D R Friend	D P Murphy	C D Zosseder

Officers:

- Chief Executive
- Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory)
- Strategic Director (Finance and Housing)
- Strategic Director (Place and Environment)
- Solicitor to the Council
- Head of Licensing and Legal Services
- Planning Policy Team Leader
- Head of Planning and Development
- Planning Policy and Projects Manager
- Head of Corporate Services and Democracy
- Democratic Services Officer
- Democratic Services Officer

31 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J L Pout.

32 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

33 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Monitoring Officer advised Members in respect of the item on the Adoption of Dover District Local Plan 2020-40 (Minute No. 40) and potential for a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or an Other Significant Interest in land included in respect of site allocations.

The Monitoring Officer also advised Members that in respect of the item on the Motion (Minute No. 42), he had consulted with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Governance Committee and following that had granted the dispensations requested by Members in respect of it.

The dispensation granted relieved those Members from both of the restrictions in paragraph 5 of the Code (participation in discussions and voting) on the grounds that without the dispensation, the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the Council as to impede the transaction of the business and/or the representation of different political groups on the Council would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the motion. The dispensation applied for the duration of the Council meeting on 16 October 2024.

Members were advised that where they had been granted a dispensation, they were still required to declare the interest.

Councillor T J Bartlett declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Minute No. 40 (Adoption of Dover District Local Plan 2020-40) by reason of his family having land identified in the Local Plan.

Councillor N S Kenton declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Minute No. 40 (Adoption of Dover District Local Plan 2020-40) by reason of his having land identified in the Local Plan as a commercial site.

Councillor D R Friend declared a Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests (VAOI) in Minute No. 40 (Adoption of Dover District Local Plan 2020-40). Although he had previously made public comments on a site in the Local Plan he had not predetermined his decision on the matter and was approaching it with an open mind and would determine it on its merits.

Councillor D G Beaney declared a Voluntary Announcement of Other Interest (VAOI) in Minute No. 40 (Adoption of Dover District Local Plan 2020-40) due to his involvement in the Local Plan.

Councillor D P Murphy declared an Other Significant Interest by reason of his position as a Cabinet Member at Kent County Council he had made comments on all of the district's local plans.

Councillor S B Blair stated that she did not have any interests to declare.

The following Members declared an Other Significant Interest in Minute No. 42 (Motions) and advised that they had been granted a dispensation in respect of it to relieve the restrictions of paragraph 5 of the Code (participation in discussions and voting).

Councillor J S Back  
Councillor T J Bartlett  
Councillor M Bates  
Councillor D G Beaney  
Councillor S H Beer  
Councillor E A Biggs  
Councillor P M Brivio  
Councillor G Cowan  
Councillor D G Cronk  
Councillor D R Friend  
Councillor M F Hibbert  
Councillor S Hill  
Councillor N S Kenton

Councillor R M Knight  
Councillor J P Loffman  
Councillor K Mills  
Councillor M W Moorhouse  
Councillor D P Murphy  
Councillor M J Nee  
Councillor D J Parks  
Councillor M P Porter  
Councillor O C de R Richardson  
Councillor M Rose  
Councillor C A Vinson  
Councillor H M Williams  
Councillor C D Zosseder

34 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

35 LEADER'S TIME

The Leader of the Council, Councillor K Mills, included the following matters in his report:

The Leader invited the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property Councillor C D Zossedler to speak on the following matters:

- (a) To congratulate all involved in getting the Roman Painted House open for the public to visit. There had been 1,534 visitors in the six days it had been open and the feedback received from the public had been very positive.
- (b) To inform Members that the tennis court at Connaught Park would be open for half-term.
- (c) The launch of safe spaces initiative by community services.
- (d) The tenders for play parks in Marke Wood, Bulwarks and Travers would be looked at next month. She was really pleased to see these progressing.

The Leader spoke to the following matters:

- (a) That the Government was keen to progress with devolution, although the form was not yet clear. He expected to learn more at the LGA conference the following week. There had been discussions at Kent Leaders and East Kent Leaders on it and it was important district leaders had an input into it. There needed to be funding to support devolution.
- (b) The Cabinet had agreed the Council Motion considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He recognised the importance of the Council reflecting society but also noted that this was something that the political parties were vital to in selecting their candidates.
- (c) He had met with the two local Members of Parliament, Mike Tapp and Roger Gale. It had been a very positive meeting and there would be regular meetings going forward.
- (d) He had visited Woodpecker Court awards ceremony. He praised the good work being done there and the difference it was making to the students. The school was happy for Members to visit by appointment.
- (e) The Crosslinks Centre, Buckland frontages had been completed. It had tidied up the area and it was hoped it would instil pride locally.
- (f) The Beacon Project was progressing well. Archaeology had found the remains of an ancient pub but nothing in the archaeology would cause a significant delay to the works. There had been good cross-party working on this.
- (g) The feedback on the Roman Painted House had overwhelmingly positive. While the work of Dr Brian Philp and the KARU couldn't be underestimated, people were very happy to see it open. A lot had been done in a very short timescale and while more needed to be done, it was vital for the public to be able to visit it. Dover needed to be a destination and had a heritage spanning from the bronze age to the cold war.
- (h) The Local Plan was a fantastic example of cross-party working and there had been very few changes required at the end of the process. The work done by the officers and the members of the Local Plan PAG was excellent.

- (i) The public consultation on Tides was underway and he encouraged everyone to be involved in it. No final decision had been made but he was committed to having two leisure centres in the district. He had been told in 2022 that Tides was unaffordable, but he was committed to trying to deliver it for the people of the district.
- (j) The works at Maison Dieu were amazing but it needs to have some form of 'wow' factor. It was a costly project and needed to be somewhere that would attract the public. He thanked the Landmark Trust for their work with the accommodation.
- (k) Deal Pier should be working on very quickly.
- (l) To congratulate Priority Freight for receiving the King's Award for Industry.
- (m) To state that he was pleased that the implementation of the European Entry/Exit (EES) arrangements had been delayed as the road network and infrastructure was not ready to accommodate it. There were no authorities in place to deal with the removal of cars on the highway and nowhere to accommodate coaches. There had been predictions by the Department for Transport of fourteen-hour delays at the Port. There was a responsibility on all parties to work to resolve these issues.
- (n) The impact on local businesses, schools and commuters needed to be considered as it was not acceptable for the town of Dover to be gridlocked. He urged the Department for Transport to speak to the Council.
- (o) It was important for live testing and the installation of new technology.

The Leader of the Main Opposition Group, Councillor T J Bartlett, included the following matters in his report:

- (a) To thank officers for their work on the Roman Painted House and to welcome the high visitor numbers which demonstrated its popularity as an attraction. He expressed his disappointment that Dr Philp had not engaged with him when he was Leader.
- (b) There needed to be more publicity for the tennis courts and play parks works so that the public knew about them.
- (c) To ask the Leader of the Council what his preferred devolution model would be.
- (d) To emphasise that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations had been about diversity in a wider context than just gender balance. He had wanted it to go further than the final recommendation was at the end with more outreach direct to the local community.
- (e) To welcome the Leader engaging with Roger Gale MP, who represented the district wards of Little Stour and Ashstone and Sandwich. He advised that Councillor M F Hibbert had been trying to engage with Mike Tapp MP in respect of TAP.
- (f) He would like to see officers and the local MPs could keep ward members updated on activities relating to their wards.
- (g) To agree with the Leader on the great work of Woodpecker Court.
- (h) To suggest that the cost-of-living grant scheme needed to be rebranded. He was concerned that there were not enough applications for the grant and suggested that rebranding it to be more community focussed would encourage applications.
- (i) To thank everyone involved in the Local Plan and Dover Beacon project and welcome the cross-party nature of it.

- (j) To ask what the plans were following the announced retirement of the Strategic Director (Place and Environment) and to request that he be kept informed.
- (k) To ask about the £1 million pound underspend on staffing last year and the future management arrangements for the Community Services team.
- (l) That he missed the interaction between Members that happened when there was catering provided for meetings. He asked if with Kearsney Abbey potentially having facilities at the council offices there was an opportunity for them to provide catering for meetings.
- (m) To praise the work of the former PA to the Leader and Civic Officer and express his sadness at her departure from the Council.
- (n) To welcome the consultation on Tides.
- (o) To agree with the Leader on the works at Maison Dieu.
- (p) To also agree with the Leader in welcoming the delay in implementing EES.

In response the Leader of the Council advised:

- (a) That longer term he wanted to see the baths under the Roman Lawn excavated to make it a national visitor focal point.
- (b) The importance of the Council communicating better to its residents and the need to tackle rumours.
- (c) That in respect of devolution, he personally did not support the mayoral model as he did not think they would represent the whole county. He also wasn't sure about the benefits of another layer of local government. He also did not want to see the costs of devolution passed onto the taxpayer. However, he wasn't sure that there would be a choice on it from government.
- (d) That he felt more people needed to be involved in local politics and welcomed recent petitions as a way of local communities engaging with the council.
- (e) The pressures on temporary accommodation were significant for the Council.
- (f) That he would speak to Mike Tapp MP about getting him to contact Councillor M F Hibbert. He welcomed the positive working relationship with Roger Gale MP.
- (g) Councillor C D Zosseder advised that the grants had been delayed as councillors were not available to meet to consider them. She was also looking at options for a community-based grant.
- (h) That staffing was regularly reviewed. There was pressure on all Councils and that the budget savings were a positive. The structure going forward was being reviewed and no final decision had been made at this time. However, he expressed the view that the officers were the Council's greatest asset and that the Council was lucky to have good officers.
- (i) In respect of catering for committee meetings, he felt that it wasn't right for taxpayers to pay thousands of pounds on catering when people were making choices between heating and eating. Members were paid an allowance anyway.

## 36 SEAT ALLOCATION AND GROUP APPOINTMENTS

There were none.

## 37 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

### QUESTION 1

In the absence of the member of the public who had submitted the question, the Chairman advised that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.11 a written answer would be provided.

### QUESTION 2

In the absence of the member of the public who had submitted the question, the Chairman advised that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.11 a written answer would be provided.

### QUESTION 3

RAISED BY GRAHAM WANSTALL, A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11:

“It is good to see the Roman Painted House open again. However the past 50 years of its important work has been air brushed out. All books and guides written by the founder Mr Brian Philp have been removed and other important national awards including the following have gone from display. 1977 award for outstanding tourist enterprise, 1978 best presentation of an archaeological site, also 1978 team showing the gratish initiative. 1979 museum of the year. 2013 the queens award for voluntary service. 1981 outstanding contribution to British archaeology. All are competitive national awards. In addition several plaques and memorials for example the opening by Lord Astor in 1977. Several photos removed for example the visit by the late Queen Mother and a presentation by the then Prince Charles of an award. Do you think it is appropriate to display these important items and if so will you have them returned to the lobby area so visitors have all the relevant history of the Roman Painted House?”

RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR K MILLS:

“Since the Dover Roman Painted House Trust took the decision in October 2023 to surrender the lease to the Council, the Council has worked tirelessly to open this nationally important heritage attraction to the public for the benefit of all, at substantial Council expense.

The work that we have carried out has ensured that the building is now safe, maintained and open once again to the public, which is great news for Dover.

The work needed to make this happen has been challenging.

Works were unable to start until the building was cleared and the high levels of mould addressed.

Items that could potentially be reused and that were not beyond recovery have been removed from site, and stored in the short term, whilst we focused on the repairs to the building.

Such items do include various plaques and photos, which once cleaned, we will consider how these can best be displayed within the building.

Regarding your mention of Dr Brian Philp, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my praise for his and his teams work, as well as that of the Trust, and the new interpretation, created in collaboration with the Trust, does highlight his importance and involvement.

We would like to see the various books and guides published by Brian and his team back on sale within the Roman Painted House but this will require the consent of the author which we have not yet received.”

A supplementary question was asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.8.

38 AMENDMENT TO THE CALENDAR OF ORDINARY MEETINGS 2024-25

Members were advised that the report, with the support of the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, sought to make changes in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings for the remainder of 2024-25.

It was moved by Councillor T J Bartlett, duly seconded by Councillor L M Wright, and

RESOLVED: That the Council approve the amended Calendar of Ordinary Meetings for 2024-25.

39 TREASURY MANAGEMENT YEAR END REPORT 2023/24

The Strategic Director (Finance and Housing) presented the Treasury Management Year End Report 2023/24.

Members considered the report and discussed the use of inter-authority borrowing arrangements.

It was moved by Councillor S B Blair, duly seconded by Councillor S H Beer, and

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

40 ADOPTION OF DOVER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2020-40

The Planning Policy and Projects Manager presented the report on the Adoption of Dover District Local Plan 2020-40.

Members thanked officers for their hard work in producing the Local Plan.

Members discussed the impact of the government’s proposed changes to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and new housing targets on the Local Plan. They were advised that the Local Plan would be reviewed in response to any changes and that it was believed that in the short term (5 years), the Local Plan would not require any changes as a result of the proposed new housing target.



Councillor M W Moorhouse read out a statement on behalf of Sandwich Town Council outlining their concerns in respect of the Local Plan.

It was moved by Councillor E A Biggs, duly seconded by Councillor J S Back, and

- (a) That the Inspectors' Final Report into the examination of the Dover District Local Plan be noted (Appendix 1).
- (b) That the Dover District Local Plan to 2040, including Policies Map, as amended by the main modifications set out in Inspectors' Final Report and the Council's additional (minor) modifications, be adopted as part of the Development Plan for the district (Appendix 2).
- (c) That the current adopted Development Plan documents consisting of Saved Policies from the Local Plan 2002, the Core Strategy 2010 and the Land Allocations Local Plan 2015, be superseded by the Dover District Local Plan 2020 to 2040 in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 Regulation 8(5).
- (d) That authority is delegated to the Head of Planning and Development to make further additional modifications to the Dover District Local Plan to 2040, and supporting documentation, that relate exclusively to factual updates and grammatical and formatting corrections, prior to making the documents available for inspection.

#### 41 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

##### QUESTION 1

RAISED BY COUNCILLOR D G BEANEY UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12:

"Can the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Built Environment tell me how many planning applications are waiting to come forward to planning committee, and from the date of submission how long it has taken on average for those applications heard at Committee to be determined in the past year?"

REPLY BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT, COUNCILLOR E A BIGGS:

"There are 18 applications that are currently intended to go to Planning Committee. Many of these are still currently under advertisement, awaiting consultee comments or being negotiated before they'll be ready to be taken to Planning Committee.

Of the 46 applications that went to Planning Committee and have been determined this year, the average length of time for their determination is ten months."

There was no supplementary question.

##### QUESTION 2

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RAISED BY COUNCILLOR D R FRIEND UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE  
RULE 12:

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Skills & Education provide an update on how many “environmentally sound Council houses” were built by Dover District Council between May 2023 and September 2024?”

REPLY BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING, SKILLS AND  
EDUCATION, COUNCILLOR P M BRIVIO:

“Between May 2023-September 2024, the Council added 61 properties to its affordable housing stock. These were all purchases of existing properties, with varying levels of environmental performance. However, all have been refurbished to ensure they meet the required standard for the Council’s stock.

There were no completions of new build affordable housing during this time, although 48 new build homes were added to the stock in September 2024. These properties exceed building regulations requirements, and have an SAP rating of B, with A being most energy efficient and G least efficient.”

A supplementary question was asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.6.

QUESTION 3

RAISED BY COUNCILLOR N S KENTON UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE  
RULE 12:

“Does the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Built Environment support Angela Rayner’s plans set out in her letter – ‘Playing your part in building the homes we need’ - sent to local authority leaders on 30th July 2024?”

REPLY BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND BULT  
ENVIRONMENT, COUNCILLOR E A BIGGS:

“Angela Rayner’s letter spans 8 pages in summarising the principal elements of the government’s plan that she set out to the House of Commons to build homes.

As a council, we are very supportive of the overall ambition for this country to be delivering more homes.

The intended goal for universal coverage of ambitious local plans as quickly as possible is therefore strongly supported, as this is the best way of ensuring that new homes are built in the right places with the needed facilities and infrastructure.

And of course, with our item on the Local Plan adoption tonight, we are in a very strong position to ensure this with our new strategy, policies and land allocations.

Given our Local Plan position and based on what was set out in the recent consultation document for the National Planning Policy Framework, the changes being proposed to calculating a district’s housing targets are not applicable to Dover and won’t be for the next few years.

The inspectors have set out in their Local Plan report that our own housing requirement (611 homes a year) is viable and deliverable through the Local Plan.”

A supplementary question was asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.6.

#### QUESTION 4

RAISED BY COUNCILLOR M BATES UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12:

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Built Environment tell me please how many enforcement investigations have been opened and closed within the past twelve months, where a breach of conditions has been identified and a decision has been taken by the officer to take no further action?”

REPLY BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND BULT ENVIRONMENT, COUNCILLOR E A BIGGS:

“There have been 62 Breach of Condition cases opened in the last twelve months and 42 cases closed. 16 of these did not involve a breach. There were 9 cases where a breach was identified and no further action was taken.”

A supplementary question was asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.6.

#### QUESTION 5

RAISED BY COUNCILLOR D G BEANEY UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12:

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Built Environment say whether the number of applications for small housing developments (of 5 units or less) has changed in the last year, and if there has been a reduction, whether it is related to the introduction of new biodiversity net gain requirements?”

REPLY BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND BULT ENVIRONMENT, COUNCILLOR E A BIGGS:

“The Planning Service’s system can only provide a search for all ‘minor’ applications for residential – which is for 9 dwellings or less (rather than 5 dwellings or less).

The department has received 142 applications in 2022-2023 and 105 applications for the same period in 2023-2024.

Biodiversity Net Gain requirements could be attributed to the lower figure this year, but we don’t hold data that can confirm this.”

A supplementary question was asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.6.

#### QUESTION 6

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RAISED BY COUNCILLOR O C DE R RICHARDSON UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12:

“Does the Portfolio Holder recognise that her proposal to replace Tides Leisure Centre with a 5-lane pool, removing all flumes and shallow water areas for younger children, is deeply unpopular with families in Deal and Walmer?”

REPLY BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE PROPERTY, COUNCILLOR C D ZOSEDER:

“Thank you, Cllr Richardson, for your question.

The New Deal Leisure Centre has been an ongoing project since 2018 but has been hampered since the pandemic by escalating project costs affecting it's financial viability.

Sadly, many leisure centres across the country have closed during this time with Folkestone Leisure Centre being a more recent casualty and we have been working hard to avoid this in Deal.

The current proposals for Deal include a range of facilities that are underpinned by assessment of need across the district to help ensure that this substantial investment meets strategic need now and in the future.

Over the past year, we have significantly reduced project costs and improved the financial viability thus providing a more deliverable and sustainable solution.

Following on from the Cabinet meeting in July, the project team is looking at the feasibility of adding a sixth lane to the swimming pool and also how we might provide the facilities needed to allow family inflatable fun sessions to take place within the pool.

They are also looking at how we can incorporate a shallow water ‘splash pad’ to cater for younger children.

As you would expect, the cost implications for all possible additions will be fully considered by both the Project Advisory Group and Cabinet.

You will I am sure be aware that we have been undertaking extensive public engagement on the proposals across Deal and beyond to capture and review public feedback.

To date the council has received some **897** online surveys and undertaken **849** face-to-face discussions with early indications showing that the majority of survey respondents support the plans for a new leisure centre in Deal.”

A supplementary question was asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.6.

QUESTION 7

RAISED BY COUNCILLOR C A VINSON UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12:

“Will the Portfolio Holder provide an assessment as to the potential environmental hazard presented by the damaged, open containers of waste engine oil present by neglected boat plots in Walmer, and explain why the Council hasn’t taken immediate action to address this risk?”

REPLY BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE PROPERTY, COUNCILLOR C D ZOSEDER:

“Thank you for your question Cllr Vinson.

The Council has been working on addressing this matter for a number of months.

I am pleased to say that the area was cleared of significant waste and rubbish on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October.

At present no waste liquids have been removed from site as these require specialist waste disposal. The recent clearance has given better access to plots which will facilitate the waste liquid removal.

On initial inspection, it appears that containers were largely intact and not leaking any oil or substances.

We are not able to properly assess any leakage that might have occurred until the containers of waste oil are removed from site.

We will continue working with the boat plot owners to tidy the boat plots and aim to remove waste oil from site over the next few months.

Any spillages that become apparent during this process will be cleaned as appropriate.

I am pleased to tell you that the boat plots will soon be inspected on a monthly basis to ensure they remain clean and tidy, and that boat plot owners continue to adhere to their lease conditions, ensuring any oil is stored correctly.”

A supplementary question was asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.6.

QUESTION 8

RAISED BY COUNCILLOR C A VINSON UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12:

“Does the Leader agree with me that Corporate Peer Challenges (CPC) delivered by the Local Government Association (LGA) provide valuable, robust and credible challenge to support Councils to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their service delivery, and will he commit to working with the LGA to organise a CPC for Dover District Council by the end of 2025?”

REPLY BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL:

“We are aware of the value that corporate peer challenges can provide and have recently been engaging with the LGA about arranging one for Dover. We are also

very pleased to confirm that the Council has now appointed a Continuous Improvement Manager who is due to start in November. They will be responsible for programming and leading a series of service reviews to drive efficiency and productivity Council services. I fully expect a peer review to be programmed to take place before the end of 2025.”

