



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

2.00 PM TUESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2022

***MULTI-LOCATION MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBER, PORT TALBOT
& MICROSOFT TEAMS***

All mobile telephones to be switched to silent for the duration of the meeting

This meeting will be recorded for broadcast via the Council's Internet Site. By participating you are consenting to being filmed and the possible use of those images and sound recordings for training purposes.

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest
2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 3 - 4*)
3. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report - 2023 (*Pages 5 - 32*)
4. Handling Harassment Abuse and Intimidation (*Pages 33 - 40*)
5. Forward Work Programme 22/23 (*Pages 41 - 42*)
6. Urgent Items
Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972

K.Jones
Chief Executive

**Civic Centre
Port Talbot**

23rd November 2022

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

**Vice
Chairperson: Councillor N.Goldup-John**

Councillors: L.Jones, W.Carpenter, J.Hale, M.Harvey,
J.Henton, A.R.Lockyer, A.Lodwig, P.A.Rees,
P.Rogers and C.Williams

Democratic Services Committee

(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

3 October 2022

Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Vice Chairperson: Councillor N.Goldup-John

Councillors: W.Carpenter, J.Hale, M.Harvey, J.Henton, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees and P.Rogers

Officers In Attendance C.Griffiths, S.Curran, C.John and A.Thomas

1. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest declared.

3. **Role and Functions of the Democratic Services Committee**

Members were presented with information relating to the functions of the committee, as presented in the report circulated.

Resolved: That the Democratic Services Committee note the information in relation to its functions and responsibilities.

4. **Multi-location Meeting Policy**

Members were presented with a draft copy of the Multi-location Meeting Policy, as detailed in the report circulated.

Members queried the requirement for cameras to be switched on when speaking remotely. Officers advised that the requirement to be 'seen and heard' was part of the current legislation relating to hybrid working.

Resolved: To note the provisions of the draft Multi-Location Meetings Policy set out in Appendix A and provide comments as appropriate.

To delegate authority to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chair, to prepare and submit a final version of the Multi Locations Meeting Policy to Council for ratification.

5. **Councillor Safety & Wellbeing**

Members were presented with information relating to Councillor Safety & Wellbeing as detailed in the report circulated.

Members were advised that the WLGA are setting up working groups to assist with the development of the programme 'debate not hate,' which is building on the civility in public life campaign.

Members will be kept up to date with any further information that is brought forward.

Resolved: That the Democratic Services Committee note the update in relation to Councillor Safety and Wellbeing and discuss whether there are any additional matters they would wish to seek further reports on.

6. **Forward Work Programme 22/23**

To note for information.

7. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

CHAIRPERSON

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Democratic Services Committee

29th November 2022

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Mr Craig Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All wards

Draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Purpose of the Report:

To advise Members of the Democratic Services Committee of proposals set out by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales which, if implemented, would impact on Member remuneration in the civic year 2023/2024 and to seek the views of the Committee so as to inform the Council's formal response to the draft proposals.

Background:

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales exercises powers set out in various legislation and can also make recommendations. It has the power to set the level of remuneration payable to elected members and co-opted members of local authorities.

Before making its final determinations for the following civic year, the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales publishes a draft report each year and invites comments on its draft proposals. Proposals for 2023/24 are set out in the attached draft report which is before the Committee for consideration today.

The proposed changes that would affect the existing arrangements in this Council are summarised in the table below:

Element of Remunerations	2022/2023	Proposed by IRPW for 2023/2024
Basic Salary	£16,800	£17,600
Leader	£56,700	£59,400
Deputy Leader	£39,906	£41, 580
Executive Members	£34,020	£35,640
Chairs of Committee	£25,593	£26,400
Leader of largest opposition Group	£25,593	£26,400
Leader of other Political Group	£20,540	£21,340
Civic Head	£25,593	£26,400
Deputy Civic Head	£20,540	£21,340

The limits on the number of senior salaries available to the Council remain unchanged as does the threshold for other opposition group leaders to qualify for the other political group leader salary.

