

**A REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES**

**FOR**

**DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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**A REPORT BY THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

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## **REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES**

### **FOR**

### **DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

#### **Part 1 Summary of Recommendations:**

##### **1. Summary**

The following is a summary of the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel convened by Dartford Borough Council to consider the current level of allowances and advise the Authority on a revised scheme of allowances for Members. The Council initiated these proceedings as required under Section 99 of the Local Government (Organisation and Standards Act) 2001. This requires all authorities to create and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances. The presumption behind this requirement is that new roles for Members require appropriate allowances to support the different responsibilities and ways of working.

##### **2. Recommendations:**

- 1. The basic allowance of £3,813 be paid to all Councillors.**
- 2. No allowance be payable for membership of Outside Bodies.**
- 3. That reasonable travel expenses for attendance of Council representatives at meetings of Outside Bodies outside the Borough should be paid at the agreed rate.**
- 4. The allowance for travel within the Borough continue as a separately identifiable allowance, payable at the appropriate rate for each Member dependant upon home address.**
- 5. The travel bands remain as set out within the existing scheme but that the ratio of travel allowance paid for each band be adjusted such that Councillors living within Band B receive twice the travel allowance of Councillors living within Band A and that Councillors living within Band C should receive four times the travel allowance of those living in Band A. (as detailed at paragraph 11.6)**
- 6. The Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Leader be £22,880 per annum.**
- 7. The SRA for the following offices be as shown below:**

<b>Office</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Deputy Leader</b>	<b>13,728</b>
<b>Senior Cabinet Member</b>	<b>10,296</b>

<b>Portfolio Cabinet Member</b>	<b>6,864</b>
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8. The SRAs for the following offices be as shown below:

<b>Chairman of:</b>	<b>SRA £</b>
<b>Development Control Board</b>	<b>1,900</b>
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate)</b>	<b>1,100</b>
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Services)</b>	<b>1,100</b>
<b>Best Value Review Committee</b>	<b>1,650</b>
<b>Audit and Standards Committee</b>	<b>550</b>

9. The SRA for Vice-Chairmanships of the above-mentioned committees and Board should be set at 60% of the Chairman's allowance.
10. The SRA for the roles of Chairmen of both the Appeals and Licensing Panels be set at £500 per annum.
11. The SRA for the role of Shadow Leader be set at 30% of the Leader's SRA.
12. The SRA for the role of Deputy Shadow Leader be set at 60% of the Shadow Leader's SRA.
13. All Shadow Chairmen be remunerated at the same rate as the relevant Vice-Chairmen.
14. All Group Leaders be paid a special responsibility allowance of £200 per annum for each Member of their Group, excepting themselves.
15. There be no limit on the number of special responsibility allowances paid to any one person. However, the Panel strongly recommends that the Council consider that the offices be spread as widely amongst Members as possible.
16. That a rate of £11 per hour, subject to the Council approving a suitable scheme to audit such payments, be payable to those Councillors who meet the requirements of an agreed scheme.
17. That a rate of £5 per hour be payable, be payable for the care of children up to the age of 15 years, irrespective of the number of children, subject to the Council approving a suitable scheme to audit such payments to those Councillors who meet the requirements of an agreed scheme.
18. That the scheme should not be allowed to be devalued by inflation and therefore that the scheme be uplifted annually in accordance with an appropriate inflationary index.

### 3. INFORMATION

Dartford Borough comprises the town of Dartford and 8 parishes: Stone, Bean, Darent, Longfield and New Barn, Southfleet, Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley, Swanscombe and Greenhithe, and Wilmington. The 85,700 residents are represented by 44 Councillors who are elected every four years.

