



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

1.00 PM MONDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2023

HYBRID COUNCIL CHAMBER/MICROSOFT TEAMS

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

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PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest
2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 3 - 6*)
 - 4th September 2023
3. Forward Work Programme (*Pages 7 - 10*)
4. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2024 (*Pages 11 - 56*)
5. Member Annual Reports (*Pages 57 - 68*)
6. Member Personal Development Reviews (*Pages 69 - 90*)
7. Proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group on Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors (*Pages 91 - 98*)

8. Proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group on Diversity in Democracy. (*Pages 99 - 110*)
9. Urgent Items
Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100BA(6)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Tuesday 21st November 2023

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: **Councillor S.Rahaman**

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

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

Democratic Services Committee

(Multi Location Meeting – Port Talbot Civic Centre & Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

4 September 2023

Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Vice Chairperson: Councillor N.Goldup-John

Councillors: W.Carpenter, J.Hale, M.Harvey, J.Henton, A.R.Lockyer, P.Rogers, C.Williams and S.Thomas

Officers In Attendance C.Griffiths, S.Curran, T.Rees and P.Chivers

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

3. **Forward Work Programme**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided an overview of the Forward Work Programme which contains standard items required under the Local Government Wales Measure and other matters for consideration. Members were reminded that any further specific matters that members may want to add to the programme should be advised to the Chair of the committee, Democratic Services or raised through this meeting.

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

4. **Democratic Services Annual Report 2022-2023**

Members commented that Cllr. P Rogers and Cllr. W Carpenter were missing from the list of committee members in the annual report, this omission will be rectified by officers

Resolved: That the Democratic Services Committee note and endorse the Annual Report 2022/23 attached at Appendix 1 and commend the same to Council.

5. **Draft Member Training & Development, and Seminar Programme**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised members that the council has a legal requirement to provide training and development opportunities for elected members. A summary of the report and the Members training programme for 2023/2024 was provided. The WLGA training programme is contained within the agenda pack and compliments the Members Training and Development Programme.

Resolved: That Members approve the Draft Members' Development and Training Programme (and Seminar Schedule) for 2023/24 contained in Appendix 1.

6. **Local Democracy Week**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided an overview of the report contained in the agenda pack.

Members asked how effective the Citizens Panel was; how often does it meet and in what forum. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that the panel were generally contacted for their views via surveys and information was emailed back to the relevant officer. Feedback on policies and proposed new arrangements could be sought from the panel as and when required before policy development is undertaken. Members commented that there was a limit to the amount of times annually, that panel members could be contacted.

This item was noted.

7. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

CHAIRPERSON

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Democratic Committee Services
Forward Work Programme 2023/24

| Meeting Date | Agenda Item | Type | Contact Officer |
|---|--|-------------------------|--|
| <u>4th September 2023</u> | Forward Work Programme Consideration | Discussion | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Draft Training Programme for Members | Decision | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 2022/23 | Information | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Local Democracy Week 2023 | Decision | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| <u>27th November 2023</u> | Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report – February 2024 | Information and comment | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Member Annual Reports | Decision | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Member PDRs | Decision | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Harassment and Intimidation- Establish T&F | Decision | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Diversity in Democracy- Establish a T&F | Decision | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran/Rhys George |

| | | | |
|--|---|-------------|------------------------------|
| | | | |
| <u>SPECIAL T&F/WORKSHOP</u> <u>January/February</u> | Diversity in Democracy Harassment and Intimidation | | |
| <u>4th March 2024</u> | Annual member survey and Timing of Meetings | Decision | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | IRPW Final Report (If available) | Information | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Annual Review of E- Petitions/Public Speaking | Decision | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Assessment of Resources for Democratic Services | Information | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| | Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 23/24 | Decision | Craig Griffiths/Stacy Curran |
| <u>(SECOND PART OF MEETING TO BE HARASSMENT & INTIMIDATION T&F)</u> | | | |
| <u>8th April 2024</u> | <u>KEEP FREE POTENTIAL PRE-ELECTION PERIOD</u> | | |
| | | | |

- Annual Review of E-Petitions/Public Speaking
- Review Diversity in Democracy Action Plan
- Draft Protocol for research & member support (WLGA)
- Draft charter (WLGA)
- WLGA Democracy Handbook

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Democratic Services Committee