There are no further changes proposed to the payments and benefits paid to elected members in relation to:

- Travel and Subsistence
- Care and Personal Assistance
- Sickness Absence
- Corporate Joint Committees
- Assistants to the Executive
- Additional salaries and job sharing arrangements
- Co-opted Members

In addition to the determinations, the IRPW asks 5 consultation questions relating to the Draft Annual Report. It is proposed that the Authority responds as follows.

Question 1

The Panel has continued to use the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office for National Statistics as the benchmark for setting the basic salary of elected members of principal councils. There is a corresponding proportionate increase proposed for the members of National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel has continued to refer to the last published ASHE which was 2021. Do you agree that the basic salary element should be referenced to the ASHE 2021 data?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Any Additional Comments

The Authority believes that linking salaries to the AHSE 2021 ensures an independence and clarity for payments to Councillors. It helps ensure that the former 'Race to the Bottom' approach by Authorities will not be returned to by putting in place a clear mechanism of how salaries are calculated.

Question 2

The Panel has made changes to the payment of costs and expenses of members of community and town councils. Do you agree with the addition of the "consumables" element?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Any Additional Comments

It ensures that Community / Town Councillors are reasonably remunerated for such costs.

Question 3

The Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed to

inform future Determinations. Are you content that the Panel should build this review into its future work plan and build the evidence base to support decisions?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Any Additional Comments

The creation of evidence-based decisions ensures that remuneration levels are appropriate and reasonable.

Question 4

We have significantly reduced the size of the report this year to concentrate on key decisions made and intend to make more use of the website to provide easy to use guidance to users. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet. How would you like to access information and guidance from the Panel? (choose all that apply)

Summary report with links to detailed guidance

Social media

Easy to use guidance notes

Information events

Frequently asked questions

Website

Other

If Other, Please Specify:

The views of the Committee are sought. It is suggested that detailed, easy to use guidance notes together with frequently asked questions on the IRPW website would be welcomed.

Question 5

The Panel intend to undertake a series of engagements with all relevant stakeholders over the next year as part of the development of its forward planning and building of its evidence and research strategy. Have you any comments that would help the Panel shape this engagement? For example, a preference for online polls, the holding of engagement events, virtual or face to face, which groups should be involved, how do we engage with prospective candidates etc.

The views of the Committee are sought

Financial Impacts:

The proposals would be contained within the budget provision.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment as this is a report in respect of governance arrangements only.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are no valley community impacts

Workforce Impacts:

There are no workforce impacts associated with this reports.

Legal Impacts:

The Panel are exercising powers set out in Part 8 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, as amended by the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 and the Local Government (Wales) Act 2015.

Risk Management Impacts:

Any proposed increased to Member remuneration has the potential to attract public criticism at a time of severe and enduring austerity. The Panel acknowledge this in making its proposals but point to the workloads and responsibilities being borne by elected Members as justification for the proposed changes.

Consultation:

All Members were sent a copy of the draft Report on the 11th November 2022. The Panel is required to allow a minimum of 8 weeks between issuing its draft and final Annual Report.

Recommendations:

Members of the Democratic Services Committee are invited to consider the proposals set out in the draft Annual Report and to determine the nature of the Council's formal response to the proposals.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To formulate a response to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' draft Annual Report within the consultation timetable.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft IRPW Annual Report

Appendix 2- Draft IRPW Consultation Questions

List of Background Papers:

None

Officer Contact:

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Democratic Services Manager (Head of Democratic Services)

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Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Annual Report

DRAFT

February 2023

Annual Report 2023 to 2024

Section	Page number
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Section 1: Introduction

Welcome to the draft Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, setting the Decisions and Determinations on pay, expenses and benefits for elected members of principal councils, community and town councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2023.