### 4. The Decision-Making Process

#### The Executive

- 4.1 The executive part of the Council is the Cabinet which is responsible for most day-to-day decisions in particular, for proposing the policy framework and budget to the Council and for implementing the Council's policy framework. The Cabinet is also the focus for community planning and leads the search for best value.
- 4.2 The Cabinet is appointed by the Leader of the Council drawn from the majority group on the Council and comprises Councillors who hold office for a municipal year commencing with the Annual Meeting of the Council in May. Decisions of the Cabinet are reached collectively (ie by all Cabinet Members present at the meeting) in public, except where confidential and/or exempt matters are being discussed.
- 4.3 The Leader of the Council allocates specific roles and responsibilities to Members of the Cabinet. These roles and responsibilities are referred to as 'portfolios' (with no decision making powers).
- 4.4 Decisions of the Cabinet and the reasons for those decisions are recorded and made publicly available together with background papers. When major decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Cabinet's forward plan (Article 13 refers) insofar as these decisions can be anticipated. The Cabinet has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If the Cabinet wishes to make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework this must be referred to the General Assembly of the Council to decide. The Cabinet may make an urgent decision which is outside the budget or policy framework agreed by the Council only in cases of special urgency having first obtained the agreement of the Chairman of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Mayor. The Chairman of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or the Mayor) must agree that the matter is urgent and that the proposed decision is reasonable.
- 4.5 Accountable decision-making within the Cabinet requires the following:
  - For the Cabinet to give advance notice of and consult on its key decisions;
  - For the public to have enhanced access to papers and decision-making;
  - For decisions made by the Cabinet to be recorded and published together with the reasons for the decisions and the background papers.

## Overview and Scrutiny

- 4.6 Overview and scrutiny committees have varied and powerful roles in
- policy development and review;
  - publicly holding the executive ( the Cabinet) to account;
  - examining matters of wider local concern.
- 4.7 There are two overview and scrutiny committees (Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate) and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Services)) and a Best Value Review Committee which support the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole. The purpose of these Committees is to take an independent role (through Terms of Reference agreed by the Council) in the Council's efforts to improve continuously the performance of its services and functions and the policies and strategies within which the Council operates.
- 4.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees monitor the decisions of the Cabinet. Within certain guidelines contained in the Committees' Protocol, the Committees can "call-in" a Cabinet decision which has not yet been implemented and may "draw down" Cabinet decisions after implementation. The "call-in" and "draw down" mechanisms enable the Committees to consider whether Cabinet decisions are appropriate and sound.
- 4.9 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees may review and make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or to the General Assembly of the Council and assist in the development of future policies and strategies. The Committees may be consulted by the Cabinet or the Council on forth-coming issues and the development of policy.
- 4.10 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees allow citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public enquiries into matters of local concern. These lead to reports and recommendations, which advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies and strategies.
- 4.11 Best Value Review Committee is an ordinary committee of the Council with the function of carrying out best value reviews and reporting to the Cabinet. It is a matter for local choice who in the Council carries out best value reviews.
- 4.12 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Best Value Review Committee are appointed by the Council, with each Committee comprising a number of Councillors (with an appropriate political balance in membership) who hold office for a municipal year commencing with the Annual Meeting of the Council in May. Decisions of the Committees are reached in public, except where confidential and/or exempt matters are being discussed.
- 4.13 Members of the Cabinet cannot be Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 4.14 Other Committees, Boards and Panels of the Council  
There are a number of functions (such a development control, licensing and other quasi judicial functions), which cannot be the responsibility of the Cabinet. These functions are delegated by the Council to other Committees, Boards and Panels and Officers of the Council. These delegations are set out in more detail in Article 8 of this Constitution.

## Outside Bodies

4.15 Cabinet Members have a role to play as the Council's representatives on key local and regional public bodies where joint service planning and operational policy is affected and also on key national bodies. However, where the Council has more than one nominee the appointment of a non-executive (non-Cabinet) Member to the second place is encouraged although sometimes the Council's representation is best secured through Officer appointments. Other appointments to Outside Bodies are filled by non-executive (non-Cabinet) Members and non-elected representatives on the basis of the following expectations;

- The Council will consider the expertise, knowledge and interests of Members when considering appointments to Outside Bodies;
- Representatives on Outside Bodies will be properly briefed and required to feedback to the appropriate part of the structure;
- Representation on an Outside Body should be taken seriously and every effort made to attend regularly;
- Representatives should give a good impression of the Council;
- Regular contacts should be made with representatives of the Council on Outside Bodies.