There was no supplementary question.

#### QUESTION 9

#### RAISED BY COUNCILLOR M BATES UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12:

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Environmental Services please provide an update on the current position with Bastion Point and provide a schedule for when Port Health will commence physical checks of suspect vehicles at the juxtaposed controls in Coquelles?”

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Environmental Services the Chairman advised that a written response would be provided.

#### 42 MOTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, Councillor T J Bartlett moved the following Motion:

Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty

Council Notes:

- The Labour Government’s recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it, including 24,503 pensioners in Dover District.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Dover District and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across Dover District sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

Council resolves to:

- Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.
- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- This Council calls upon the Cabinet to commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.
- Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Dover District are supported in claiming their entitlement.

It was duly seconded by Councillor O C de R Richardson.

Councillor K Mills moved an AMENDMENT, duly seconded by Councillor M J Nee, as followed:

- (a) To remove the words "urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and" from the second bullet point under 'council resolves to' so that it reads:

"Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty."

(b) To delete the third bullet point under 'council resolves to' which was as follows:

“This Council calls upon the Cabinet to commit the Council to signing the ‘Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners’ petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.”

Councillor C A Vinson raised a Point of Order to question if the amendment resulted in a negation. The Chairman’s ruling was that it did not.

On being put to the vote, the AMENDMENT was CARRIED.

On being put to the vote the Substantive Motion was CARRIED and it was

RESOLVED:

Council Notes:

- The Labour Government’s recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it, including 24,503 pensioners in Dover District.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Dover District and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across Dover District sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.



- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

Council resolves to:

- Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.
- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Dover District are supported in claiming their entitlement.

43 URGENT BUSINESS TIME

There were no items of urgent business for consideration.

The meeting ended at 8.19 pm

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>COUNCIL TAX BASE AND COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025/26</b>
<b>Meeting and Date:</b>	<b>Council – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Mike Davis, Strategic Director (Finance &amp; Housing)</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor Stacey Blair, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Climate Change, and Environment</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>

Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992

Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to this item of business. If any member of the Council who is present at the meeting at which this report is considered owes any sum in respect of council tax which has remained unpaid for at least two months, they shall at the meeting and as soon as practicable after its commencement disclose the fact that section 106 applies to them and shall not vote on any question with respect to the matter.

**Purpose of the report:** To set the Council Tax Base for 2025/26, to determine Council Tax discounts and premiums, to agree to retain the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for the financial year 2025/26 (subject to the usual annual uplift of the ‘income grid’). To also reaffirm the previous decision (31 January 2024) to implement Council Tax premiums on second homes with certain exceptions, to reaffirm the previous decision to implement a 100% Council Tax premium on ‘long term empty’ properties after 1 year (with certain exceptions),

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that Council:

1. Determine that for the financial year 2025/26, the empty homes discount for properties unoccupied and unfurnished (‘Class C’ properties) remains at 0%, so that Council Tax will be payable in full on these properties.
2. Approve the District's Council Tax Base for 2025/26 as 42,119.72 and the tax base for the towns and parishes in the Council's administrative area, as set out in the table at Appendix 2
3. Determines the “Long Term Empty Premium” for properties that have been left empty and substantially unfurnished:
  - (a) for periods of 1 year but less than 5 years, a Long Term Empty premium to be charged at 100%; and
  - (b) for periods of 5 years but less than 10 years, a Long Term Empty premium to be charged at 200%; and

(c) for periods of 10 years or more a Long Term Empty premium to be charged at 300%.

4. Formally reaffirms the previous decision (31 January 2024) to cease new applications for the council Tax 'Class D' discount, for properties undergoing structural alteration and/or major repair, effective 1 April 2024.

5. Formally approves the CTRS as set out in this report, effective from 1 April 2025.

6. Formally reaffirms the previous decision (31 January 2024) to apply a 100% Council Tax premium on properties that are unoccupied and furnished (now with certain exceptions), often referred to as 'second homes' ('Class B' properties), applicable from 1 April 2025, in line with the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

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## 1. Summary

1.1 Council Tax is a tax on the occupation of domestic property. The Council Tax base for the coming year is set by Dover District Council, and is used by Kent County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and the various town and parish councils when setting their Council Tax and their precepts.

1.2 The council tax base for 2024/25 was 40,874.50 Band D equivalents. The proposed tax base for 2025/26 is 42,119.72 Band D equivalents. This is an increase of 1,245.23 Band D equivalents, or 3.05%

## 2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Council is required to set its tax base by 31 January every year, for the following financial year. The tax base is defined mainly in terms of the number of Band D equivalent properties, but it is then adjusted to reflect the collection rate, various discounts and the level of CTR claimed.

2.2 The Council is also required, on an annual basis:

- (a) To determine whether and, if so, the extent to which it will add or reduce any Council Tax discounts;
- (b) To determine the Long Term Empty premium;
- (c) To determine premiums for dwellings occupied periodically;
- (d) To approve, by 11<sup>th</sup> March, a CTRS for the coming financial year.

2.3 The tax base for 2025/26 has been prepared in accordance with the current regulations<sup>1</sup> which came into force on 30 November 2012. The calculations are shown in Appendix 1.

2.4 As the Council Tax base is defined in terms of “Band D equivalent” dwellings, and Band D dwellings are treated as “average” houses, all other properties are defined as a ratio against Band D houses and pay Council Tax in accordance with that ratio.

2.5 The table below illustrates how this works.

<b>Council Tax Band</b>	<b>Ratio to Band D</b>	<b>Number of Dwellings (based on the Valuation Office list)<sup>2</sup></b>
Band A	6/9	7,301
Band B	7/9	17,322
Band C	8/9	14,586
Band D	9/9	7,733
Band E	11/9	4,633
Band F	13/9	2,576
Band G	15/9	1,581
Band H	18/9	75

2.6 The basis of the calculation is to multiply the number of dwellings in each band by their respective ratio, then add the totals together to produce a “Band D equivalent” total. This is followed by adjustments, the most significant of which is for single person discounts.

2.7 Final adjustments are required to allow for non-collection and assumptions in the level of CTRS required in the year. The council is required to estimate what its collection rate is likely to be and apply this to its council tax base. It is proposed to use a collection rate of 97.00%. This results in a tax base of 42,119.72 Band D equivalent properties.

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<sup>1</sup> “Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (SI:2012:2914)”

<sup>2</sup> In the actual calculation this is adjusted for anticipated new build, demolitions, etc. expected during the year

### **3. Underlying assumptions**

- 3.1 Council Tax collection rate – a collection rate of 97.00%<sup>3</sup> has been assumed for 2025/26. It should be noted that Kent County Council, as major Council Tax preceptor, currently fund district councils for Council Tax administration activity. Due to budget pressures, KCC is proposing to cease funding all districts in Kent. The direct impact of this is difficult to predict with total certainty but estimates are that this will reduce the assumed Council Tax collection rate by at least 1%. Further detail is given later in this report.

On top of this, the cost of living crisis continues, and although inflation has eased significantly over the past 12 months, it has led to continued uncertainty as to the overall level of Council Tax collection that will be achieved, in the coming and possibly future years. The long-term collection rate is being monitored and reported to the council's Section 151 officer on a quarterly basis.

- 3.2 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) - A prudent assumption has been made in terms of the cost of CTR. No growth rate has been applied. Essentially, any CTR growth equates to Taxbase reduction. The current CTR caseload fluctuates very slightly month by month but is expected to hold steady over the course of the coming year.

### **4. Reduction of Council Tax discounts**

- 4.1 From the year 2013/2014 and subsequently, the Council removed the following Council Tax discounts in order to offset some of the cost of operating the CTRS:
- (a) Second Home discount of 10% removed;
  - (b) Empty property exemption (Class C) removed.
- 4.2 From the year 2024/25 the Council removed the Class D 100% discount (maximum 12 months), for properties undergoing structural alteration/major repairs.
- 4.3 Reductions in Council Tax discounts are required to be determined on an annual basis, and it is recommended that the existing Council Tax discounts are continued for the year 2025/26.

### **5. Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

- 5.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit from April 2013 and, in accordance with Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council approved a local CTRS, with effect from 1 April 2013.
- 5.2 The current scheme, which has been in place since April 2020, was agreed and approved at full council on 29 January 2020. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires that for each financial year, the Council must consider whether to revise its scheme or to replace it with another scheme. Where a new scheme is proposed or revisions to an existing scheme are proposed, there must be prior consultation with

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<sup>3</sup> This is the 'ultimate' collection rate (the rate of collection the council can expect after 5 years) rather than the 'in year' collection rate. The 'in year' collection rate is expected to be 96.84%

major precepting authorities, and such other persons as are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.

5.3 It is proposed that no changes are made to the CTRS for 2025/26, other than uprating the income bands (the 'income grid') in line with the previously agreed methodology of the scheme reflecting the level of the National Living Wage in force as at 1 April for the relevant council tax year.

#### 5.4 National Living Wage (NLW)

5.5 The starting point for the figures contained within the grid is the hourly rate of the National Living Wage (NLW) for the relevant year. When the grid was first created this was £8.21 per hour. Currently it is £11.44 per hour.

5.6 The government has announced that with effect from 1 April 2025 the NLW will be £12.21 per hour.

5.7 The current and proposed income grids can be found at Appendix 3.

### **6. Background to the Long Term Empty premium for properties empty (unoccupied and unfurnished) for more than 1 year**

6.1 Legislation was passed in 2017 to allow Councils to increase the Long Term Empty premium being charged for domestic properties that had been left empty and substantially unfurnished for two years or more. This took effect from April 2019 and saw the premium increase from 50% to 100% extra Council Tax payable. This means that if a property was empty and unfurnished for two years or more, but less than 5 years, Council Tax was charged at 200% from April 2019. Dover introduced this premium from April 2019.

6.2 Further legislation was passed allowing billing authorities to charge an increased amount for properties left empty and substantially unfurnished for longer periods. Public consultation undertaken in December 2018 resulted in respondents being in favour of further increasing the Long Term Empty premium for properties empty for 5 years or more to 200%, with effect from April 2020. This means that for properties empty and substantially unfurnished for 5 years or more, Council Tax was charged at 300% from April 2020. Dover introduced this premium from April 2020.

6.3 From April 2021, billing authorities have been able to further increase the premium for properties left empty and substantially unfurnished for 10 years or more. A council tax premium of 300% can be levied on such properties. This means that for properties left empty and substantially unfurnished for 10 years or more Council Tax can be charged at 400% from 1 April 2021. Dover introduced this premium from April 2021. Results from the public consultation which took place in December 2018 were put to Full Council on 30 January 2019, and all increases were approved.