This is my first Report as Chair of the Panel, having been appointed in June this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Bader, the outgoing Chair, for his service over many years and who led the Panel through two significant pieces of work last year – the [Independent 10 Year Review of the Panel](#) and restoring the link between elected members salaries and average earnings in Wales. I also thank Joe Stockley for his service and I am pleased to announce the appointment of Bev Smith in June this year. Saz Willey, Vice Chair, and Ruth Glazzard have continued to lead the work of the Panel during this period of change and I thank them for the support they have given both Bev and I, as new members.

This year the Panel has continued to focus on and take forward the recommendations from the [Ten-Year Review](#). There are four key strands to this work – review the way we work, set out a three year strategy for the Panel, improve how we communicate and engage with stakeholders and build a robust evidence base to inform decisions.

We have embarked on the recommended Effectiveness Review of the way we work and have started developing our longer-term strategy with a Panel Development Day in August. We have agreed that our mission should be to deliver a fair and accountable reward framework for Wales' communities to have their voices heard within our democracy. We will use our expertise and professionalism to build trusting, sustainable partnerships to inform our work and deliver the changes Wales needs.

We aim to improve the way we communicate and engage both with our immediate stakeholders and the general public. As a first step we now publish a summary of our monthly meetings on our [website](#), but recognise there is much more to do. We aim to improve the accessibility and ease of use of our website and develop it into a more useful resource tool for people. We intend it to be an easy-to-use store of information on our Determinations, and, building on our current [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page, develop our Guidance on how all decisions should be applied.

Whilst we are an independent body, we will continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders engaged in promoting participation in local democracy. We look forward to participating in the forthcoming events hosted by the Welsh Government and Minister for Finance and Local Government, to share knowledge, experience, and best practice across a range of subjects related to the role of a councillor to develop a shared understanding of how we can take collective action to increase diversity in local democracy.

The Welsh Government will soon be publishing research which explores the barriers to standing for elected office and the changing role of the councillor and is

developing a programme of work around the role of the community and town Councils.

The Panel has decided that this year will be a year of consolidation. Major changes were put in place last year, and a significant uplift in salary levels was agreed. We wish to allow time for last year's Determinations to bed in and to allow the Panel to continue its development of a research and evidence base to inform future decisions and move to a longer term planning cycle. This report reflects that decision.

During the past few years, we have been considering the structure of our reports and how we can make them more accessible to all. We have concluded that much of the information published replicates previous years, often without significant change. For this report we decided to focus on the changes made as a result of the proposals. We have therefore decided that the majority of the content set out in previous reports will be removed from the report and placed on the Panel's website. We will make arrangements for those who are unable to access the website.

This change has significantly reduced the size of the report and made it more manageable to navigate. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

This is a work in progress, and we would be interested in your views about this approach and so have specifically asked for some feedback as part of our [Consultation questions](#) at the end of the Report.

Panel Membership

Frances Duffy, Chair
Saz Willey, Vice Chair
Ruth Glazzard
Bev Smith

Detailed information about the members can be found on the website: [Panel website](#)

Section 2: Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Role of the Panel

The Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of members of the following organisations.

- Principal Councils – county and county borough councils
- Community and Town Councils
- National Park Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Corporate Joint Committees

The Panel is an independent body and is able to make decisions about:

- The salary structure within which members are remunerated
- The type and nature of allowances to be paid to members
- Whether payments are mandatory or allow a level of local flexibility
- Arrangements in respect of family absence
- Arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Panel's decisions

The Panel is an independent organisation and the organisations listed above are required, by law, to implement the decisions it makes.

The Panel is also consultee for proposed changes to the pay of principal council Chief Executives.