4.16 To secure maximum Member representation on School Governing Bodies, the Council appoints Cabinet and non-executive Members.

### Non-executive (non-Cabinet) Councillors

4.17 The role of a non-executive Councillor is:

- To represent the community's interest to the Council through the Overview and Scrutiny and Best Value Review Committees;
- To monitor the Cabinet through the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- To advise and to be consulted by the Cabinet through the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- To review policies and develop proposals for change through the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- To serve on Committees, Boards and Panels of the Council.

4.18 The Council is a body corporate and as such individual Councillors have a collective responsibility for the Council's functions. This collective responsibility extends to a duty to ensure that the Council complies with the law and does not act unlawfully. Councillors must consciously think whether what is being done under delegated powers is appropriate.

4.19 The arrangements under which non-executive Councillors can discharge their responsibilities are through;

- Holding the Cabinet to account for the discharge of its executive functions by scrutinising decisions before and after implementation;
- The right of any 5 Members to requisition a meeting of the Council;
- Accessibility of documents through the access to information legislation;
- The power through the General Assembly of the Council to appoint and remove the Cabinet.

## **5. The Council's Staff**

The Council employs professional and manual staff referred to as 'Officers'.

The Council has a professional Head of Paid Service.

Officers are accountable to the Council as an organisation and serve all Members of the Council. Officers give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of the Council's services. Some Officers (the Head of Paid Service the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer) have a specific duty to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely. A code of practice (the Member/Officer Protocol) governs the relationship between Officers and Members of the Council.

All Officers of the Council have a responsibility to act fairly, honestly, in good faith and in an impartial way to meet the specified objectives of the Council and must not place themselves in a position that would create the least suspicion of being influenced by improper motives. The Employee Code of Conduct outlines existing laws regulations and conditions of service and provides further guidance to assist Officers in their day-to-day work, particularly in light of the challenges faced in the new and more commercially orientated environment of local government.

## **6. Funding and Service Delivery**

The Council's income comes from various sources, grants from central government; Council Tax; and income from fees for services such as car parking, building control and leisure facility admission. Dartford Borough Council currently operates within a two-tier system with the Kent County Council providing services such as education, police and fire services, social services and strategic planning. Borough Councils such as Dartford provide services more important at local level such as planning control, cemeteries, environmental health and housing.

## **7. Development in the Borough**

Dartford is the major part of the Kent Thames-side growth area within the Thames Gateway, which has been established to regenerate the economy of the area. Dartford Borough Council has a leading role in identifying and supporting suitable projects. A notable success has been the opening of Bluewater. Current and proposed projects include major, mixed use housing and employment schemes and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, with an international and domestic station.



NB. *Sections 4 to 7 are taken from the Council's Constitution.*

## Part 3 Methodology, The Panel and Terms of Reference

### 8. Methodology

8.1 The Panel met formally on three occasions and informally on numerous occasions between 14 November 2002 and 14 May 2003 to review a wide range of information and interview a cross section of Members. Information from Dartford Borough Council officers was sought and given. All Members were invited to provide written submissions for the Panel's consideration to ensure that no Member was denied a voice in the review process. The Panel also took into account various Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) reports from other local authorities. Furthermore the Panel was also aware of the advice and statutory guidance arising from the Local Government Act 2000 Section 99 and the Department Environment for Transport and Regions (DETR) guidance which all Panels must have regard to. It is from these processes and deliberations that the Panel has arrived at the recommendations set out below.