## 7. Summary of the Levelling-Up & Regeneration Act 2023

7.1 The Levelling-Up & Regeneration Act 2023 ('the Act') received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. The Act allows for, amongst other things, two important changes to Council Tax, at sections 79 and 80, as follows;

1. A change in the application of a Council Tax premium on 'Long Term Empty' properties. *Previously*, if a property had been unoccupied and unfurnished for 2 years but less than 5 years, then a 100% Council Tax premium could be applied to the property (Dover District Council currently applies this premium in line with the relevant regulations). The Act allowed for that 2 year period to be shortened to 1 year. The change to the Long Term Empty (LTE) premium could be implemented from 1 April 2024, in accordance with [S11B\(5\) LGFA 1992](#) which allows for a decision to be varied or revoked providing the decision is taken before the start of the financial year. Dover introduced this change with effect from 1 April 2024. 'Long Term Empty' premiums are applied to encourage owners to bring properties back into use so they are not left empty for extended periods.
2. The ability to levy a Council Tax premium on 'second homes'. 'Second homes' are properties which are unoccupied but furnished. For some years now local councils have been able to apply a full Council Tax charge to second homes. Dover District Council applies such a charge. The Act allows councils to apply a Council Tax premium of '*not more than 100%*' on second homes – in practical terms, this applies a restriction so that if the premium is applied to its maximum effect, a liable person would pay double the normal Council Tax charge.

The Council Tax premium on 'second homes' requires a full year 'lead-in' period before it can be implemented. Therefore, the 'second home' premium could only be implemented from 1 April 2025 at the earliest, provided Full Council approves the charging of the 'second home' premium before 1 April 2024. Appendix 4 shows the relevant part of the Act. Council made the decision, on 31 January 2024, to apply this premium from 1 April 2025

Note: the Act states that the authority should, when exercising its functions under sections 79 & 80 of the Act, have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Guidance was published on 1 November 2024, setting out certain exceptions that apply to the 'second home premium', and to the 'long term empty premium'. See section 10 of this report.

## 8.0 Changes to Council Tax 'Long Term Empty' premium

8.1 The Levelling-Up & Regeneration Act allowed for a change in the application of a Council Tax premium on 'Long Term Empty' properties. The Act allowed for the original 2 year period when the premium is applied to be shortened to 1 year.

- 8.2 The council approved the implementation of a 100% council tax premium, for Long Term Empty properties, where the property had been empty for 1 year (rather than the previous 2 years), on 31 January 2024. The change was effective from 1 April 2024.
- 8.3 The purpose is now to formally reaffirm, for 2025/26, the charging of:
- (a) the 100% Long Term Empty premium for properties empty and unfurnished for periods of 1 year but less than 5 years;
  - (b) the 200% Long Term Empty premium for properties empty and unfurnished for periods of 5 years but less than 10 years; and
  - (c) the 300% Long Term Empty premium for properties empty and unfurnished for periods of 10 years or more, and
  - (d) to apply the six exceptions to the Long Term Empty premium, as set out in section 10 and Appendix 4

#### 9.0 **Implementation of a ‘second home’ Council Tax premium for unoccupied but furnished properties**

- 9.1 The Levelling-Up & Regeneration Act 2023 allows councils to apply a Council Tax premium of ‘*not more than 100%*’ on properties that are unoccupied and furnished (often referred to as ‘second homes’). That would mean an owner of a property that is unoccupied and furnished in the district would pay double the normal Council Tax<sup>4</sup>.
- 9.2 As stated in para 7.1 above, Council approved, on 31 January 2024, the implementation of a ‘second home premium’, effective from 1 April 2025. The purpose now is to formally reaffirm that decision, with the associated 8 exceptions to the premium – see section 10 and Appendix 4 for details on the exceptions.
- 9.3 In order to ensure that council records are as accurate as possible and that the Council Tax charged per property is correct, officers have conducted a formal review of properties that are shown on the council’s database as unoccupied and furnished (a second home). This has been done by writing a letter to every household requesting they complete an online form, should they believe one of the exceptions applies to them. This review was necessarily short in terms of timeframe, owing to the

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<sup>4</sup> Councils have the discretion to decide whether to introduce a premium in their local area or parts of the area on long-term empty homes and second homes. They also have the discretion to decide on the level of the premium, up to the maximum statutory threshold. Government guidance is attached at Appendix 5.

Members have previously expressed concern at the numbers and impact of second homes in the district and the effects on local communities, house prices and availability of houses for people with local connections to, or employment in, the area. There are circa 1,100 second homes in the district on the Council’s records, although Members should note that this may understate of the total of second homes in the district. The second homes are predominantly clustered in the north and coastal areas of the district – from St Margarets to Sandwich. However, there is concern that applying the premium only to certain areas carries the risk that it will displace the second homes to other areas, and therefore applying the premium to the whole district is proposed for this reason.



government issuing guidance on 1 November 2024, and the Taxbase calculation needing to be performed using data as at 1 December 2024. There will naturally be some 'late responders', and those cases will need to be considered and decided after the Taxbase has been calculated.

- 9.4 The Act states that to apply the 'second home premium' approval to do so must be given *at least 12 months before the implementation date*. As the original decision to implement the 'second home premium' was made on 31 January 2024, the council has complied with this requirement.

## **10 Exceptions to the 'second home premium' and the 'Long Term Empty' premium**

- 10.1 The government has made regulations to provide exceptions to these premiums. These exceptions to the premiums are mandatory and councils may not disapply any exceptions. These exceptions will come into effect from 1 April 2025.

The regulations prescribe 9 classes of dwellings which are excluded from the Council Tax premiums. Classes E, F, G, H and I apply to both long-term empty homes and second homes. Classes J, K and L only apply to second homes. Class M only applies to long-term empty homes. See Appendix 4 for a full explanation of the exceptions.

- 10.2 Councils may add extensions to exceptions as a part of their determination or may provide support through discretionary reductions using powers under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. I am not recommending any extensions to the published exceptions.

## **11. Kent County Council (KCC) CTRS funding**

- 11.1 When the CTRS was first introduced in 2013, KCC provided funding to districts for both the administration of the scheme, and 'incentive' funding aimed at recognising efforts made by the district towards maximising the Tax Base. The council did this by implementing a maximum level of support within its CTRS, and by removing empty property discounts.
- 11.2 The KCC funding has remained in place to date, and KCC has been consulted each time the council has sought to amend its CTRS. Funding currently amounts to approximately £168k per annum. Financial modelling shows that KCC receives *at least* a 3:1 return on its investment, in terms of increased tax base and Council Tax yield.
- 11.3 Indications are that KCC, due to budget pressures, is actively considering the cessation of this funding to all districts in Kent. This would seem to mean that KCC will save £168k in support to DDC but lose circa £500k in Council Tax. This presents a challenge to the districts on different levels.
- 11.4 Most, if not all, of the districts in Kent use the KCC funding to pay for staff administering the CTRS and undertaking Council Tax activities aimed at maximising the tax base.

Without the funding, the natural conclusion to this is that those staff can no longer be employed. However, without changes to the CTRS or tax base maximisation activities, the work done by those staff is still extant – in other words, we would still be doing the same work, but with less funding, and less staff. This is not a realistic nor sustainable position.

11.5 The alternative is to seek to amend tax base maximisation measures that have been introduced over a number of years. This could mean any, or all of:

- reducing the expected council tax collection rate used in the tax base calculation,
- amending the CTRS so that it awards 100% support at the highest level – leading to officers no longer needing to pursue a high number of people for a low level of debt,
- removing ‘long term empty’ premiums,
- not pursuing the decision to implement the ‘second home premium’,
- reversing decisions previously made by Council to no longer award certain council tax discounts.

All of these measures have two effects: in the long term they reduce the administration involved in Council Tax processing, but at the same time they have the effect of reducing the tax base.

11.6 Officers have undertaken financial modelling on the tax base and all of the above measures have been modelled.

11.7 Having considered the options, the DDC taxbase has been calculated on the basis of a 1% reduction in forecast collection rate. This option has been chosen because:

- in the timescale available it does not require consultation with Council Tax payers;
- the impact is spread across all tax payers;
- it most closely mirrors the effect of the actions taken by KCC.

## **12. Identification of Options for the Setting of the Council Tax Base**

12.1 The setting of the Council Tax Base is mainly a mechanical process based on the projected number of properties, level of discounts and collection rates, and does not produce options for Councillors to consider, except for the recommended empty home discounts, the Long Term Empty property premium, and the ‘second home’ premium. Although Councillors do have the option to amend these discounts and premiums, it is recommended that Councillors approve them as recommended because:

- they send an important message to property owners about the use of property in a time of housing shortage;
- the discounts and premiums are part of an overall package which creates broadly equivalent schemes (when combined with the Council Tax Reduction Schemes) across Kent.

### **13. Corporate Implications**

- 13.1 Comment from the Strategic Director (Finance & Housing): The Strategic Director (Finance & Housing) has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has nothing further to add (MD).
- 13.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 13.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report relating to the Council's Tax Base for 2025-26 does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149'](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149)

### **14. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – The Council Tax Base Calculation for 2025/26

Appendix 2 – The Council Tax Base for the Towns and Parishes

Appendix 3 – CTRS 'income grids'

Appendix 4 – Background to the council tax premiums and details of the exceptions

Appendix 5 – Government Guidance on Empty and Second Homes.

### **15. Background Papers**

Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (SI: 2012:2914)

Detailed calculations for District and Parish/Town Council Tax Bases

Contact Officer: Mark Gillmore, Head of Revenues and Benefits , Civica [mark.gillmore@civica.ekservices.org](mailto:mark.gillmore@civica.ekservices.org) or Sharon Harvey, Revenues & Benefits Operational Manager, Civica [Sharon.harvey@civica.ekservices.org](mailto:Sharon.harvey@civica.ekservices.org)

**The Council Tax Base Calculation for 2025/26**

Council Tax Base = A x B:

- (i) A is the total of the "relevant amounts" (or Band D equivalents) for that year for each of the valuation bands which is shown or is likely to be shown for any day in that year in the authority's valuation list as applicable to one or more dwellings situated in this area.
- (ii) B is the authority's estimate of its collection rate for that year (97.00%)
- (iii) The "relevant amount" for a valuation band is the amount found by applying the formula:  $(H - Q + E + J) \times (F/G)$
- (iv) H is the number of chargeable dwellings in the area of the Council (as billing authority) on calculated in accordance with the regulations at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012
- (v) Q is the factor to take account of the discounts to which the amount of council tax payable was subject to that band, estimated in accordance with the regulations at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012
- (vi) E is a factor to take into account any premiums, if any, to which the Council Tax payable was subject to that band, estimated in accordance with the regulations at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012
- (vii) J is the estimated adjustments due to change in the number of dwellings, exemptions and discounts.
- (viii) Z is the total amount that the authorities estimates will be applied in relation to the Authorities council tax reduction scheme in relation to the band, expressed as an equivalent number of chargeable dwellings in the band.
- (ix) F is the number which is the proportion of dwellings in that band.
- (x) G is the number that, in that proportion, is applicable to dwellings in band D.