Principles

The work of the Panel is underpinned by a set of principles which guides its approach, methodology and decision making. They are:

- **Upholding trust and confidence** – Citizens rightly expect that all those who choose to serve in local authorities uphold the public trust by embracing the values and ethics implicit in such public service.
- **Simplicity** – The Framework is clear and understandable.
- **Remuneration** – The Framework provides for payment to members of authorities who carry a responsibility for serving their communities. The level of payment should not act as a barrier to taking up or continuing in the post.
- **Diversity** – Democracy is strengthened when the membership of authorities adequately reflects the demographic and cultural make-up of the communities such authorities serve.
- **Accountability** - Taxpayers and citizens have the right to receive value for money from public funds committed to the remuneration of those who are elected, appointed or co-opted to serve in the public interest.
- **Fairness** - The Framework will be capable of being applied consistently to members of all authorities within the Panel's remit as a means of ensuring that levels of remuneration are fair, affordable and generally acceptable.

- **Quality** - The Panel recognises that the complex mix of governance, scrutiny and regulatory duties incumbent upon members requires them to engage with a process of continuous quality improvement.
- **Transparency** - Transparency of members' remuneration is in the public interest.

Section 3: Summary of Deliberations and Determinations

Methodology

Each year the Panel engages with members of the bodies for which it sets remuneration levels, officers within those organisations, clerks, Welsh Local Government Association, One Voice Wales and the Society for Local Council Clerks. It does this through a range of meetings which, at the moment, remain mostly online. The Panel will continue with these discussions. They provide an opportunity for the Panel to explore views about existing arrangements, the impact decisions are having on individuals, how the arrangements are operating in practice and any issues or concerns individuals wish to raise. It also provides an opportunity for discussion about emerging situations which the Panel may need to consider in respect of its decision making.

The draft report is published widely and members of the public are encouraged to and have provided valuable feedback and we welcome this.

The Panel also considers feedback from the publishing of the Annual Report in the previous year. The changes made in last year's Report, in particular the uplift in the basic salary, seem to have been well received by stakeholders. The issues raised with the Panel have all been centred around the detail of the Determinations, asking for guidance on how they should be applied or asking for points of clarification where the text of the Report was unclear.

The Panel has therefore agreed to review the format and structure of the main Report and make better use of the Panel website to provide information and guidance.

The Panel has a duty to set payments that are fair and that encourage and enable democratic participation. It must also take account of affordability and acceptability.

In making its determinations for this Draft Report, the Panel considered a range of benchmarks, including past, current and projected indices and actual figures and the known and forecast extent and impact of multiple economic and social factors. These included post Brexit and COVID work environments and the cost of living, energy and climate crises.

The Panels proposals are consulted on and following consideration of the views received in response to its consultation the Panel makes its final determinations which are published each year in its Annual Report.

Panel's Determinations for 2023 to 2024

Basic salary for elected members of principal councils - Determination 1

The basic salary, paid to all elected members, is remuneration for the responsibility of community representation and participation in the scrutiny, regulatory and related functions of local governance. It is based on a full time equivalent of three days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment and no changes are proposed for 2023 to 2024.

Last year the Panel reset the basic salary to align with the [2020 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\)](#) published by the Office of National Statistics. This reduced the imbalance that had arisen between the basic salary of members of principal councils and the average salaries of their constituents. The change took effect from the May 2022 local elections. The rationale for this significant step can be found in last year's Annual Report and a detailed explanatory paper setting out the historical context and analysis is available on the Panel's website.

Building on this decision the Panel has determined that for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 it is right to retain a link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. **The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of the all Wales [2021 ASHE](#), the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £17,600. This will represent a 4.76% increase in the basic salary.**

Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils: Determination 2

The limit on the number of senior salaries payable ("the cap") will remain in place. At the 2022 local elections boundary reviews changed the number of members for some councils. The Panel adjusted the senior salary cap for these councils in its 2022 to 2023 Annual Report. As there are no further changes for 2023 to 2024, the maximum number of senior salaries payable within each council remains as set out in the 2022 to 2023 [Report](#).

All senior salaries include the basic salary payment. The different levels of additional responsibility of and between each role is recognised in a banded framework. The framework was revised last year after a review of differentials and market comparators. No changes to banding are proposed this year. Early next year the Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed.

The [ASHE 2021](#) increase applies to the role element of Band 1 and Band 2 salaries – leader, deputy leader and executive members.