8.2 Panel meetings were held in the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre and at the Manor Gatehouse, Dartford. All formal meetings of the Panel were held in the public forum while information gathering meetings and interviews with councillors were held in private. The Panel invited the following officers to support the Panel:-

Sheri Green, Director of Central Services  
Steve Brooks, Head of Finance and Human Resources  
Deborah Lennen-Wood, Member Services Manager

8.3 The Panel's deliberations fell into three parts:-

- Review of background information particularly IRP reports from other authorities and evidence of pay rates for different sectors and areas.
- Interviews with Councillors Cook, Hamilton, James, Kite, Lawson, Leadbeater, May, Mrs Muckle, J Muckle, Prout, Read and V Stock, 12 in total.
- Review of oral and written information supplied by Members.

8.4 The Panel took the view that its task was not simply to arrive at a set of numbers but rather to make recommendations that could be supported by a logical framework that was transparent, simple and easily understood both by Members and the public.

8.5 However, it was accepted that there was no definitive answer to Members allowances and the issue is both complex and contentious as Councillors themselves have voiced various opinions on the matter. The Panel understands that its recommendations on allowances may seem insufficient to some and generous to others. In the context of the latter there remains no compulsion by Members to accept any of these allowances. Should any Member feel that public service for whatever reason, should not be remunerated at the

levels approved by the Council, then any of the allowances may be refused altogether or in part.

- 8.6 The Panel has set out the reasons for the recommendations in this report so that Members can understand the approach taken to arrive at its conclusions. The Panel's recommendations are not binding upon the Council although it is hoped that the Council will accept the logic associated with the rationale.

**9. The Panel:**

The Panel comprised the following members:

Mr Alan Murdoch  
Rev Malcolm Cooper  
Mr Derek Higgs  
Mr Alan Thrussell

The Panel would like to record its gratitude to the following:-

All Members participating in the review process  
Sheri Green, Director of Central Services  
Steve Brooks, Head of Finance and Human Resources  
Deborah Lennen-Wood, Member Services Manager

**10. Terms of Reference:**

The Panel's terms of reference, as handed down by the General Assembly of the Council, were recorded and accepted by the Panel at its meeting on 29 November 2002. The Panel was charged with:

As described in the document – Independent Remuneration Panel (reporting to the Council). Terms of Reference Delegated Functions.

1. To make recommendations to the Council as to:-
  - (a) The amount of the basic allowance payable to elected Members.
  - (b) The categories of elected Members who should receive a special responsibility allowance and the amount of such an allowance.
  - (c) Whether the Members allowance scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and if it does, the rate of childcare and dependent carers allowance and the means by which it is determined.
2. To review the current Members Allowance scheme and to make written recommendations to the General Assembly of the Council for a new Scheme or revision to the existing scheme as considered necessary and appropriate, taking into account the following :

- a) The need for the Council to pay a basic allowance and the discretion to pay special responsibility allowances.
  - b) The various roles and responsibilities of elected Members and the commitment of time and other resources involved.
  - c) The differences between the level of responsibility and time commitment of different Members roles.
  - d) Schemes operating elsewhere in similar local Authorities, particularly but not exclusively, other authorities in the Thames Gateway.
  - e) The levels of remuneration paid for other types of public duties.
  - f) The need to attract and retain elected Members of the highest calibre, who are representative of the local population, particularly in terms of race, age, and gender.
3. To provide informal advice on expenses, gratuities and allowances not referred to in these Terms of Reference.

## Part 4 Allowances

The process by which the Panel set about its recommendations and its conclusions are set out below. The Panel felt that the allowances should be based on a meaningful calculation and information was sought which provided the figures from which to work.

### 11. Arriving at the Basic Allowance

#### 11.1 Rate for the Job:

The Panel considered the following information sources in order to determine an appropriate rate per hour for performing the duties of a councillor.

	<b>Per day</b>	<b>per hour</b>
Local Government Association Rate April 2000	£109	£13.63
New Earnings Survey Current Rate (Dartford area)	£88	£11

**The Panel considers that a rate of £11 per hour is the appropriate rate.**

#### 11.2 Time Commitment

The Panel wanted to come to a view as to the number of hours which a councillor might reasonably be expected to commit to their basic duties as a councillor. The Panel considered information produced by the Association of Local Government and by the (then) DETR in 1998 along with information supplied by sitting Dartford Borough Councillors.