27th November 2023

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 2024/2025 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 2024/25 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 | Current 2023/24 | Proposed by IRPW for 2024/2025 |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Basic Salary | £17,600 | £18,666 |
| Leader | £59,400 | £62,998 |
| Deputy Leader | £41, 580 | £44,099 |
| Executive Members | £35,640 | £37,799 |
| Chairs of Committee | £26,400 | £27,999 |
| Leader of largest opposition Group | £26,400 | £27,999 |
| Leader of other Political Group | £21,340 | £22,406 |
| Civic Head | £26,400 | £27,999 |
| Deputy Civic Head | £21,340 | £22,406 |

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

The current determination states that co-opted members of the relevant bodies should be remunerated on a day or half day basis. The Panel has noted the changes to working practices such as short online briefings, and proposes to move to an hourly rate of remuneration and introduce a local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide if an hourly or half day/day rate be applicable.

The proposed rates are:

| Role: | Hourly: | Half Day: | Full Day: |
|---|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Chairs of standards, and audit committees | £33.50 | £134 | £268 |
| Ordinary Members of Standards Committees who also chair Standards Committees for Community and Town Councils | £29.75 | £119 | £238 |
| Ordinary Members of Standards Committees; Education Scrutiny Committee; Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee | £26.25 | £105 | £210 |
| Community and Town Councillors sitting on Principal Council Standards Committees | £26.25 | £105 | £210 |

Consultation:

As with each draft Annual Report, the Panel are seeking feedback on the content of the report. A copy of the consultation questions is included as Appendix 2 but for ease of reference, the questions are listed below.

Q1 – Do you think that the Panel has struck the right balance between affordability and adequate remuneration for representatives? If not, do you have other suggestions?

Q2 – Do you agree with the Panels proposal in relation to co-opted

members of committees? If not, do you have any suggested alternatives?

Q3 – Do you have any examples of good practice or other ideas of ways in which we might use our powers to encourage more sustainable travel among members?

Q4 – This question is seeking individual Member responses.

Q5 – This question relates specifically to Community and Town Councils so does not apply.

Q6 – Do you agree that figures for travel and subsistence expenses of members of principal councils should be published as a global total rather than individually?

Question 4 of the consultation is seeking to establish whether individual Members are aware of the payments they are entitled to. It would not therefore be appropriate for this Committee to provide an answer on behalf of all elected Members and co-opted members of committees. It is proposed that the Democratic Services Manager issues this question to all elected Members and the co-opted members. This could take the form of an anonymous survey, or they could be asked to provide an individual response direct to the IRPW.

The Committee is therefore invited to consider, and comment on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report and its Determinations for 2024, and to provide comments for inclusion in the response to the consultation. The consultation period ends on 8 December 2023.

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:

The IRPW are consulting about their proposals and Members have the opportunity to feedback their views. All Members were sent a copy of the draft Report on the 13th November 2023. The Panel is required to allow a minimum of 8 weeks between issuing its draft and final Annual Report.

Recommendations:

- That the Committee considers and comments on the Determinations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in their draft Annual Report for 2024/25.
- That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make a response on behalf of the Democratic Services Committee reflecting the decision and comments made at the meeting, to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

- That the Head of Democratic Services issue Question 4 of the consultation document to all elected Members and co-opted members for them to respond to individually.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft IRPW Annual Report

Appendix 2- Draft IRPW Consultation Questions

List of Background Papers:

None

Officer Contact:

Craig Griffiths

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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Stacy Curran

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Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Annual Report

DRAFT

October 2023

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Foreword

Welcome to the draft report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, setting out our proposals on pay, expenses and benefits for elected members of Principal Councils, Town and Community Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2024.

This has been a year of change for the Panel, with 1 longstanding member leaving us and the appointment of 2 new members. I would like to thank Helen Wilkinson for her contribution over the years to the Panel and wish her well for the future.

Last year we were down to only 3, which is the minimum for a Panel meeting to be quorate. Earlier this year we were able to appoint 2 new members to bring our current complement up to 5. I welcome Dianne Bevan and Kate Watkins to the Panel and thank Saz Willey, Vice Chair, and Bev Smith for their continued contribution throughout the year. You can find out more about our Panel members on our website.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 8 (The Measure), which gives the statutory authority for the Panel's work, allows the appointment of a minimum of 3 and up to 7 members.

This draft annual report is now issued for consultation. We have again put forward a set of specific questions where we would welcome your feedback. We welcome any additional comments either on the detail of the proposed Determinations or on other relevant areas you think the Panel should consider.

The Consultation period ends on 8 December and after deliberating on your feedback, and taking cognisance of any change in circumstances, the Panel will issue its final Determinations and annual report by the 28 February 2024.