To complete the last year's realignment of the framework, Band 3 and Band 4 salary holders will receive a small increase to the role element of their pay and the role element of Band 5 pay will remain frozen. The increase in basic salary will apply. The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £66,000. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Salaries payable to Basic, Senior, Civic and Presiding Members of Principal Councils

Description	Remuneration		
Elected Members of Principal Councils			
Basic salary (payable to all elected members)	£17,600		
Senior salaries (inclusive of basic salary)	Group A	Group B	Group C
Band 1:			
Leader	£66,000	£59,400	£56,100
Deputy Leader	£46,200	£41,580	£39,270
Band 2:			
Executive Members	£39,600	£35,640	£33,660
Band 3:			
Committee Chairs (if remunerated): Civic Head Presiding Officer	£26,400		
Band 4:			
Leader of Largest Opposition Group	£26,400		
Band 5:			
Leader of Other Political Groups Deputy Civic Head	£21,340		
Deputy Presiding Member – no role payment	£17,600		

Group A: Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea

Group B: Bridgend, Caerphilly, Carmarthenshire, Conwy, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Newport, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Vale of Glamorgan, Wrexham

Group C: Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Isle of Anglesey

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Travel and subsistence;
- Care and Personal Assistance;
- Sickness Absence;
- Corporate Joint Committees,
- Assistants to the Executive,
- Additional salaries and Job sharing arrangements and
- Co-opted Members

Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,400.

There are no other changes.

Payments towards costs and expenses of members of Community and Town Councils; Determination 4

Last year the Panel carried out a major review of the remuneration framework for community and town councils and undertook a comprehensive consultation exercise with the sector. The Framework was updated then and this year the Panel has decided to make limited but important changes.

The Panel recognise that all members of community and town councils necessarily spend time working from home on council business. This was the case before and during COVID and is continuing. As a result, members have extra domestic costs and also need office consumables.

The Panel considers members should not be out of pocket for carrying out their duties. It therefore proposes the following.

Basic payment for extra costs of working from home

All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home.

Set payment for consumables

Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables. It is a matter for each council to make and record a policy decision in respect of when and how the payments are made and whether they are paid monthly, yearly or otherwise. The policy should also state whether and how to recover any payments made to a member who leaves or changes their role during the financial year.

The level of payments is set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Payments to Community and Town Councils

Type of payment	Requirement
Group 1	Electorate over 14,000
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all Members
Senior Role	Mandatory for 1 member; optional for up to 7
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Costs of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory

Type of payment	Requirement
Group 2	Electorate 10,000 to 13,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Mandatory for 1 member; optional up to 5
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 3	Electorate 5,000 to 9,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 4	Electorate 1,000 to 4,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 5	Electorate less than 1,000
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory

Group number	Size of Electorate
Group 1	Electorate over 14,000
Group 2	10,000 to 13,999
Group 3	5,000 to 9,999
Group 4	1,000 to 4,999
Group 5	Under 1,000

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Payments for undertaking senior roles;
- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of Travel and subsistence costs;
- Compensation for financial loss:
- Attendance allowance and
- Co-opted Members

Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5

The three national parks in Wales - Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia were formed to protect spectacular landscapes and provide recreation opportunities for the public. The Environment Act 1995 led to the creation of a National Park Authority (NPA) for each park.

National Park authorities comprise members who are either elected members nominated by the principal councils within the national park area or are members appointed by the Welsh Government through the Public Appointments process. Welsh Government appointed and council nominated members are treated equally in relation to remuneration.

The three fire and rescue services (FRAs) in Wales: Mid and West Wales, North Wales and South Wales were formed as part of Local Government re-organisation in 1996. FRAs comprise elected members who are nominated by the Principal Councils within each fire and rescue service area.

Payments will increase as a result of the uplift proposed for elected members of principal councils. Therefore, there will also be an uplift of 4.76% in the basic salary element.