The amount calculated for Dover District Council's Council Tax Base in 2025/26 is 42,119.72 save for the following parts of the Council's administrative area where its Council Tax Base shall be the amounts shown against each part respectively.

Collection rate has been reviewed with regard to the changes, Council Tax Reduction discounts and exemptions. This report seeks the approval of the collection rate of 97.00%.

## The Council Tax Base for the Towns and Parishes

<b>Parish</b>	<b>2024/2025 Tax Base using collection rate</b>	<b>2025/2026 Tax Base using collection rate</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Alkham	305.08	324.11	19.03
Ash	1296.38	1324.59	28.21
Aylesham	1690.93	1732.26	41.33
Capel-Le-Ferne	668.76	697.83	29.07
Deal	7083.24	7437.22	353.98
Denton-with-Wootton	184.47	191.38	6.91
Dover	8516.39	8586.89	70.50
Eastry	852.52	864.76	12.24
Eythorne	812.87	818.48	5.61
Goodnestone	175.30	189.37	14.07
Great Mongeham	327.85	337.41	9.56
Guston	443.98	460.24	16.26
Hougham Without	177.96	188.18	10.22
Langdon	239.85	243.63	3.78
Lydden	299.62	302.77	3.14
Nonington	297.73	304.13	6.40
Northbourne	278.78	288.97	10.19
Preston	400.29	412.49	12.20
Ringwould with Kingsdown	1089.59	1170.28	80.69
Ripple	155.04	161.19	6.16
River	1493.49	1499.43	5.94
St Margarets-at-Cliffe	1338.05	1419.81	81.76
Sandwich	2114.49	2204.94	90.45
Sheperdswell-with-Coldred	803.54	816.17	12.63
Sholden	757.41	780.97	23.57
Staple	263.33	271.31	7.97
Stourmouth	113.69	113.62	-0.07
Sutton by Dover	319.93	337.55	17.62
Temple Ewell	689.70	691.05	1.35
Tilmanstone	159.21	162.94	3.73
Walmer	3414.40	3580.60	166.19
Whitfield	2366.21	2407.06	40.85
Wingham	724.67	729.00	4.34
Woodnesborough	520.98	528.31	7.33
Worth	498.77	540.79	42.02
<i>Total Band D Equivalentents</i>	<b>40874.50</b>	<b>42119.72</b>	<b>1245.23</b>

### Appendix 3 – Council Tax Support (CTS) income grids

2024/2025 – Current Grid – based on NLW\* at £11.44 per hour

Income Band	Single		Couple		Family with 1 child		Family with 2+ children		Discount
	From	To	From	To	From	To	From	To	
Band 1	0.00	114.40	0.00	154.40	0.00	204.40	0.00	254.40	90%
Band 2	114.41	171.60	154.41	211.60	204.41	261.60	254.41	311.60	75%
Band 3	171.61	228.80	211.61	268.80	261.61	318.80	311.61	368.80	60%
Band 4	228.81	286.00	268.81	326.00	318.81	376.00	368.81	426.00	45%
Band 5	286.01	343.20	326.01	383.20	376.01	433.20	426.01	483.20	30%

2025/2026 – Proposed Grid from 1 April 2025 - based on NLW\* at £12.21 per hour

Income Band	Single		Couple		Family with 1 child		Family with 2+ children		Discount
	From	To	From	To	From	To	From	To	
Band 1	0.00	122.10	0.00	162.10	0.00	212.10	0.00	262.10	90%
Band 2	122.11	183.15	162.11	223.15	212.11	273.15	262.11	323.15	75%
Band 3	183.16	244.20	223.16	284.20	273.16	334.20	323.16	384.20	60%
Band 4	244.21	305.25	284.21	345.25	334.21	395.25	384.21	445.25	45%
Band 5	305.26	366.30	345.26	406.30	395.26	456.30	445.26	506.30	30%

\*NLW = National Living Wage

**Background to ‘second home premium’ and ‘Long Term Empty’ premiums, and the associated exceptions**

**Regulations**

- The legal framework for Council Tax premiums are set out in Section 11B (1D) and 11C (4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (“the 1992 Act”) as inserted by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.
- The Secretary of State has powers under section 11B(2)-(3) and 11D(1)-(2) of the 1992 Act to prescribe through regulations the certain classes of properties, which may not be made subject to a premium and this is detailed in The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings and Consequential Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024
- The exempt classes for Council Tax are set out in the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) Order 1992

**Background**

- Since 2013, councils have had the power to charge additional Council Tax on long-term empty homes. For the purpose of Council Tax, long-term empty homes are properties which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period.
- In April 2024, the empty homes Council Tax premium was strengthened so that councils can charge the premium on homes that have been empty for 1 or more years (rather than the previous 2 years), which was introduced by Canterbury, Dover and Thanet Councils.
- From April 2025, Councils are able to charge a premium of up to 100% additional Council Tax on second homes (class B properties). For the purpose of Council Tax, second homes are properties which are substantially furnished but have no resident i.e. it is not someone’s sole or main residence. A decision has been made to introduce a 100% premium on second homes by Canterbury, Dover and Thanet from 1 April 2025.
- All Councils have the discretion to decide whether to introduce a premium in their local area on long-term empty homes and second homes. They also have the discretion to decide on the level of the premium, up to the maximum statutory threshold. Canterbury, Dover and Thanet have decided to introduce the maximum premium and there are no exceptions to this outside of those prescribed by the regulations.
- Where a determination to charge a premium is made, Councils must publish a notice of the determination in at least 1 newspaper circulating in its area within 21 days of the date of the determination. This has been done in Canterbury, Dover and Thanet.

### **Section 11B: Higher amount for long-term empty properties**

- A long-term empty home is defined as a home which is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least 1 year. The property must be occupied, or substantially furnished, for a continuous period of at least 6 weeks in order for it to reset the length of time it has been empty for, and its liability for a premium.
- Canterbury, Dover and Thanet have made a determination to charge a premium on long-term empty properties, which are:
  - 100% for homes empty between 1 and 5 years
  - 200% for homes empty between 5 and 10 years
  - 300% for homes empty for over 10 years

### **Section 11C and 11D: Higher amount for properties occupied periodically Class B properties or ‘second homes’**

- Properties occupied periodically (commonly referred to as “second homes”) are defined as properties which are substantially furnished and have no resident i.e. not a person’s sole or main home.
- When introducing the premium in the local area for the first time, a Council must make its first determination under section 11C at least 1 year before the beginning of the financial year to which the determination to apply the premium relates. This was done in Canterbury, Dover and Thanet.
- Where individuals own multiple homes, but the homes are let out or occupied by someone as their main home, it will not be considered as a “second home” for the purposes of the premiums (as they will be the liable person and billed as an occupied property) and as such will not be liable for the premium.
- It is for Councils to determine whether a property is a “second home” in accordance with the legislation and their local statutory determination to apply the premium.
- When making a determination to charge the Council Tax premiums on long-term empty homes and/or second homes, Councils have the discretion whether to apply the premium in their local areas and the decision to make a determination is under section 11B and 11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- The Government have built flexibility into the Regulations, but Canterbury, Dover and Thanet has chosen to implement a premium on long term empty properties and second homes without exception (other than those stated in the Regulations) and the maximum premium will be applied.
- Any decision to vary or revoke a determination to apply a premium must be made before the beginning of the financial year to which it applies. This enables councils to take any changes into account when calculating their taxbase for the following year as well as giving local taxpayers advance notice of the changes.



## Exceptions to the council tax premiums for long-term empty homes and second homes – effective 1 April 2025

- Section 11B and 11D of the 1992 Act enables the government to make regulations to prescribe classes of properties where a premium cannot be applied.
- The exceptions to the premium are mandatory and will come into effect from 1 April 2025.
- The regulations prescribe 9 classes of properties which are excluded from the Council Tax premiums:
  - Classes E, F, G, H and I apply to both long-term empty homes and second homes.
  - Classes J, K and L only apply to second homes.
  - Class M only applies to long-term empty homes.
- The classes of property are outlined in the table below:

<b>Classes of Properties</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Class E	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Properties which is, or would be, someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in job-related armed forces accommodation
Class F	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main property
Class G	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Properties being actively marketed for sale (12 months limit)
Class H	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Properties being actively marketed for let (12 months limit)
Class I	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Unoccupied properties which fell within exempt Class F and where probate has recently been granted (12 months from grant of probate/letters of administration)
Class J	Second homes only	Job-related properties
Class K	Second homes only	Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings.
Class L	Second homes only	Seasonal homes where year-round, permanent occupation is prohibited, specified for use as holiday accommodation or planning condition preventing occupancy for more than 28 days continuously
Class M	Long-term empty home only	Empty properties requiring or undergoing major repairs or structural alterations (12 months limit)

## **Annexes and military accommodation (Class E and Class F)**

Two mandatory exceptions from the empty home premium already exist. These exceptions will continue to apply for empty homes and will also be applied in the case of the second homes premium.

- a property which is, or would be the sole or main residence of a member of the armed services, who has been provided with a property as a result of such service
- a property which forms part of a single property with one or more other property (an annexe) that is being used by a resident of one of the other properties as part of their sole or main residence

## **Job related properties and caravan pitches/boat moorings (Class K and Class L)**

- Generally, a property would be classed as a job-related property where it is provided by a person's employer for the purposes of performing their work. The definition of job-related for the purposes of this exception is set out in the Schedule to the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003.
- The Council Tax system already contains provisions which ensure that in certain circumstances, these properties receive a 50% Council Tax discount (under class BE). There are no changes to these discounts. The exceptions mirror the provisions of these discounts to ensure these properties continue to receive the discount.
- The guidance states that there are households that may fall outside the definition of a job-related property and that the Council may determine that it would still not be appropriate for the premium to apply. Canterbury, Dover and Thanet have not applied discretion in this area and if a property does not qualify for a job-related discount, then the premium will be applied.

## **Probate (Class I)**

- There is an existing exemption (Class FN and FF) in Council Tax for properties undergoing probate. When a property has been left empty following the death of its owner or occupant, it is exempt from Council Tax for as long as it remains unoccupied and until probate is granted.
- Following a grant of probate (or the issue of letters of administration), a further 6 months exemption is possible (Class F), as long as the property remains unoccupied and has not been transferred by the executors or administrators to the beneficiaries or sold to anyone else.
- Following a grant of probate the owners of the property may require further time to decide how they will manage the home or sell it. The Regulations provide for a 12-month exception to the premium for both second and empty homes. **The 12-month period begins from the point probate is granted or letters of administration have been issued.** This runs concurrently with the 6-month exemption.
- This exception will run for 12 months or until the property has changed owner by being sold. For Canterbury, Dover and Thanet there is no discretion to extend this exception.

