

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES

'Way Forward' Policy Consultation: July 2009 Response Form

You are invited to complete the responses below (explanatory details in the accompanying Consultation Paper), indicating agreement or otherwise to the Panel's determinations and recommendations for 2010/2011 and proposals for 2011/2012 and beyond, giving any further comment you wish.

You need not give your name, but it would help in the analysis to know your council and whether you hold special responsibility within your council.

Name Mr. David Michael

Council Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Special Responsibility Post (please detail the post held)

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Common Issues of Terminology and Determination

Proposed Panel Determinations for 2010/2011

1 That the "Basic Allowance" be referred to as "Basic Salary" (denoting recompense for time, worth and responsibility rather than entitlement as at present).

Agree Disagree

2 That the annual up rating index for Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowance and Co-optees Allowance continues to be the projected public sector pay award and that the Retail Price Index (RPI) continues to be used for the annual up rating of the Care Allowance and the Subsistence Allowance.

Agree Disagree

Comment - It is considered that the uprating of Basic Allowance SRA and Co-optees Allowance should be on the basis of the actual public sector pay award not projected with backdating as for staff. The RPI

should be used for uprating Care and Subsistence Allowances with reference made to the particular index e.g. the “all items” RPI.

Proposed for 2011/2012 and Beyond

3 That the Panel prescribes the level of Basic Allowance to be payable in Wales (in place of setting the maximum as at present).

Agree Disagree

4 That the Panel prescribes the level of Leaders’ Special Responsibility Allowance to be payable in Wales and any consequent matrix of allowances for special responsibility.

Agree Disagree

5 That the Panel monitors the implementation of members’ remuneration schemes by councils.

Agree Disagree

Comment – The new rules should preserve Members’ discretion in claiming either nothing or part of an allowance.

Principles of Councillors’ Remuneration

6 Do you agree the Principles the Panel wishes to adopt?

Agree Disagree

Comment.....
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Basic Allowance

Proposed Panel Determinations for 2010/2011

7 That the Basic Allowance be reset in line with the All Wales full-time male and female median salary which in 2008/2009 was £22,115 pa. In this alignment, remunerated public service set at the equivalent of three working days per week, results in an (indicative) Basic Allowance of £13,269 pa.

Agree Disagree

8 That the Basic Allowance for 2010/2011 be set at the equivalent of three working days derived from the 2009/2010 All Wales full-time male and female median salary when advised.

Agree Disagree

9 That the Basic Allowance for 2010/2011 be uprated in line with the public sector pay increase when advised.

Agree Disagree

10 That the “public sector discount” be reconceptualised to denote the unremunerated time committed in excess of three working days per week.

Agree Disagree

11 That the support expenses element of around £1,000 included in the £13,356 maximum Basic Allowance for 2009/2010 be discontinued (**note:** the 2008/2009 alignment of £13,269 does **not** include the support element of £1,000).

Agree Disagree

Comment- [Question 9 does not appear to be comparable with the proposal in paragraph 2.1 that uprating be by reference to “projected” increases. The Council’s view is that the increase should be by reference to the actual settlement. In relation to Questions 7 & 10 in particular it should be recognized that Councillors are on “call” 24 hours a day 7 days a week – their responsibilities are full time. The support element of the current allowance is not well known nor understood and the Council agrees that it should be deleted for clarity.](#)

Proposed Panel Recommendations for 2010/2011

12 That councils note the discontinuation of support expenses included in councillors’ Basic Allowance and consider direct provision to meet such supports as are necessary for the efficient discharge of councillor duties.

Agree Disagree

- 13 That councils consider negotiating block tax dispensations for their elected membership in respect of office expenses in the councillor's home.

Agree Disagree

- 14 That councils, in association with the WLGA, consider adopt and publish a statement of basic responsibility setting out councillor duties in regard to democratic representation and local governance.

Agree Disagree

- 15 That councils, in association with the WLGA, consider, and where possible implement, mechanisms and formats for the annual reporting of activity, attendance and relevant training for each member, to be placed in the public domain.

Agree Disagree

Comment – [With reference to question 13 the WLGA or WAG should negotiate block tax dispensations with HMRC instead of leaving it to individual local authorities. Local Authorities should be enabled to pay standard set allowances for IT, telephones and office expenses. Otherwise officers may have to examine detailed records of telephone calls or office purchases thus creating much bureaucracy.](#)

Proposed for 2011/2012 and Beyond

- 16 That adoption of a basic responsibility statement for councillors becomes obligatory.