The remuneration for Chairs will remain linked to a Band 3 senior salary of principal councils. Therefore there will be a small increase to the role element of their pay. Deputy Chairs, Committee Chairs and other senior roles will remain linked to Band 5. Therefore their role element of pay will remain frozen. The increase in basic salary will apply. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities, is set out in Table 3.

Table 3 – Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

National Parks Authorities	
Basic salary for ordinary member	£4,964
Chair	£13,764
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£8,704
Committee Chair or other senior post	£8,704
Fire and Rescue Authorities	
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,482
Chair	£11,282
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£6,222
Committee Chair or other senior post	£6,222

All other Determinations for 2022 to 2023 will still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering;

- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of Travel and subsistence costs;
- Compensation for financial loss;
- Co-opted Members and
- Restrictions on receiving double remuneration where a member holds more than one post.

Section 4: Consultation on Draft – Questions

We welcome feedback on this draft Report and have included some additional questions where we would appreciate your views. The consultation period will end on the 1 December 2022 and you can either email us your comments or complete the form on our website [HERE](#).

Question 1

The Panel has continued to use the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office for National Statistics as the benchmark for setting the basic salary of elected members of principal councils. There is a corresponding proportionate increase proposed for the members of National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel has continued to refer to the last published ASHE which was 2021. Do you agree that the basic salary element should be referenced to the [ASHE 2021](#) data.

Yes

No

No Opinion

Any additional comments

Question 2

The Panel has made changes to the payment of costs and expenses of members of community and town councils. Do you agree with the addition of the “consumables” element?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Any additional comments

Question 3

The Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed to inform future Determinations. Are you content that the Panel should build this review into its future work plan and build the evidence base to support decisions?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any additional comments

Question 4

We have significantly reduced the size of the report this year to concentrate on key decisions made and intend to make more use of the website to provide easy to use guidance to users. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

How would you would like to access information and guidance from the Panel?
(choose all that apply)

Summary report with links to detailed guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easy to use guidance notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequently asked questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information events	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify:

Have you experienced any challenges accessing or understanding our guidance and information through our website? Please let us know how we can make it easier for you?

Question 5

The Panel intend to undertake a series of engagements with all relevant stakeholders over the next year as part of the development of its forward planning and building of its evidence and research strategy.

Have you any comments that would help the Panel shape this engagement?

For example, a preference for online polls, the holding of engagement events, virtual or face to face, which groups should be involved, how do we engage with prospective candidates etc.

Would you like to be involved in any future engagement events?

Yes

No

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Contact details

Summary of Determinations:

Determination 1:

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils will set at £17,600.

Determination 2:

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £66,000. All other payments have been decided in reference to this.

Determination 3:

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,400.

Determination 4:

Members of Community and Town Councils will be paid £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home. And Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

Determination 5:

The basic pay of members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities has been increased by 4.76%. All payments are set out in Table 3.

Determination 6:

All other Determinations set out in the 2022 to 2023 [Annual Report](#) of the Panel remain valid and should be applied.

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The Report and other information about the Panel and its work are available on our website at:

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales](#)

Consultation on Draft – Questions

We welcome feedback on this draft Report and have included some additional questions where we would appreciate your views. The consultation period will end on the **1 December 2022** and you can either email us your comments or complete the form on our website [HERE](#).

Question 1

The Panel has continued to use the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office for National Statistics as the benchmark for setting the basic salary of elected members of principal councils. There is a corresponding proportionate increase proposed for the members of National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel has continued to refer to the last published ASHE which was 2021. Do you agree that the basic salary element should be referenced to the [ASHE 2021](#) data.

Yes

No

No Opinion

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Any additional comments

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Question 2

The Panel has made changes to the payment of costs and expenses of members of community and town councils. Do you agree with the addition of the “consumables” element?