## **Actively marketed for sale or let (Class G and Class H)**

- The exception can apply for up to 12 months from the point from which the property has first been marketed for sale or let.
- The exception will end either when the 12-month period has ended, when the property has been sold or let, or when the property is no longer actively marketed for sale or let. The following conditions will apply to this exception:
  - the same owner may only make use of the exception for a particular property marketed for sale once;
  - the exception may be used again for the same property if it has been sold and has a new owner;
  - the same owner may make use of the exception for properties marketed for let multiple times, however, only after the property has been let for a continuous period of at least 6 months since the exception last applied.
- We will need to take the following factors into consideration when assessing whether a property is being actively marketed for sale or let. These will include:
  - whether the property is clearly advertised for sale or let;
  - whether the property is being marketed at a fair market value;
  - whether there are any artificial barriers on the property preventing sale/let;
  - whether the property has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).
- When considering whether a second or empty home is actively marketed, we will need to consider these factors holistically. It could be that a home may not meet one of the described factors, but it may still overall be considered to be actively marketed. Further guidance will follow for processing purposes.
- At the end of the 12-month period, the premium will be applied and there are no exceptions or discretions around this.

### **Major repairs (Class M)**

- Where a property requires or is undergoing major repairs or is undergoing structural alteration it may be excepted from the empty home premium for up to 12 months.
- Where major repairs are completed in less than 12 months, the exception will still apply to the property for up to 6 months or until the end of the 12 months whichever is sooner (similar to the D6 on the previous Class D discount)
- This exception only applies on empty homes. This exception cannot apply again unless the property has been sold. If the property is substantially furnished and becomes a second home without a resident, then this exception will end.
- At the end of the 12-month period, the premium will be applied and there are no exceptions or discretions around this.

### **Seasonal homes (Class L) often referred to as “Chalets”**

- Certain properties may have restrictions on them which means that the property could not reasonably be occupied as a permanent residence. The properties will not be subject to a premium, as they cannot be used as a permanent residence.
- When applying the exception, we will need to consider whether there are any planning restrictions which explicitly set out that the property cannot be used as a main residence. For example, where this is purpose-built holiday accommodation which can only be used as holiday accommodation.
- This exception provides for properties which have planning restrictions whereby they cannot be occupied for at least 28 continuous days in a year. In some cases, a council may assess a property with this restriction, as being a person’s sole or main residence. Where this is the case, the property would not be liable for the premium since this cannot apply to a main residence.

### **Powers to identify and exclude certain properties**

- Councils have discretionary powers to exclude properties from the premium in their area through their determination. The government encourages councils to make use of their local expertise to consider which other properties should not be charged a premium.
- There is no discretion built into the decisions to apply premiums for Canterbury, Dover and Thanet.
- The consideration under Section 13a for financial hardship or personal circumstances remains as does the discretion for fire and flood, there are no changes to this process.

### **Monitoring and appeals**

- The government encourages councils to be transparent in how they apply the premium, making the following information available for residents:
  - the level of premium charged by the council;
  - which areas this applies to;
  - the number of properties charged the premium;
  - the amount which has been raised by the premium;
  - how funding from the premium has been used locally.
- If an individual believes they have been inappropriately charged a premium on their property, in the first instance, they will be required to contact us. If the individuals have discussed the issue with the Council, but they are not satisfied with the Council’s response, they may be able to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal Service.



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

Guidance

# Guidance on the implementation of the council tax premiums on long-term empty homes and second homes

Published 1 November 2024

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**Applies to England**

Contents

Introduction

1. Implementation of the council tax premiums on long-term empty homes and second homes
2. Exceptions to the council tax premiums for long-term empty homes and second homes
3. Monitoring and appeals



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# Introduction

Since 2013, councils<sup>[footnote 1](#)</sup> in England have had the power to charge additional council tax on long-term empty homes. For the purpose of council tax, long-term empty homes are dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period. In April 2024, the empty homes council tax premium was strengthened so that councils can charge the premium on homes that have been empty for 1 or more years (rather than the previous 2 years).

Additionally, from April 2025, councils will be able to use new powers to charge a premium of up to 100% additional council tax on second homes in their area, or parts of their area. For the purpose of council tax, second homes are dwellings which are substantially furnished but have no resident (i.e. it is not someone's sole or main residence).

The powers to charge the empty homes or second homes premium (or both) is discretionary, and it is for councils to decide whether to charge the premiums in their local area and at what rate, up to the statutory maximum.

This guidance has been published to set out the circumstances where a premium can be charged, the discretion available to councils in doing this, the administration of premiums and the application of the exceptions. This guidance is also intended to enable taxpayers to identify the circumstances where their dwelling may be excepted from a premium.

This guidance is issued under powers in [section 11B\(1D\) and 11C \(4\) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/contents>) (“the 1992 Act”) as inserted by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. It applies to all councils in England. This does not apply to councils in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

This guidance should not be treated as an interpretation of the legislation. Councils should make their decisions based on the legislation and their specific local circumstances.

## 1. Implementation of the council tax premiums on long-term empty homes and second homes

# Legal framework for the council tax premiums

## Sections 11B and 11C of the 1992 Act

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/contents>) enables councils in England to disapply the section 11(2)(a) discount which may otherwise apply to long-term empty homes and second homes and apply additional council tax (commonly called a premium).

The 1992 Act was amended through the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (“the 2023 Act”) so that councils can apply a premium on homes which have been empty for 1 or more years from 1 April 2024. The 2023 Act also introduced new powers for councils to charge premiums on second homes from 1 April 2025 (provided that the conditions set out in section 11C of the 1992 Act apply).

Councils have the discretion to decide whether to introduce a premium in their local area or parts of the area on long-term empty homes and second homes. They also have the discretion to decide on the level of the premium, up to the maximum statutory threshold.

A council must make its first determination to charge a second homes premium at least 1 year before the financial year to which it will apply. This is to provide owners of these dwellings sufficient notice to make any appropriate changes. Councils may vary or revoke a determination under these same powers but only before the beginning of the financial year to which this will apply. When using these powers, councils can determine the long-term empty homes or second homes to which they will apply a premium. This enables each council to tailor its determination to local circumstances.

Where a determination to charge a premium is made, councils must publish a notice of the determination in at least 1 newspaper circulating in its area within 21 days of the date of the determination<sup>[footnote 2\]](#)</sup>.

The Secretary of State has powers under section 11B(2)-(3) and 11D(1)-(2) of the 1992 Act to prescribe through regulations certain classes of dwelling which may not be made subject to a premium. The [Council Tax \(Prescribed Classes of Dwellings and Consequential Amendments\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/1007/contents/made>) prescribe these exceptions, and these are detailed later in this guidance.

The council tax system already provides a number of specific exemptions from council tax. The exempt classes are set out in the [Council Tax \(Exempt Dwellings\) Order 1992](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/558/contents/made>). There are a number of exemptions in place for unoccupied dwellings, including:

- where the resident has died for up to 6 months after grant of probate or letters of administration)



- where the resident is in long-term residential care or hospital
- where the resident is living elsewhere to provide personal care

A dwelling that is exempt from council tax is not liable for a premium. Where a dwelling is no longer eligible for an exemption but remains no one's sole or main residence, it may become liable for a premium. In the case of an empty home, it may become liable for a premium after it has been empty for a continuous period of 1 year. This time frame begins when the dwelling first becomes empty rather than when an exemption ends. A second home may become liable for the premium as soon as the exemption ends.

## **Section 11B: Higher amount for long-term empty dwellings**

A long-term empty home is defined as a home which is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least 1 year. The dwelling must be occupied, or substantially furnished, for a continuous period of at least 6 weeks in order for it to reset the length of time it has been empty for, and its liability for a premium.

Where a council makes a determination to charge a premium on long-term empty dwellings, it may specify different percentages for dwellings based on the length of time for which they have been empty. This enables councils to take a stepped approach, with increases over time. These include:

- up to 100% for homes empty between 1 and 5 years
- up to 200% for homes empty between 5 and 10 years
- up to 300% for homes empty for over 10 years

Councils are able to choose the level of the premium, up to the applicable statutory maximum. For example, they may apply a 50% premium for dwellings empty between 1 and 2 years and a premium of 100% of dwellings empty for 2 to 5 years.

## **Section 11C and 11D: Higher amount for dwellings occupied periodically**

Dwellings occupied periodically (commonly referred to as "second homes") are defined as dwellings which are substantially furnished and have no resident (i.e., not a person's sole or main home).

When introducing the premium in the local area or parts of the area for the first time, a council must make its first determination under section 11C at least 1 year before the beginning of the financial year to which the determination to apply the premium relates.

Where individuals own multiple homes, but the homes are let out or occupied by someone as their main home, it will not be considered as a “second home” for the purposes of the premiums and as such will not be liable for the premium. It is for councils to determine whether a dwelling is a “second home” in accordance with the legislation and their local statutory determination to apply the premium.

## **Making a determination to charge the council tax premiums on long-term empty homes and/or second homes**

Councils have the discretion whether to apply the premium in their local areas and will determine how best to use this in combination with other measures to bring dwellings back into use or how the additional flexibilities may be used to improve the sustainability of local services.

The decision to make a determination under section 11B and 11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 is for councils to make. However, the government expects councils to have due consideration of local circumstances. Councils can choose to apply either or both of the council tax premiums; they can also choose to apply the premium to parts of the local area rather than to the whole of their local area. This flexibility allows councils to tailor the premiums to best address local concerns or priorities.

Councils should carefully consider whether to charge a premium and make an assessment of possible impacts, including on the local population, its communities, and the local economy. Examples of factors that councils may wish to consider are set out below. Whilst some factors will be specific to either long-term empty dwellings or second homes, others will be common to both. The list is not exhaustive, and councils will want to consider all factors they think are relevant before making a decision.

- numbers and proportion of long-term empty dwellings and/or second homes in the local area
- circumstances which may affect whether the dwelling can be used as a main residence
- potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry
- potential impact on the local community
- potential impact on local services

- other measures that are available to councils to help bring empty dwellings back into use

Councils should consider the reasons why dwellings are unoccupied in deciding whether they want such dwellings to be included in their determination. Examples of issues councils may want to take account of in making their determination include:

- on average, how long dwellings in their area are available for sale or rent before completion/occupation
- the average price/rent in the local area
- whether there are circumstances which make the dwelling unsuitable for use as main residence
- whether there are circumstances which make the dwelling difficult to sell/let
- whether the dwelling is empty so that improvements can be made between sale/let

Any decision to vary or revoke a determination to apply a premium must be made before the beginning of the financial year to which it applies. This enables councils to take any changes into account when calculating their taxbase for the following year as well as giving local taxpayers advance notice of the changes.