<b>Time Commitment</b>	<b>Hours Per Week</b>	<b>Hours Per Month</b>	<b>Days Per Month</b>	<b>Days Per Year</b>
Association of Local Government (ALG)	15	60	7.5	90
1998 DETR Estimation	11.6	46.4	5.8	69.6
Interviews with DBC Members (average)	10	40	5	60

**The Panel considers that 10 hours should be taken as the average number of hours per week needed to discharge the duties of a councillor.**

### 11.3 The Voluntary Element

The Panel felt that an element of the time commitment considered above should not be remunerated but given freely by the Member. This view was reinforced strongly by Members interviewed, some of whom were uncomfortable with the principle of remuneration, all of whom expressed the view that they did not expect allowances to be based hour for hour on the time that they spent on Council business and on behalf of their community. This element of ‘unremunerated’ time commitment is described by the Panel as the ‘voluntary element’.

In deciding the level of the voluntary element for Dartford the Panel took into account the wide variety of treatments adopted by other schemes, the interviews held with sitting Members and representations made by sitting Members.

**The Panel considers that the level of the Voluntary Element should be set at the 33.3% for DBC.**

### 11.4 Calculation of Basic Allowance

	<b>Hours</b>
Time commitment	10
Rate for the Job	£11
x 52 weeks	£5,720
Less voluntary element of 33%	£3,813

**The Panel recommends that a basic allowance of £3,813 be paid to all Councillors.**

### 11.5 Outside Bodies:

The Panel felt attendance at Outside Body meetings to be part of the community work of the Council. It was recognised that attendees, other than those representing the Council, generally attended on a voluntary basis and were not remunerated.

The Panel acknowledged the potential difficulty of finding Members to accept nominations to Outside Bodies but nonetheless felt that no additional allowance should be paid to Dartford Borough Council nominees for undertaking these duties. This view was supported by research which indicated that other local authorities did not pay a separate payment for outside body membership/attendance.

It was recognised that some organisations, notably the CHC, met frequently, but the Panel did not consider that a special case could be made in respect of membership of this body.

**The Panel therefore recommended that no allowance be payable for membership of Outside Bodies.**

**It was felt that reasonable travel expenses for attendance of Council representatives at meetings of Outside Bodies outside the Borough should be paid at the agreed rate and the Panel recommends accordingly.**

#### 11.6 Fax, Telephone and Travel

The Panel believe that the Basic Allowance should be inclusive of fax, telephone and other ancillary expenses eg. stationery and postage.

The Panel considered whether the Basic Allowance should be inclusive also of travel but, the principle of the current separate travel allowance was generally considered by Members to be fair albeit, in monetary terms, insufficient for some.

**The Panel recommends that the allowance for travel within the Borough continue as a separately identifiable allowance, payable at the appropriate rate for each Member dependant upon home address.**

The Panel further considered the geographical distance bands adopted for travel allowance within the existing scheme and also the likely costs to be incurred by Councillors in attending meetings, taking into account both mileage rates and the cost of public transport and taxi fares.

**The Panel recommends that the travel bands remain as set out within the existing scheme as set out below but that the ratio of travel allowance paid for each band be adjusted such that Councillors living within Band B receive twice the travel allowance of Councillors living within Band A and that Councillors living within Band C should receive four times the travel allowance of those living in Band A:**

**Band A - £51.50**

For anyone living in Brent, Heath, Joyce Green, Littlebrook, Newtown, Princes, Town and West Hill Wards.

**Band B - £103**

For anyone living in Joydens Wood Ward or the Parishes of Bean, Darenth, Stone, Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley and Wilmington.

**Band C - £206**

For anyone living in the Parishes of Longfield and New Barn, Southfleet and Swanscombe and Greenhithe or outside the Borough Boundary.