Yes

No

No Opinion

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Any additional comments

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Question 3

The Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed to inform future Determinations. Are you content that the Panel should build this review into its future work plan and build the evidence base to support decisions?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any additional comments

Question 4

We have significantly reduced the size of the report this year to concentrate on key decisions made and intend to make more use of the website to provide easy to use guidance to users. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

How would you would like to access information and guidance from the Panel?
(choose all that apply)

Summary report with links to detailed guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easy to use guidance notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequently asked questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information events	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify:

Have you experienced any challenges accessing or understanding our guidance and information through our website? Please let us know how we can make it easier for you?

Question 5

The Panel intend to undertake a series of engagements with all relevant stakeholders over the next year as part of the development of its forward planning and building of its evidence and research strategy.

Have you any comments that would help the Panel shape this engagement?

For example, a preference for online polls, the holding of engagement events, virtual or face to face, which groups should be involved, how do we engage with prospective candidates etc.

Would you like to be involved in any future engagement events?

Yes
No

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Contact details

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

29th November 2022

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services- Mr Craig Griffiths.

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Councillor Guide to Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation

Purpose of the Report

To provide the Democratic Services Committee information on the Local Government Association's (LGA) Councillor's Guide on Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation.

Background

Councillor safety has been part of the collective discussions and work of Local Authorities and the WLGA (Welsh Local Government Association) for the past few years both in terms of electoral planning, ethical framework/standards and diversity in democracy.

In the last meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held in October 2022, members were updated on the areas of work in relation to Councillor Safety and Wellbeing.

It was noted that the WLGA have suggested that a dedicated working group be convened to look at councillor safety and wellbeing, which would bring together and focus some of the wider discussions that are being held and officers and members will engage in such processes as and when they arise.

The Democratic Services Committee noted that future reports will be brought on this area of work as it progresses and looked forward to being involved in the working group as it developed.

Recent Developments

There has been a recent guide published by the LGA in relation to How Councillor’s Handle Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation (Appendix 1) that has been made available by the information sharing forum ‘Protect UK’. A copy of this guidance will shortly be circulated to all elected members.

A pressing concern facing those in public office is the increasing levels of intimidation, harassment and abuse they are experiencing. While debate and expressing different views is all part of a healthy representative democracy, these unacceptable behaviours undermine the key democratic principles of free speech, debate and engagement, and sometimes pose a risk to councillors’ safety.

The guidance from the LGA provides practical advice for councillors to enhance their personal security and to minimise the risk of physical abuse. The advice can be applied to various settings including surgeries, home visits and whilst travelling to and from council meetings.

The guidance contains some suggestions that local authorities may wish to consider and are helpfully summarised below along with steps that this Council are considering:

Recommendation	NPT Position
Appointing an officer to undertake a role as a sounding board for any councillor or officer who wishes to make contact in confidence if he or she has received intimidatory contact or communication from an external or internal source. This officer can provide support and advice rather than a solution to such abuse, and could also provide practical advice on personal safety. Any serious	The Council’s Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Democratic Services Manager undertake this role.

<p>allegation of criminal activity may have to be taken further.</p>	
<p>All councils are now required to have a local councillor code of conduct to help councillors model and balance their behaviour, understand the expectations of their role, and to indicate the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against them.</p>	<p>The Council has an agreed Code of Conduct for elected members which all elected members are required to sign on election to the Council. Training is also provided to elected members on the content of the Code of Conduct</p>
<p>Local Resolution Protocols have proven a useful tool to deal with low level complains and solve internal disputes.</p>	<p>The Council has an agreed Local Resolution Protocol that enable member complaints to resolved</p>
<p>Encouraging each political group within the council to likewise appoint either the leader of the group and/or one of their number to perform a similar role for their elected members.</p>	<p>The Head of Democratic Services will approach political group leaders to suggest that such measures are put in place in accordance with their rules.</p>
<p>Establishing a council policy setting out procedures and protocols, should a councillor feel they are being publicly harassed, intimidated or abused. Regular briefings for all councillors, including those who have been newly elected, to share experiences and concerns can both help identify persistent offenders and look at council-led solutions.</p>	<p>WLGA have suggested that a dedicated working group be convened to look at councillor safety and wellbeing, which would bring together and focus some of the wider discussions that are being held and officers and members will engage in such processes as and when they arise.</p>

