

**DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel held on 29 November 2002

**PRESENT:** Mr A Murdoch ( Chairman )  
Mr D Higgs (Vice-Chairman)  
Rev M Cooper  
Mr A Thrussell

Also present Councillor V Stock

**1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED:

That Mr D Higgs be appointed Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None received.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

**4. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

The Panel considered the terms of reference as agreed by the General Assembly of Council and the appointment of the Chairman.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the terms of reference for the Panel as agreed by the General Assembly of Council be noted.
- (ii) That the decision of the General Assembly of the Council to appoint Mr A Murdoch as Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel for the first year of the three year term of office and that thereafter the Panel will select its own Chairman be noted.

**5. PROCESS AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel considered the report before it and recognised that in order to meet the aspirations of the Council in that it would like to be in a position to introduce a new scheme of allowances from May 2003 following the election

of the new Council, the work of the Panel would need to be complete by Spring 2003.

Three distinct phases of work were identified:

- The research phase
- Analysis and consultation
- Conclusion.

### The Research Phase

The Panel was informed that other Remuneration Panel reports, recommendations, implemented schemes and any subsequent amendments to those schemes had been requested from Kent County Council, Sevenoaks, Gravesham, Thanet, Thurrock Borough Council and the London Borough of Bexley. It was suggested that additional boroughs be contacted in a wider area to the west, east and north of London in order to obtain a balanced view. The boroughs of Slough, Gerrards Cross and Spelthorne were identified as possible contacts. Additionally, it was requested that information be obtained in respect of allowances paid to Members of Health Trusts, the LGA daily rate and local and regional wage rates.

In order to facilitate meeting the timetable requirements it was agreed that information would be sent to Panel members upon receipt together with an analysis of common or different factors, where identified.

It was recognised that the location of the Borough within the Thames Gateway may lead to additional pressures being experienced by Members to those experienced by other more rural Kent county district authorities.

### Consultation

In order to understand fully the commitments that Councillors performed in their various roles and to gauge the weight of each role the Panel considered which Members it would like to interview. Additionally, it considered that information needed to be provided regarding the parameters of the questions to be asked of interviewees in order that they might be able to provide informed answers.

To preserve the independence of the information-gathering stage it was considered vital that such interviews would be conducted outside of the formal meeting setting and that these would be arranged at a date and time to suit the interviewees.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That officers be requested to provide the information detailed above and forward it to Members of the Panel at the earliest opportunity.
- (ii) That the following office-holders be invited to interview;

<b>Offices</b>
Leader
Deputy Leader
Senior Cabinet Member
Portfolio Cabinet Member
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate)
Chairman, Development Control Board
Shadow Leader
Shadow Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate)
Shadow Deputy Leader
Shadow Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Services)
Chairman, Best Value Review Committee
Chairman, Audit and Standards Board
Leader/representative of the Independent Group
Backbench Member – Labour Group
Backbench Member – Conservative Party

## **6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Panel be held at 2pm on Thursday 12 December. (Please see note below).

The meeting closed at 10.55am.

A Murdoch  
Chairman

**Note.** Subsequently, the date of the next meeting was changed to 2pm on 10 December 2002 and it was agreed that the interview with the Leader of the Council would be held between 3pm and 5 pm on that day also.