#### 12. Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs):

The Panel have concluded that in the context of the decision-making process at DBC and the significant additional contribution made by some Members by reason of their offices, Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) should be paid for particular offices.

13. **Group Leaders**

The Panel considered that the Leaders of all political parties represented on the Council should receive an SRA that reflected the number of Members belonging to their Group. This payment would be a recognition of the counselling, support and advice given by Leaders to their members and of the requirement to 'manage' the Group. The rate was calculated at £200 per member. This form of allowance had been shown in research to be a common feature of a number of allowance schemes and the recommended rate represented approximately 9 hours one to one contact per annum for each Group member with the Group Leader at a rate of £22 per hour.

**The Panel therefore recommends that all Group Leaders be paid a special responsibility allowance of £200 per annum for each Member of their Group, excepting themselves.**

14. **Leader of the Council's Allowance:**

The Cabinet lead by the Leader will exercise all of the Council's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council, by law or under this Constitution.

The Cabinet and its Members have wide ranging leadership roles in;

- Leading the community planning process and the search for best value with input and advice from Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Best Value Review Committee and any other persons as appropriate;
- Leading the preparation of the Council's policies and budget;
- Take in - year decisions on resources and priorities, together with other stakeholders and partners in the local community, to deliver And implement the budget and policies decided by the General Assembly of the Council; and
- Be the focus for forming partnerships with other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to address local needs.

The Cabinet's leadership role is particularly important in the context of local strategic partnerships to develop and deliver community strategies. Local strategic partnerships are built on existing partnership activity and play a key role in addressing the challenges of neighbourhood renewal.

The Cabinet responds to any recommendations and reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Best Value Review Committee. Where recommendations differ from the Cabinet's policy, the Cabinet must justify the differences and its actions and or change its policy, where necessary, seeking approval from the General Assembly of the Council. The Cabinet aims to respond to the needs and aspirations of local communities, seeking to resolve conflicts through clear leadership.



The Council has adopted a Leader and Cabinet form of local governance. The Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Council and a number of Councillors of the majority political group in office on the Council. The size of the Cabinet is determined by the Council and must consist of not fewer than 3 and not more than 10 Councillors (including the Leader of the Council). The membership of the Cabinet is determined by the Leader of the Council.

The Council at its Annual Meeting in May decides the size of the Cabinet and notes the appointments to the Cabinet by the Leader of the Council.

In the light of the views expressed at interviews, the Panel gave consideration to the various methods of fulfilling the role of Leader, which would require differing levels of time commitment.

#### 14.1 **Proposed Allowance**

The evidence provided by the Leader of the Council was that he is a 'full-time' Leader, generally working more than 40 hours per week in this role. The Panel acknowledge this time commitment but felt that it was in part due to his style of leadership. Having heard various representations the Panel decided that for remunerative purposes they would base the calculations on a total of 40 hours per week spent on Council business. However, the Panel also recognised that the Basic Allowance took into account a time commitment of 10 hours per week and therefore based its calculations for the SRA on 30 hours per week spent on the leadership role.

The Panel felt that the complexity of the role, level of responsibility and level of influencing required that the rate per hour should be double that of the basic level i.e. £22 per hour.

**The Panel therefore recommend that the following calculation be proposed in respect of the SRA for the Leader:**

**30 hours x 52 weeks x £22 per hour = £34,320**

**Reduced by 33.3% Voluntary Element = £22,880 per annum**

#### 15. **The Cabinet**

The Panel considered the relative weights of responsibility of the offices held by Members of the Cabinet. Additionally, the Panel considered the number of hours required to carry out the functions of these offices. However, in view of the differing styles and responsibility levels (eg chairmanships, portfolio responsibilities etc) that were highlighted during the interviews, and, having considered other local authority schemes,

**the Panel recommend that the following percentages be applied to the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance to determine the SRA applicable for the listed offices:**