	Officers will then develop a protocol specifically for Neath Port Talbot Council
Working with the local police, establishing a named officer responsible for handling the serious threats to councillors and to advise on personal safety and security.	Officers will liaise with South Wales Police to identify a named officer and this will be included in any protocol development.
Controlled online meetings have helped to minimise abuse from the public. Some strategies include asking participants to pre-register, to monitor or disable the chat function and read opening statements indicating that abuse of any kind will not be tolerated.	The Council currently requires any members of the public who wish to attend a virtual meeting of the Council to pre-register and officers are liaising with Digital Services to look at ways to address the chat function in MS TEAMS
Ensuring that council insurance arrangements cover injuries or loss suffered by elected members arising from their role as councillors in respect of any intimidation.	Work is ongoing with the Council's Insurance Section and Insurance Brokers to consider this element.
Considering what steps should be taken by the council to mitigate the risk to councillors in the event of severe intimidation and threats. In some of the cases that have been researched in the production of this guidance, councillors who have been subjected to death threats have been supplied with personal alarms by the police.	WLGA have suggested that a dedicated working group be convened to look at councillor safety and wellbeing, which would bring together and focus some of the wider discussions that are being held and officers and members will engage in such processes as and when they arise.

	Officers will then develop a protocol specifically for Neath Port Talbot Council
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It should be noted, that the ability of the local authority to assist in resolving any issues such as defamation of a member, libel or slander are limited. As a Local Authority we cannot bring action for defamation ourselves and are unable to fund officers/members to pursue the same. In its Guidance the Welsh Government states it “.... does not believe that individuals should be funded at public expense to bring proceedings against a third party. To do so could stifle legitimate public debate.” However, it is recognised that more needs to be considered at the UK and Welsh Government level to look at further support for elected members who find themselves victim of such defamation or libel and it is proposed that a letter be forwarded to the Welsh Local Government Association on behalf of the Democratic Services Committee asking for such matters to be considered at a national level.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impacts

No impact.

Risk Management

No impact.

Legal Powers

There are no specific legal powers relating to this report.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are no specific impacts for valley communities arising from this report.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Democratic Services Committee:

- (a) note the update in relation to Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation and the content of the Councillor Guide to Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation;
- (b) endorse the work programme that officers will embark on both internally and with stakeholders to develop a protocol for members in respect of harassment, abuse and intimidation; and
- (c) authorise the chair of the Democratic Services Committee to write to the Welsh Local Government Association and any other relevant organisation seeking further information on what measures Welsh and UK Government are considering to support elected members who are victims of harassment, abuse and intimidation.

Reason for report

To note the update in relation to Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Councillor Guide to Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation

[Councillors' Guide to handling harassment, abuse and intimidation | ProtectUK](#)

Officer Contacts

Craig Griffiths – Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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Stacy Curran- Democratic Services Manager

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Democratic Committee Services
Forward Work Programme 2022/23

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Type	Contact Officer
29 th November 2022	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report – February 2023	Decision	Craig Griffiths
	Handling Harassment Abuse and Intimidation	Information	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran
13 th February 2023	Member Annual Reports	Decision	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran
	Members PDRs	Decision	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran
	Member Training and Development Priorities for upcoming year and Annual Member Survey	Decision	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran
	Timing of Meetings Survey	Information	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran

	IRPW Final Report (if available)	Information	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran
	Public Participation Strategy	Decision	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran
3 rd April 2023	- Annual Consideration of Constitutional Issues	Information	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran
	- Assessment of Resources for Democratic Services	Information	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran
	- Democratic Services Committee Annual Report	Information	Craig Griffiths / Stacy Curran

2023/2024

- Annual Review of E-Petitions
- Review Diversity in Democracy Action Plan