Frances Duffy

Chair

Panel Membership

- Saz Willey, Vice Chair
- Bev Smith
- Dianne Bevan
- Kate Watkins

Detailed information about the members, our strategic plan, our deliberations and supporting research and evidence can be found on the [Panel website](#).

Introduction

This year we published our first strategic plan. This covers the period from 2023 until 2025 and sets the framework for our deliberations and wider context for our decisions. The key elements are set out below under Roles and Responsibilities of the Panel.

With a strengthened Panel, we were able to focus on building our research and evidence plan to support our discussions on our remuneration framework. Our evidence plan will be published on our website inline with our aim to be open and transparent in all our decision making.

Our goal continues to be to ensure that levels of remuneration are fair and reasonable. We agreed to continue to align levels of remuneration for elected members of Principal Councils, National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities within the context of average Welsh earnings. This has meant using the Annual

Survey of Hours and Earnings within Wales (ASHE) published by Office for National Statistics (ONS) as the main benchmark for setting remuneration.

The Measure states that “the Panel must take into account what it considers will be the likely financial impact on relevant authorities” of its decisions. The Panel considered evidence on public sector finances and the impact on Principal Authorities’ budgets. Whilst the total cost of remuneration for elected members is relatively low in terms of overall budgets, the Panel were mindful of the heightened economic and fiscal strain on Principal Councils.

In reaching our decision to continue the link between elected members remuneration and the average earnings of their constituents, the Panel remain of the view that a fair and reasonable remuneration package will continue to support elected members and not act as a barrier to participation. This is an important principle, underpinning our considerations on appropriate remuneration.

In line with our commitment to simplifying reporting and compliance, the Panel this year looked at the reporting requirements for Community and Town Council. We continue to receive queries regarding the PAYE treatment of the mandatory allowance for working from home (£156 per annum) and the option of a flat rate of £52 a year for consumables. We will update our guidance on this issue which should ensure clarity for local clerks.

We are also mindful of a continuing, albeit reducing, number of Community and Town councillors who decide to forego all or part of their entitlement. We strongly believe that councillors should be reimbursed for some of the expenses they necessarily incur whilst carrying out their duties.

Currently each council must annually report to the Panel, and publish on its website, the details and names of each councillor in receipt of any expenses. In previous years we agreed that in respect of costs of care and personal assistance allowances, it would be inappropriate to name individual councillors,

and that it would be sufficient to simply list the total amounts paid and the total number of recipients.

The Panel feels that it would be appropriate to extend this to the mandatory payment for working from home, the flat rate consumables allowance and travel and subsistence claims. This will give the right balance between public accountability and individual privacy, and we hope will encourage all to accept the payments they are entitled to.

We will therefore provide a new template report for use from September 2024 and will continue to monitor the level of payments made.

The final area that the Panel considered this year, was the method of calculating payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Following feedback on last year's annual report and queries raised through the year by some co-opted members and by several Heads of Democratic Services, the Panel took evidence from the correspondents on the impact of both the increase in numbers of co-opted members and the changing nature of working patterns. This showed that the current arrangement of either a half day rate for anything up to 4 hours and a full day rate for anything over, was insufficiently flexible to reflect the patterns of working now more normally in place, mainly due to more online or hybrid working.

The Panel therefore proposes that the local relevant officer should have the flexibility to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate and when to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings.

The Panel is aware of feedback that our website can be difficult to navigate and that finding the right Determination to deal with a specific issue is not always straightforward, especially for new elected members or officials. We will

therefore update the links on the website and created a new link to a page setting out all the current Determinations that should be applied. It will be updated every year when the final annual report is issued, and we hope this will be easier to navigate than having to refer to every year's report.

We are also reviewing our guidance (previously called the Regulations) and frequently asked questions pages.

Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Our Role

The Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of elected and co-opted members of the following organisations:

- Principal Councils: County and County Borough Councils
- Community and Town Councils
- National Park Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Joint Overview Scrutiny Committees
- Corporate Joint Committees

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

We make determinations on:

- 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

Our aim

- supporting local democracy and giving communities their voice, through setting up an appropriate and fair remuneration framework, which encourages inclusion and participation

Our goals

- our determinations should ensure that levels of remuneration are fair, reasonable, represent value for money for the taxpayer, and are set within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances of Wales
- our Determinations should support elected members from a diverse range of backgrounds, and levels of remuneration should not act as a barrier to participation

Our strategic objectives

- to make evidence, based Determinations
- to use clear and accessible communications
- to proactively engage and consult
- to simplify compliance and reporting
- to work collaboratively

The Panel

- Frances Duffy (Chair)

- Saz Willey (Vice Chair)
- Dianne Bevan (Member)
- Bev Smith (Member)
- Kate Watkins (Member)

Further information on Panel members can be found on the [Panel's website](#).