Office of :	Percentage of Leader's SRA	£ SRA
<b>Deputy Leader</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>13,728</b>
<b>Senior Cabinet Member</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>10,296</b>
<b>Portfolio Cabinet Member</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>6,864</b>

## 16. Chairmanships

The weight of responsibility of chairing meetings, the qualitative preparation required and the information handling and people skills required were recognised and the Panel felt that the level of the allowances should reflect that the role fell between the basic allowance and that recommended for Leadership of the Council. However, the Panel considered it appropriate to recommend a higher hourly rate in respect of the Development Control Board in view of the added weight of decision-making and the technical nature of the subject matter dealt with by the Board. The proposed rates, which were based on figures supplied by the Office for National Statistics are shown below.

£ per hour	Committee/Board
19	Development Control
16.50	Overview and Scrutiny (Corporate) Overview and Scrutiny (Services) Best Value Review and Audit & Standards

The Panel therefore recommend the SRA's for those offices, based on the number of hours which the Panel believe is reasonable to fulfil the role, is as shown below:

Chairmanship of:	Meeting Attendance plus Preparation/Reading Hours per annum	Hourly Rate	Less voluntary element at 33.3%	Total recommended SRA £
<b>Development Control Board</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1,900</b>
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16.50</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1,100</b>
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Services)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16.50</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1,100</b>
<b>Best Value Review</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>16.50</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1,650</b>

<b>Committee</b>				
<b>Audit and Standards Committee</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>16.50</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>550</b>

The Panel considered the demanding role of Chairmen of the Licensing and Appeals Panels and recognised that the decisions of these bodies could be subject to external challenge by way of appeal. However, due to the ad hoc nature of their meetings it was not possible to calculate an SRA using the methodology above.

**The Panel therefore recommends that the Chairmen of both Panels should receive £500 SRA.**

Possible changes to the arrangements for licensing were highlighted and the Panel considered that, should these occur and have a significant bearing on the work of the Licensing Panel and its Chairman, this Panel should be requested to review the above SRA.

#### **17. Vice-Chairmanships**

In view of the possibility of Vice-Chairman having to assume the Chairman's role, sometimes at short notice, **the Panel considered that the SRA should be 60% of the Chairman's allowance and recommend accordingly.** In order to fulfil the role the Panel recognised the need for Vice-Chairman to be fully informed and that the preparation requirements were often not vastly different from that of the Chairmen. The informal interviews highlighted the reliance which chairmen placed on their Vice-Chairmen.

#### **18. Shadow Leader**

Having considered the information obtained from the informal interviews and other local authority schemes **the Panel considered that the appropriate SRA for the role of Shadow Leader was 30% of the Leader's SRA and recommend accordingly.** It was recognised that this role should also attract the Group Leader's Allowance detailed in paragraph 8.1.

#### **19. Deputy Shadow Leader**

The weight of responsibility of this post was considered to be directly comparable to that of the Leader's Deputy, without the weight of responsibility inherent in forming the administration. **The Panel therefore recommend that the SRA for this role be set at 60% of the Shadow Leader's SRA.**

#### **20. Other Shadow Roles**

The role of Shadow Chairmen was considered to be significant, especially in respect of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and **the Panel recommend that all Shadow Chairmen should be remunerated at the same rate as the relevant Vice-Chairmen.**

## 21. Payment for multiple offices

The Panel considered that there should be no limit on the number of special responsibility allowances paid to any one person. However, the Panel strongly recommends that the Council consider that the offices be spread as widely amongst Members as possible.