Agree Disagree

- 17 That annual reporting in the public domain of each councillor's activity, attendance and relevant training becomes obligatory.

Agree Disagree

Comment – [Cost of monitoring.](#)

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

Proposed Panel Determinations for 2010/2011

18 That, for the purpose of determining the scope and complexity of Special Responsibility Allowances, councils be grouped by population as follows:

Group A: (population over 200,000)
Cardiff; Rhondda Cynon Taf; Swansea

Group B: (population 100,000 to 199,999)
Bridgend; Caerphilly; Carmarthenshire; Conwy;
Flintshire; Gwynedd; Neath Port Talbot; Newport;
Pembrokeshire; Powys; Vale of Glamorgan;
Wrexham

Group C: (population below 100,000)
Blaenau Gwent; Ceredigion; Denbighshire;
Isle of Anglesey; Merthyr Tydfil; Monmouthshire;
Torfaen

Agree Disagree

Comment.....
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19 That, for the purpose of determining the level of responsibility within councils, the following responsibility bands will apply:

Band 1 Leaders of councils in a leader and cabinet executive
Chairs of Boards in councils operating alternative arrangements

Band 2 Members of Executives in leader and cabinet executives
Members of Boards in councils operating alternative arrangements

Band 3 Leader of the largest Opposition Group
Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees
Chairs of Planning; Chairs of Licensing;
Chairs of Audit

Band 4 Leaders of other political groups (as defined in the

2002 Regulations).

The Panel will consider specific requests from councils for a SRA outside of those set out in this matrix

Agree Disagree

Comment – [The Council does not support the removal of SRAs for Vice Chairs and notes that there is no provision for chairs of appeal committees which can be quite onerous. Otherwise the Council supports the proposal.](#)

20 That, in line with the population grouping of councils, the Panel will set the total amount available for the remuneration of members of cabinets and boards, with each council setting the individual remuneration of each cabinet/board member up to the total amount identified.

Agree Disagree

21 That the Panel will use multiples (varying with population grouping) of the All Wales full-time male and female median earnings in the 2009/2010 index when available, as the baseline for setting Leaders/Chairs Special Responsibility Allowances (£22,115 in the 2008/2009 index).

Agree Disagree

22 That the Panel will set the remuneration for Deputy Leaders/Vice Chairs at 65% of the Leaders' remuneration in each population grouping.

Agree Disagree

23 That the Panel will set the remuneration for Cabinet/Board members as a percentage of the Leaders' remuneration in each population grouping.

Agree Disagree

24 That the Panel will use multiples of the new Basic Allowance derived from the 2009/2010 index when available (£13,269 in the 2008/2009 index) as the baseline for setting a single SRA applicable across all Welsh unitary councils for the functional roles of chairs of Audit, Licensing, Planning and Scrutiny Committees, and leaders of the largest and other political groups.

Agree Disagree

25 That the Panel will publish a consolidated total of Basic Salary + Special Responsibility Allowance as the remuneration for Leaders and all special responsibility post holders.

Agree Disagree

26 That the Panel will term this consolidated amount 'Senior Salary' or 'Executive Salary'.

Agree Disagree

Comment – [The Council feels that there is some lack of clarity in the report as to whether the Panel propose to set the remuneration for Cabinet Members or only the maximum. Please see the comparison between Paragraphs 5.15 of the document and 5.22 and, indeed, questions 20 and 23. If the Panel sets the remuneration for Cabinet Members and also the overall budget it will effectively set the number of Cabinet Members. The Council considers that the Panel should only set the maximum remuneration for Cabinet Members and it has been confirmed that this is the Panel's intention.](#)

Proposed Panel Recommendations for 2010/11

27 That all councils publish widely all public service payments received by their members at least once a year. This should include payments and expenses for all public appointments.

Agree Disagree

28 That councils consider whether, consequent on the Panel's decision to remove SRAs from vice-chairs, they can publicly justify any increase in the number of committees attracting a SRA to the 50% maximum.

Agree Disagree

Comment – [The Council would not have any record of payments received by Members from other “public appointments” however defined. Also there is no power requiring Members to declare any payments to them.](#)

Proposed for 2011/2012 and Beyond

29 That the Panel considers further the current 50% limit on special responsibility posts held in councils.

Agree Disagree

Comment- [The Council considers that there is a case for junior executive members as a career development for Members](#)

Care Allowance

Proposed Panel Determinations for 2010/2011

30 That the Care Allowance (set at a maximum of £403 per month for 2009/2010) continues to be available to facilitate all councillor activity, as a contribution towards the costs of caring for adult and child dependants.