Methodology

As set out in our strategic objectives the Panel has committed to making evidence-based decisions. This year we prepared an evidence and research paper to pull together the various sources of information that the Panel considered in making its draft Determinations. This provided a wide range of data, evidence and contextual factors to inform the Panel's decision-making process in relation to its Determinations for the 2024 to 2025 financial year. This included:

- data on average UK and Wales weekly earnings, including ASHE the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
- annual CPIH and CPI inflation rates
- benchmarks, including councillor remuneration in Scotland
- research on councillor workload, views and attitudes to remuneration and diversity (Welsh Government)
- findings of Senedd Cymru Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee (2019)
- data collected on the take up of remuneration and benefits packages by councillors
- data on local authority finances

The full set of evidence and research considered, will be published on our [website](#).

The Panel engaged directly with key stakeholder representative groups including the Welsh Local Government Association and its Heads of Democratic Services committee, One Voice Wales, the Society for Local Council Clerks and North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils. These discussions 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 Panel helped facilitate sessions at the Welsh Government's "Diversity in Democracy" events earlier this year. This gave us the opportunity to hear the direct experiences of a range of elected members, prospective candidates and organisations working to broaden representation in local government. We have drawn on that information to inform this report and to explore areas for future consideration.

This year this focused on 3 main issue, affordability, payments made to co-opted members and reporting requirements for Community and Town Councils. The Panel would like to thank all those that contributed to our deliberations either directly or through feedback and questions on our last report.

The Panels' proposals will now be consulted on and following consideration of views received in response to this consultation the Panel will make its final determinations and issue the 2024 to 2025 final report, in February 2024.

Deliberations and determinations for 2024 to 2025

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 t3 days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment, and no changes are proposed for 2024 to 2025.

The Panel is fully aware of the current constraints on public funding and the impact its decisions will have on the budgets of Principal Authorities. The Panel is also mindful of our aims and objectives to provide a fair and reasonable remuneration package to support elected members and to encourage diversity of representation.

The Panel also noted that in previous electoral cycles, the remuneration of councillors fell far behind the key benchmark of Average Hourly Earnings in Wales (ASHE) and a significant uplift was therefore required in 2022.

The Panel has therefore determined that for the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 it is right to retain the link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of all Wales 2022 ASHE, the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £18,666.

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.

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. No changes to banding are proposed this year.

The basic pay element will be uplifted in line with ASHE and this uplift will also apply to the role element of Bands 1, 2, 3 and 4. Where a Band 5 is paid, there is no increase to the role element as this remains temporarily frozen. The increase in the basic salary will apply.

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £69,998. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out in Table 1.

Group A

- Cardiff
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea

Table 1: salaries payable to basic, senior, civic and presiding members of principal councils (Group A)

| Description | Amount |
|---|---------|
| Basic salary | £18,666 |
| Band 1 Leader | £69,998 |
| Band 1 Deputy Leader | £48,999 |
| Band 2 Executive Members | £41,999 |
| Band 3 Committee Chairs (if paid) | £27,999 |
| Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group | £27,999 |
| Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) | £22,406 |
| Civic Head (if paid) | £27,999 |
| Deputy Civic Head (if paid) | £22,406 |
| Presiding Member (if paid) | £27,999 |
| Deputy Presiding Member (basic only) | £18,666 |

Group B

- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Carmarthenshire
- Conwy
- Flintshire
- Gwynedd
- Newport
- Neath Port Talbot
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Wrexham

Table 1: salaries payable to basic, senior, civic and presiding members of principal councils Group B

| Description | Amount |
|--|---------|
| Basic salary | £18,666 |
| Band 1 Leader | £62,998 |
| Band 1 Deputy Leader | £44,099 |
| Band 2 Executive Members | £37,799 |
| Band 3 Committee Chairs (if remunerated) | £27,999 |

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| Description | Amount |
|---|---------|
| Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group | £27,999 |
| Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) | £22,406 |
| Civic Head (if paid) | £27,999 |
| Deputy Civic Head (if paid) | £22,406 |
| Presiding Member (if paid) | £27,999 |
| Deputy Presiding Member (basic only) | £18,666 |