## 22. Carers

The Panel recommends that two carer's allowances should be introduced in order that those with dependent children or other relatives are not excluded from seeking to become councillors. The framework for the allowances should be based on an hourly amount which reflects the local rates paid for the care of dependent relatives. The Panel's research indicated local rates ranged between :

£10.19 per hour before 9pm	)	Minimum of 2 hours
£13.00 per hour after 9pm	)	
£10.15 per hour before 10pm	)	No minimum booking
£11.17 per hour after 10 pm	)	
£13.64 per hour	)	No minimum booking

**The Panel therefore recommend a rate of £11 per hour, subject to the Council approving a suitable scheme to audit such payments to facilitate attendance at official meetings of the Council.**

### The Local Child Care Rate.

With regard to child care, a number of agencies were contacted, including a. A national charitable trust which is operated by the National Childcare Campaign whose rate is £4.50 per hour for weekdays and £5.50 per hour for Saturdays, However, there is also an annual membership fee of £51 and a £4 booking fee (charged against a credit card) for each booking. Additional quotes were obtained and they ranged from £4.50 per hour to £6 per hour, all with a minimum booking period of 4 hours. Generally there is no charge for up to 4 additional children but one organisation charged a £10 fee if more than one child is to be cared for.

**The Panel recommends a flat rate of £5 per hour be payable for the care of children up to the age of 15 years and irrespective of the number of children, subject to the Council approving a suitable scheme to audit such payments to facilitate attendance at official meetings of the Council.**

### **23. Inflationary Uplift**

**The Panel considered that the scheme should not be allowed to be devalued by inflation and therefore that the scheme be uplifted annually in accordance with an appropriate inflationary index.**

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS CONSULTED**

New Council Constitutions. Guidance on Members' Allowances for Local Authorities in England – April 2001.

Dartford Borough Council Constitution 2002/03, including the current Members' Allowances Scheme.

Office for National Statistics New Earnings Survey – April 2003

Reports from Independent Remuneration Panel of Local Authorities:

Ashford Borough Council

London Borough of Bexley

Gravesham Borough Council

Hertsmere Borough Council

Kent County Council

Borough of Spelthorne

Thanet District Council

Imbucon Report to Dartford Borough Council - 2002

## Appendix A

### Summary of Recommendations

**Basic Allowance** (All Councillors) - £3813per annum

#### Travel Allowance

For travel to meetings within the borough, fixed sums based on home addresses are recommended as follows:

**Band A - £51.50**

For anyone living in Brent, Heath, Joyce Green, Littlebrook, Newtown, Princes, Town and West Hill Wards.

**Band B - £103**

For anyone living in Joydens Wood Ward or the Parishes of Bean, Darenth, Stone, Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley and Wilmington.

**Band C - £206**

For anyone living in the Parishes of Longfield and New Barn, Southfleet and Swanscombe and Greenhithe or outside the Borough Boundary.

#### Special Responsibility Allowances

	£
<b>Leader</b>	<b>22,880</b>
<b>Group Leader's Allowance (per member ,excluding Leader)</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Deputy Leader</b>	<b>13,728</b>
<b>Senior Cabinet Member</b>	<b>10,296</b>
<b>Portfolio Cabinet Member</b>	<b>6,864</b>
<b>Group Leader's Allowance (per member excluding the Leader)</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Chairman Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate)</b>	<b>1,100</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate)</b>	<b>660</b>
<b>Chairman Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Services)</b>	<b>1,100</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman Overview and Scrutiny (Services)</b>	<b>660</b>
<b>Chairman Best Value Review Committee</b>	<b>1,650</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman Best Value Review Committee</b>	<b>990</b>
<b>Chairman Development Control Board</b>	<b>1,900</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman Development Control Board</b>	<b>1,140</b>
<b>Chairman Audit and Standards Committee</b>	<b>550</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman Audit and Standards Committee</b>	<b>330</b>
<b>Chairman Licensing Panel</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman Licensing</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Chairman Appeals Panel</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman Appeals Panel</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Shadow Leader</b>	<b>6,864</b>
<b>Shadow Deputy Leader</b>	<b>4,118</b>

<b>Shadow Chairman Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate)</b>	<b>660</b>
<b>Shadow Chairman Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Services)</b>	<b>660</b>
<b>Shadow Chairman Best Value Review Committee</b>	<b>990</b>
<b>Shadow Development Control Board</b>	<b>1,140</b>
<b>Leader Independent Group</b>	<b>-</b>