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**Subject:** APPOINTMENT OF AN EAST KENT JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

**Meeting and Date:** Council– 25 November 2015

**Report of:** Director of Governance

**Classification:** UNRESTRICTED

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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) To confirm the Council's continued participation in the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel until 30 November 2019.
- (b) To appoint Mr W Ferrier and Mr A Goodall as Dover District Council's appointees to the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel for a four year term commencing 1 December 2015.
- (c) That the Director of Governance be authorised to agree the arrangements for the administrative support of the East Kent Joint Independent 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 and in 2007 the first East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel was formed by Dover District Council, Shepway District Council and Thanet District Council. The current Panel was formed in 2008 and consists of 5 members appointed jointly by Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council and Thanet District Council. The term of office of the current Panel members expired in May 2015.

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

### 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".
- 2.7 The Panel membership is currently appointed on the following basis:
- 1 member appointed by Canterbury City Council
  - 2 member appointed by Dover District Council
  - 2 members appointed by Thanet District Council
- 2.8 The quorum for the Panel is 3 members.
- 2.9 The proposed term length of the members of the Panel is for four years, running from 1 December 2015 until 30 November 2019. The Panel will be responsible for appointing its own Chairman from amongst the membership on an annual basis.
- 2.10 It is proposed to reappoint former Independent Members of the Standards Committee Mr W Ferrier and Mr A Goodall to the Panel for a second term on the basis of the experience they have accumulated in their first term as members of the Panel and their knowledge of the authority.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 It is not proposed to change the allowance arrangements for the members of the Panel for the duration of the term of office running until 30 November 2019.
- 2.14 The Central administrative support for the Panel is currently provided by Dover District Council's Democratic Support team and it is proposed that this will continue. However, it is recommended that the Director of Governance be given delegated authority to agree the final administrative arrangements.
- 3. Identification of Options**
- 3.1 Option 1: To confirm the Council's continued participation in the East Kent Joint Independent Remuneration Panel with Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council.
- 3.2 Option 2: To form an Independent Remuneration Panel for Dover District Council only.
- 3.3 Option 3: To instruct the Director of Governance to investigate alternative arrangements for an Independent Remuneration Panel, accepting that the authority will have no Panel in place until such alternative arrangements are approved.

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

4.1 Option 1 is the preferred choice and it continues the existing arrangements that have worked successfully since 2008 and bring resilience to the Panel through the pooling of resources and the resultant economies of scale.

4.2 Options 2 and 3 are not recommended as they would take longer to implement and would lose the benefits gained through the sharing a Panel.

#### **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.

#### **6. Corporate Implications**

6.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Finance has been consulted. Allowances for the members of the IRP have been budgeted for in 2016/17. There are no concerns. (VB)

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 does not specifically highlight any equalities implications however, in discharging their responsibilities 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>

#### **7. Appendices**

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

#### **8. Background Papers**

None.

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