Councils should consider how it might engage and consult with key stakeholders, including the local electorate and second homeowners, before taking a decision to charge a premium. If councils decide to introduce or vary a premium, they should consider how this is communicated, particularly to those who might be directly affected. For instance, through publication of press notices, providing information on website pages or direct communication with council taxpayers who are likely to be liable for the premium. Councils should also consider how they advise or inform those who may be affected but may reside outside the local area.

## **2. Exceptions to the council tax premiums for long-term empty homes and second homes**

The government recognises that there may be instances where it may be inappropriate for the council tax premiums to apply. Section 11B and 11D of the 1992 Act enables the government to make regulations to prescribe classes of dwellings in relation to which councils may not make a determination to apply a premium.

The government has made regulations to provide exceptions to these premiums, in line with the published [consultation response](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposals-to-exempt-categories-of-dwellings-from-the-council-tax-premiums/outcome/summary-of-responses-and-governments-response-to-the-consultation-on-proposals-to-exempt-categories-of-dwellings-from-the-council-tax-premiums-in-eng) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposals-to-exempt-categories-of-dwellings-from-the-council-tax-premiums/outcome/summary-of-responses-and-governments-response-to-the-consultation-on-proposals-to-exempt-categories-of-dwellings-from-the-council-tax-premiums-in-eng>). These exceptions to the premium are mandatory and councils may not disapply any exceptions. These exceptions will come into effect from 1 April 2025.

The regulations prescribe 9 classes of dwellings which are excluded from the council tax premiums. Classes E, F, G, H and I apply to both long-term empty homes and second homes. Classes J, K and L only apply to second homes. Class M only applies to long-term empty homes.

The classes of dwelling are outlined in the table below and are detailed further in the guidance. These exceptions only exclude these dwellings from premiums, these do not affect the standard rate of council tax they may be liable for. Exceptions may apply in succession where the dwelling meets the necessary criteria. Councils may add extensions to exceptions as a part of their determination or may provide support through discretionary reductions using powers under [section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/section/13A) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/section/13A>).

Where a person believes they may meet the criteria for an exception from the premium they may wish to contact their council directly. The council will be best placed to assess whether an exception would apply in these circumstances. Furthermore, councils have discretionary powers to provide additional exceptions from premiums where they consider this appropriate.

<b>Classes of Dwellings</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Class E	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Dwelling which is or would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in job-related armed forces accommodation
Class F	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling
Class G	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Dwellings being actively marketed for sale (12 months limit)

<b>Classes of Dwellings</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Class H	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Dwellings being actively marketed for let (12 months limit)
Class I	Long-term empty homes and second homes	Unoccupied dwellings which fell within exempt Class F and where probate has recently been granted (12 months from grant of probate/letters of administration)
Class J	Second homes only	Job-related dwellings
Class K	Second homes only	Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings.
Class L	Second homes only	Seasonal homes where year-round, permanent occupation is prohibited, specified for use as holiday accommodation or planning condition preventing occupancy for more than 28 days continuously
Class M	Long-term empty home only	Empty dwellings requiring or undergoing major repairs or structural alterations (12 months limit)

## **Annexes and military accommodation (Class E and Class F)**

Two mandatory exceptions from the empty home premium already exist:

- a dwelling which is or would be the sole or main residence of a member of the armed services, who has been provided with a dwelling as a result of such service
- a dwelling which forms part of a single property with one or more other dwellings that is being used by a resident of one of the other dwellings as part of their sole or main residence

These exceptions will continue to apply for empty homes and will also be applied in the case of the second homes premium.

## **Job related dwellings and caravan pitches/boat moorings (Class K and Class L)**

The council tax system already contains provisions which ensure that in certain circumstances these dwellings receive a 50% council tax discount. The government does not intend to change the discounts which these dwellings receive. The exceptions mirror the provisions of these discounts to ensure these dwellings continue to receive these discounts.

Generally, a dwelling would be classed as a job-related dwelling where it is a dwelling provided by a person's employer for the purposes of performing their work. The definition of a job-related dwelling for the purposes of this exception is set out in the [Schedule to the Council Tax \(Prescribed Classes of Dwellings\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2003/3011/schedule/made) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2003/3011/schedule/made>). Examples include headteachers for boarding schools who are required to live in school accommodation, or certain care workers who need to live on site to carry out their role.

Certain households may fall outside the definition of a job-related dwelling; however, the council may determine that it would still not be appropriate for the premium to apply. Councils have the discretionary power to exclude any dwellings from the premium where they consider this appropriate.

## **Probate (Class I)**

There is an existing Class F council tax exemption for dwellings undergoing probate. When a dwelling has been left empty following the death of its owner or occupant, it is exempt from council tax for as long as it remains unoccupied and until probate is granted. Following a grant of probate (or the issue of letters of administration), a further 6 months exemption is possible, so long as the dwelling remains unoccupied and has not been transferred by the executors or administrators to the beneficiaries or sold to anyone else.

Following a grant of probate the owners of the dwelling may require further time to decide how they will manage the home or sell it. The Regulations provide for a 12-month exception to the premium for both second and empty homes. The 12-month period begins from the point probate is granted or letters of administration have been issued. This runs concurrently with the 6-month exemption.

This exception will run for 12 months or until the dwelling has changed owner by being sold. Councils may wish to consider the specific

circumstances of the dwelling's owners at the end of the period and whether to use their discretionary power to extend this exception.

## **Actively marketed for sale or let (Class G and Class H)**

The government has been clear that its intention is not to penalise those who are genuinely trying to bring their dwelling back into use as a sole/main residence.

This exception can apply for up to 12 months from the point from which the dwelling has first been marketed for sale or let. The exception will end either when the 12-month period has ended, when the dwelling has been sold or let or when the dwelling is no longer actively marketed for sale or let. The following conditions will apply to this exception:

- the same owner may only make use of the exception for a particular dwelling marketed for sale once
- the exception may be used again for the same dwelling if it has been sold and has a new owner
- the same owner may make use of the exception for dwellings marketed for let multiple times, however, only after the dwellings has been let for a continuous period of at least 6 months since the exception last applied

There are a number of factors which councils may take into consideration when assessing whether a dwelling is being actively marketed for sale or let. These may include:

- whether the dwelling is clearly advertised for sale or let
- whether the dwelling is being marketed at a fair market value
- whether there are any artificial barriers on the dwelling preventing sale/let
- whether the dwelling has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) [\[footnote 3\]](#)
- whether the owner is taking any other reasonable steps to market the dwelling for sale or let

When considering whether a second or empty home is actively marketed, councils should consider these factors holistically. Whether a home may not meet one of the described factors it may still overall be considered to be actively marketed. Councils may wish to consider further factors in determining whether a dwelling is actively marketed for sale or let.

At the end of the 12-month period, councils may wish to consider the specific circumstances of the owners and whether to use their discretionary powers to extend the exception.

## **Major repairs (Class M)**

The government appreciates in some cases a dwelling may require major repair work before it can be occupied. Where a dwelling requires or is undergoing major repairs or is undergoing structural alteration it may be excepted from the empty home premium for up to 12 months. Where major repairs are completed in less than 12 months, the exception will still apply to the dwelling for up to 6 months or until the end of the 12 months whichever is sooner.

This exception only applies on empty homes. This exception cannot apply again unless the dwelling has been sold. If the dwelling is substantially furnished and becomes a second home without a resident, then this exception will end.

Councils may wish to consider the specific circumstances of the dwelling at the end of this 12 months and whether to use their discretionary power to extend this exception in certain scenarios.

## **Seasonal homes (Class L)**

The government recognises in some cases certain dwellings may have restrictions on them which means that the dwelling could not reasonably be occupied as a permanent residence. The government's position is that it is right that these dwellings should not be subject to a premium when these dwellings could not be used as a permanent residence.

In applying this exception, councils should consider whether there are any planning restrictions which explicitly set out that the dwelling cannot be used as a main residence. For example, where this is purpose-built holiday accommodation which can only be used as holiday accommodation.

In addition, this exception provides for dwellings which have planning restrictions whereby they cannot be occupied for at least 28 continuous days in a year. In some cases, a council may assess a dwelling with this restriction as being a person's sole or main residence. Where this is the case, the dwelling would not be liable for the premium since this cannot apply to a main residence.

## **Powers to identify and exclude certain dwellings**



The government recognises there may be specific local issues relating to second homes and empty homes which are not covered by mandatory exceptions. Councils have discretionary powers to exclude dwellings from the premium in their area through their determination. The government encourages councils to make use of their local expertise to consider which other dwellings should not be charged a premium.

There may be cases where despite best endeavours, an owner may not have the ability to bring an empty or second home back to productive use in a reasonable time. An example of this is where occupation of a dwelling is restricted to a specific group of people and cannot be used in any other way. Where a dwelling has been actively marketed for sale or let but there are mitigating circumstances which mean the dwelling may take longer to sell or let, the council may wish to consider using their discretionary powers.

In some cases, there may be no specific planning restriction preventing dwellings from being used as a main residence but conditions around the dwelling may make it impractical to be used as a main residence. For example, where the dwelling may be located on land which cannot be accessed for significant parts of the year. Councils should consider whether any dwellings in their area could not be used for any purpose other than as a second home when making their determinations.

The scenarios set out above are not exhaustive and there may be specific local circumstances which impact the exceptions a council may apply. Ultimately councils should rely on their expertise of their local area when deciding which exceptions may apply.

Councils cannot amend their determinations in year to include further exceptions. However, councils do have powers under [section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/section/13A) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/section/13A>) to offer a discretionary discount for households where they consider this appropriate.

### **3. Monitoring and appeals**

As with all council tax income, income received by council tax premiums is fully retained by councils and their precepting authorities. This income is unringfenced and it is for local councils to determine how best to use the income raised to address issues within their local areas.

The government trusts council to apply premiums taking into account their local circumstances. The government encourages councils to be transparent in how they apply the premium, making the following information available for residents:

- the level of premium charged by the council
- which areas this applies to
- the number of dwellings charged the premium
- the amount which has been raised by the premium
- how funding from the premium has been used locally

If an individual believes they have been inappropriately charged a premium on their dwelling, they should in the first instance contact their council. Councils are best placed to advise how they have determined a premium should apply in these circumstances. Additionally, they will be able to make any necessary amendments where there is evidence to show a premium should not be applied.

If the individuals have discussed the issue with their local council, but they are not satisfied with the council's response, they may be able to [appeal to the Valuation Tribunal \(https://valuationtribunal.gov.uk/council-tax-appeals/\)](https://valuationtribunal.gov.uk/council-tax-appeals/).