Group C

- Blaenau Gwent
- Ceredigion
- Denbighshire
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Torfaen
- Isle of Anglesey

Table 1: salaries payable to basic, senior, civic and presiding members of principal councils Group C

| Description | Amount |
|---|---------|
| Basic salary | £18,666 |
| Band 1 Leader | £59,498 |
| Band 1 Deputy Leader | £41,649 |
| Band 2 Executive Members | £35,699 |
| Band 3 Committee Chairs (if remunerated) | £27,999 |
| Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group | £27,999 |
| Band 5 Leader of other political groups | £22,406 |
| Civic Head (if paid) | £27,999 |
| Deputy Civic Head (if paid) | £22,406 |
| Presiding Member (if paid) | £27,999 |
| Deputy Presiding Member (basic only) | £18,666 |

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members. All current Determinations will be published on our [website](#).

There have been no changes made to allowances for:

- travel and subsistence
- care and personal assistance
- sickness absence
- corporate joint committees
- assistants to the executive
- additional salaries and job-sharing arrangements

Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to be aligned to Band 3 and will be set at £9,333.

The salary of a vice-chair is set at 50% of the Chair and will be £4,667.

There are no other changes.

Payments to national parks authorities and fire and rescue authorities: Determination 4

The 3 national parks in Wales, Eryri (Snowdonia), Pembrokeshire Coast and Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons), 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 3 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.

In line with the Panel's decision to increase the basic salary of elected members of principal councils, the remuneration level for ordinary members of both NPAs and FRAs is also increased in line with ASHE.

The remuneration for Chairs will remain linked to a principal council Band 3 senior salary. Their role element will therefore increase accordingly. Deputy chairs, Committee chairs and other paid senior posts will remain linked to a Band 5. This means the role element of their pay will continue to be temporarily frozen. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of NPAs and FRAs is set out in Table 2.

Table 2: payments to national parks authorities

| National parks authorities | Amount |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Basic salary for ordinary member | £5,265 |
| Chair | £14,598 |
| Deputy chair (where appointed) | £9,005 |
| Committee chair or other senior post | £9,005 |

Table 2: payments to fire and rescue authorities

| Fire and rescue authorities | Amount |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Basic salary for ordinary member | £2,632 |
| Chair | £11,965 |
| Deputy chair (where appointed) | £6,372 |
| Committee chair or other senior post | £6,372 |

All current Determinations, including restrictions on receiving double allowances, will be published on our website. Other than the above increases, there are no changes proposed this year.

Payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5

The current Determination (made in the 2022 to 2023 Annual Report) states that co-opted members of the relevant bodies should be remunerated on a day or half day basis. In addition, the relevant officer may decide on the total number of days remunerated in a year and set a reasonable time for meeting preparation.

The Panel has noted the changes to working practices, put in place during Covid and now becoming more routine, that has meant a move towards more frequent use of online meetings and or training courses, often short, as well as more regular committee meetings. The panel also received feedback from Heads of Democratic Services raising this issue.

The Panel considered moving to an hourly rate instead. This would better reflect new ways of working and hours actually worked. However, the Panel recognised that this may not always be appropriate, especially to cover in person meetings scheduled to last several hours.

The Panel therefore proposes there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

| Role | Hourly rate payment | Up to 4 hours payment rate | 4 hours and over payment rate |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Chairs of standards, and audit committees | £33.50 | £134 | £268 |
| Ordinary Members of Standards Committees who also chair Standards Committees for Community and Town Councils | £29.75 | £119 | £238 |
| Ordinary Members of Standards Committees; Education Scrutiny Committee; Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee | £26.25 | £105 | £210 |
| Community and Town Councillors sitting on Principal Council Standards Committees | £26.25 | £105 | £210 |

Community and Town Councils

The Panel continues to mandate payments for the extra costs of working from home and payments for office consumables. There is no change to the Determination made last year.

Mandatory payments: Determination 6

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.

Compensation for financial loss: Determination 7

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment. The amount for financial loss was not increased last year.

Previously, the Panel determined that an appropriate level of payment should be set at the daily rate of ASHE.

To maintain this link, the figures for 2024 are now proposed as £119.62 for a full day and £59.81 for a half day.

Reporting requirements: Determination 8

Community and Town Councils are required to submit an annual statement of payments to the Panel by the 30 September each year, and also publish this on their website. The Panel have provided a template return for clerks to use.