Agree Disagree

31 That the Care Allowance be reimbursed only upon the production of receipts from informal and formal carers for actual expenses incurred, up to £403 per month (2009/2010 maximum).

Agree Disagree

Comment – [The Council considers that only payment to formal carers should be reimbursed.](#)

Proposed Panel Recommendations for 2010/2011

32 That councils bring the “salary sacrifice scheme” to the attention of the elected membership as an alternative means of assisting with child-care costs.

Agree Disagree

33 That councils consider introducing more flexibility in the scheduling of meetings/meetings cycles to assist councillors with caring responsibilities (and those in less flexible employment).

Agree Disagree

Comment – [Later meetings were not productive in producing greater or wider attendance](#)

Proposed for 2011/2012 and Beyond

34 That consideration be given to discontinuing the Care Allowance as a separate allowance when the Basic Allowance may be at a level which better assists in meeting caring costs.

Agree Disagree

Comment.....
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Co-optees' Allowance

Proposed Panel Determinations for 2010/2011

35 That the annual remuneration for co-optees reflects an expected position of attendance at six meetings. At the levels set for 2009/2010 this would raise the statutory co-optees' allowance to a maximum of £1,200 per year and that for Chairs of Standards Committees to a maximum of £2,230 per year.

Agree Disagree

36 That where independent vice-chairs of Standards Committees carry a demonstrable additional responsibility (usually for Community and Town

Councils) the remuneration be based on an expected position of attendance at seven meetings. This would result in an annual allowance of a maximum of £1,400.

Agree Disagree

Comment – [Local Authorities should retain discretion over whether to pay co-optees allowances. Does the use of the word “statutory” in the question denote “voting” or co-optees who are required to be appointed by legislation”? All co-optees are “statutory” in that their appointment derives from statute.](#)

Proposed for 2011/2012 and Beyond

37 That the Panel considers extending the eligibility for the Care Allowance to statutory co-optees.

Agree Disagree

38 That the Panel considers whether statutory co-optees are eligible to claim more than one allowance when they sit on more than one council committee.

Agree Disagree

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

Proposed Panel Determinations for 2010/2011

39 That the Panel maintains the maximum mileage allowance payable at HMRC rates:

*All sizes of private motor vehicle
up to 10,000 miles – 40p per mile
over 10,000 miles – 25p per mile*

passenger supplement – 5p per mile

*private motor cycles – 24p per mile
pedal cycles – 20p per mile*

Agree Disagree

40 That the Panel increases the overnight allowance for London to a maximum of £150.

Agree Disagree

41 That the Panel introduces a new overnight allowance for Cardiff at a maximum of £120.

Agree Disagree

Comment – [Provision needs to be made for a location other than London and Cardiff. Is it intended that the current maximum will apply? The figures should be subject to annual RPI increases. The Council considers that the maxima are on the high side.](#)

Proposed Panel Recommendations for 2010/2011

42 That all arrangements for travel outside the council's area (including overseas travel) be arranged by Member Services.

Agree Disagree

43 That councils negotiate with HMRC for identified named rural wards only, an increase in the 10,000 mileage allowance at the 40p rate.

Agree Disagree

44 That councils consider further whether it is necessary, given the receipt based nature of claims made, to reduce the flexibility intended in setting a daily subsistence rate, by setting fixed cost elements for constituent meals.

Agree Disagree

Comment – [It is not practical for the Council to arrange travel out of area which would include for example visits to the National Assembly 45 minutes away or joint committees in Swansea. The authority books rail travel and accommodation for Members travelling further afield. In relation to question 43 there is difficulty in defining rural](#)

wards by population density measured over the whole ward. Some have compact populations but large uninhabited areas.

Proposed for 2011/2012 and Beyond

45 That consideration be given to removing the ability to claim subsistence allowance for 'approved duty' within a council's boundaries.

Agree Disagree

46 That consideration be given to extending the definition of 'approved duty' to include constituency duties for the purposes of claiming a mileage allowance in council identified named rural wards.

Agree Disagree

47 That consideration be given to developing a Green Travel Policy, including discussing with HMRC more favourable mileage rates for low carbon emission cars, and an increased passenger supplement.

Agree Disagree

Comment.....
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Thank you for your help.

Please return this Response Form by **Friday, 4 September** by email or post to:

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