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1. Specifically, it is for billing authorities to make a determination whether to charge a premium. Billing authorities are responsible for the billing and collection of council tax.
2. A determination will not be invalid where this has not been done.
3. A valid EPC is necessary to be able to sell or let any dwelling - [Selling a home: Energy Performance Certificates \(https://www.gov.uk/selling-a-home/energy-performance-certificates\)](https://www.gov.uk/selling-a-home/energy-performance-certificates).

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>EAST KENT JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL</b>
<b>Meeting and Date:</b>	<b>EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 29 January 2025</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND DEMOCRACY</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>

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**Purpose of the report:** To appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel as required under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).

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- Recommendation:**
- (a) That the Council agree to Folkestone and Hythe District Council joining the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, subject to ratification by Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council.
  - (b) That the Head of Corporate Services and Democracy be authorised to agree the arrangements for the administrative support of the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.
  - (c) That the Head of Corporate Services and Democracy be requested to proceed with continuing to advertise for the vacant second Dover District member on the East Kent Joint Remuneration Panel.
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## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 for the purpose of making recommendations to the Council in respect of its Members' Allowances Scheme.

## 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Since 2002 the Council has operated a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel with neighbouring authorities. While the initial Joint Independent Remuneration Panel was with Thanet District Council this was expanded in 2007 to become the first East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (EKJIRP) with Dover District Council, (the then) Shepway District Council and Thanet District Council. Shepway District Council withdrew the following year to be replaced by Canterbury City Council. The current Panel was formed in 2008 and consists of 5 members appointed jointly by Canterbury City Council (1 member), Dover District Council (2 members) and Thanet District Council (2 members). The term of office of the current Panel members commenced on 30 November 2023 and runs until 30 November 2027.
- 2.2 In summer 2024, Folkestone and Hythe District Council approached the Council with a view to joining the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel during the municipal year 2024/25.

### Panel Arrangements

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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". This means that the members of the Panel may not be a member of the three district/city councils or any of the towns/parish councils in their administrative areas.
- 2.7 It is proposed that the Panel membership be reappointed on the current five-member basis as follows:
- 1 member appointed by Canterbury City Council
  - 2 members appointed by Dover District Council
  - 2 members appointed by Thanet District Council
  - 2 members appointed by Folkestone and Hythe District Council
- 2.8 The quorum for the Panel is 3 members.
- 2.9 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 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.
- 2.10 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. On average the Panel meets two or three times a year, though this number increases when conducting the four-yearly parish review.

### **Administration**

- 2.11 The Central administrative support for the Panel is currently provided by Dover District Council's Democratic Services team and it is proposed that this will continue. The administrative support for the Panel is charged to each of the partner authorities at £1200 per annum and if Folkestone and Hythe District Council were to join this charge would also be applied to them.
- 2.12 The Head of Corporate Services and Democracy was authorised in November 2023 to agree the arrangements for the administrative support of the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel and a similar authorisation is requested for the admittance of Folkestone and Hythe District Council to the EKJIRP.

### **Vacancy**

- 2.13 The Council during 2024 went to advertisement to recruit to the vacant position on the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel. Following advertisement, there were no eligible candidates that applied for the vacancy. It is proposed that the Head of Corporate Services and Democracy should undertake a further attempt to recruit a second Dover District representative for the Panel.

### **3. Identification of Options**

#### Folkestone and Hythe District Council's Request to Join EKJIRP

- 3.1 To select either Option 1 or 2.
- 3.2 Option 1: To agree to Folkestone and Hythe District Council joining the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, subject to ratification by Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council.
- 3.3 Option 2: To not agree to Folkestone and Hythe District Council joining the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

#### Recruiting to the Vacancy on EKJIRP

- 3.4 To select either Option 3 or 4.
- 3.5 Option 3: In addition to either Option 1 or 2, to instruct the Head of Corporate Services and Democracy to continue to try to recruit to the vacant Dover District position on the EKJIRP. A further report will be made to the Council advising the outcome of the recruitment process.
- 3.6 Option 4: In addition to either Option 1 or 2, instruct the Head of Corporate Services and Democracy to cease trying to recruit to the vacant Dover District position on the EKJIRP. This will mean that the Council only appoints one representative to the EKJIRP.

### **4. Evaluation of Options**

- 4.1 Option 1, the preferred option out of Options 1 and 2, 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 through shared costs.
- 4.2 Option 2, while not the preferred choice, would have minimal operational impact on the Panel but would miss the opportunity to share costs further and forego a small revenue increase.
- 4.3 Options 3 and 4 relate to recruiting to the vacant position on the Panel. The Panel has traditionally had two representatives from the Dover District and while it has operated successfully with a single representative for Dover, for resilience it is recommended that that a further attempt be made to fill the available places for Dover on EKJIRP.
- 4.4 The preferred option would be for Option 1 (to admit Folkestone and Hythe District Council to the EKJIRP) with Option 4 (to continue).

### **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 The proposal set out in Option 1 has no additional resource implications. However, if the Council were to choose Options 2 or 3 the resource implications would need to be reassessed as part of a further report.
- 5.2 The administration of the Panel generates a small income for Dover District Council through an agreed administrative fee charged to Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council. All costs incurred by the Panel are split equally amongst the partner authorities.

### **6. Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): "The Head of Finance & Investment has been consulted on this report and has no further comments to add. (HL)"

- 6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: 'This report regarding the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel as required under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>'

7. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference of the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel

8. **Background Papers**

Correspondence with Folkestone and Hythe District Council

Contact Officer: Rebecca Brough, Head of Corporate Services and Democracy, [rebecca.brough@dover.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.brough@dover.gov.uk)



## **CONSTITUTION OF THE EAST KENT JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANELS**

Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council and Thanet District Council (the 'partner authorities') have established a Joint District Independent Remuneration Panel and a Joint Parish Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations on remuneration levels for District and Town/Parish Councillors.

### **1. Terms of Reference**

- (a) The Terms of Reference of the Panels shall be:
- (i) to make recommendations to each District and Town/Parish authority as to the amount of basic allowance which should be payable to its elected and co-opted members;
  - (ii) to make recommendations to each District and Town/Parish authority about the roles and responsibilities for which a special allowance should be payable and as to the amount of each such allowance;
  - (iii) to make recommendations as to whether each District and Town/Parish authority's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and if it does make such a recommendation, the amount of this allowance and the means by which it is determined;
  - (iv) to make recommendations to each District and Town/Parish authority about a members' pension scheme;
  - (v) to make recommendations to each District and Town/Parish authority as to the amount of travel and subsistence allowance payable to elected and co-opted members.

### **2. Recommendations of the Panel**

- (a) In making its recommendations, the Panels be asked to include guidance on what is to be encompassed by the allowance and it will have regard to the following principles:
- (i) the Panels shall make separate recommendations to each authority if it is deemed appropriate;
  - (ii) recommendations should conform with existing legislation (and anticipate likely future legislation so far as possible);

- (iii) recognition of the principle that the work of a Councillor is undertaken for the sake of public service and not for personal gain;
- (iv) recognition that the demands placed upon Councillors by their differing roles and responsibilities within the Council
- (v) the need to fairly and equitably compensate Councillors so far as the Panels thinks appropriate for the time and effort devoted to their work as a member of the Council and/or the time and effort which they can reasonably be expected to devote;
- (vi) 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 District of the places where Council business is conducted;
- (vii) an allowance scheme should be transparent, economic, efficient and effective to administer and easy to explain, understand and justify to the local communities within the District.

### **3. Panel Membership and Appointment**

- (a) The membership of the District Independent Remuneration Panel and the Parish Independent Remuneration Panel shall be the same.
- (b) Each partner authority shall appoint up to two representatives to serve on the panels.
- (c) The members of the Panels should receive the following allowances, to be reviewed every four years:
  - Chairman: Supplement of £250 per annum
  - Panel Member: £300 per annum
  - Meeting Fee: £75 per meeting
- (d) Wherever possible, the members of the Panels shall be treated as separate and independent consultants who are responsible for their own tax, National Insurance, etc.
- (e) The respective partner authorities should carry out recruitment of the members of the panels. Recruitment should be by either public advertisement or direct approach to appropriate individuals or business/community/voluntary sector organisations that command local respect and public confidence and would be able to nominate persons who should have the necessary skills, integrity, independence and who are recognisable members of the local business and voluntary/community sectors within their respective areas.
- (f) A person specification shall be drawn up and agreed to ensure that candidates who are appointed:
  - (i) Are able to demonstrate a high degree of personal integrity;



- (ii) Are not members of any local authority and are not disqualified from being or becoming a member of a local authority;
  - (iii) Have, if possible, the appropriate level of skill, knowledge and understanding of setting remunerations;
  - (iv) Have the necessary time and commitment for the role;
  - (v) Will disclose the extent of their connections to a political party and whether these are such as to risk the effective discharge of the panel's functions were the candidate to be appointed.
- (c) Terms of appointment shall include a provision for removal from office in circumstances where:
- (i) the member of the Panel is disqualified from being a member of an authority or guilty of any conduct which brings the office into disrepute eg being found guilty of a criminal offence, an act of dishonesty or other serious misconduct;
  - (ii) the member of the Panel is guilty of lack of diligence or incompetence;
  - (iii) the member becomes an elected or co-opted member [or an employee] of a local authority;
  - (vi) a member of the Panel shall only be removed from office by the appointing partner authority, except at the expiration of a member of the Panels term of office.

#### **4. Panel Operating Rules**

- (a) The Panel's Term of Office shall commence from 1 December 2015.
- (b) The Panel shall:
  - (i) appoint its own Chairman at the first meeting of each municipal year;
  - (ii) require a quorum of three at all meetings;
  - (iii) Meet a minimum of once per municipal year, with additional meetings convened at the request of any partner authority;
  - (iv) otherwise devise its own rules for the conduct of meetings providing that such are consistent with legislative requirements and good governance practice.

#### **5. Responsibilities of the Partner Authorities**

- (a) The partner authorities in the Panel shall:
  - (i) Share equally the cost of the above allowances and expenses of the panel.
  - (ii) Appoint Dover District Council to provide the administrative support of the Panel at a cost of £1,200 per partner authority per annum.

- (iii) In the event that a partner authority wishes to change the administrative support arrangements for the Panel, notice must be given in writing no later than three months before the end of the financial year, to take effect from the start of the next financial year.
- (iv) Dover District Council, or the member authority providing administrative support if different, will produce the final report in conjunction with the Chairman of the Panel setting out the recommendations to the member authorities.

**6. Termination of Participation in the East Kent Joint IRP by a member authority**

In the event that a partner authority wishes to end its participation in the Panel, notice must be given in writing no later than three months before the end of the financial year, to take effect from the start of the next financial year.