The Panel have discussed and considered changing the requirements for Community and Town Councils when submitting their statement of payment returns. The Panel's aim is to simplify administration and encourage Councils to ensure all mandatory payments are made to individual members.

The Panel proposes that from September 2024, the returns need only show the total amounts paid in respect of the mandatory payments mentioned above. That is the £156 contribution to the costs of working from home and the £52 set rate consumables allowance and the travel and subsistence expenses paid.

This brings these in line with the reporting of the costs of care and personal assistance allowances.

Payments to community and town councils

| Type of payment | Group | Requirement |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Reimbursement for time spent on CTC matters (previously known as Basic Payment) | 1 (Electorate over 14,000) | £156 mandatory for all members. 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 |
| Reimbursement for office consumables whilst working from home | 1 (Electorate over 14,000) | £52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week) towards the cost of office consumables whilst working home |
| Senior role payment | 1 (Electorate over 14,000) | Mandatory for 1 member; optional for up to 7 |
| Mayor or Chair of Council | 1 (Electorate over 14,000) | Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500 |
| Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair of Council | 1 (Electorate over 14,000) | Optional: up to a maximum of £500 |
| Attendance Allowance | 1 (Electorate over | Optional |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | 14,000) | |
| Financial loss | 1 (Electorate over 14,000) | Optional |
| Travel and subsistence | 1 (Electorate over 14,000) | Optional |
| Costs of care | 1 (Electorate over 14,000) | Mandatory |
| Reimbursement for time spent on CTC matters (previously known as Basic Payment) | 2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999) | £156 mandatory for all members. 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 |
| Reimbursement for office consumables whilst working from home | 2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999) | £52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week) towards the cost of office consumables whilst working from home |
| Senior role payment | 2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999) | Mandatory for 1 member: optional up to 5 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mayor or chair of Council | 2 | Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500 |
| | (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999) | |

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair of Council | 2 | Optional: up to a maximum of £500 |
| | (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999) | |

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Attendance allowance | 2 | Optional |
| | (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999) | |

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Financial loss | 2 | Optional |
| | (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999) | |

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Travel and subsistence | 2 | Optional |
| | (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999) | |

| | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Costs of care | 2 | Mandatory |
| | (Electorate over 10,000 to | |

13,999)

Reimbursement for time spent on CTC matters (previously known as Basic Payment) 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) £156 mandatory for all members. 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

Reimbursement for office consumables whilst working from home 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) £52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week) towards the cost of office consumables whilst working home

Senior role payment 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) Optional up to 3 members

Mayor or Chair of Council 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500

Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair of Council 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) Optional: up to a maximum of £500

Attendance allowance 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) Optional

Financial loss 3 Optional
(Electorate
over 5,000
to 9,999)

Travel and subsistence 3 Optional
(Electorate
over 5,000
to 9,999)

Costs of care 3 Mandatory
(Electorate
over 5,000
to 9,999)

Reimbursement for time spent on CTC matters (previously known as Basic Payment) 4 £156 mandatory for all members. 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
(Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)

Reimbursement for office consumables whilst working from home 4 £52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week) towards the cost of office consumables whilst working home
(Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)

Senior role payment 4 Optional up to 3 members
(Electorate
over 1,000
to 4,999)

Mayor or Chair of Council 4 Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500
(Electorate
over 1,000)

to 4,999)

Deputy Mayor or
Deputy Chair of
Council

4 Optional: up to a maximum of £500
(Electorate
over 1,000
to 4,999)

Attendance
allowance

4 Optional
(Electorate
over 1,000
to 4,999)

Financial loss

4 Optional
(Electorate
over 1,000
to 4,999)

Travel and
subsistence

4 Optional
(Electorate
over 1,000
to 4,999)

Cost of care

4 Mandatory
(Electorate
over 1,000
to 4,999)

Reimbursement for
time spent on CTC
matters (previously
known as Basic
Payment)

5 £156 mandatory for all members. All councils must
(Electorate pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a
less than week) towards the extra household expenses
1,000) (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of
working from home

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Reimbursement for office consumables whilst working from home | 5 (Electorate less than 1,000) | £52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week) towards the cost of office consumables whilst working home |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Senior role payment | 5 (Electorate less than 1,000) | Optional: up to 3 members |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mayor or Chair of Council | 5 (Electorate less than 1,000) | Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500 |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair of Council | 5 (Electorate less than 1,000) | Optional: up to a maximum of £500 |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Attendance allowance | 5 (Electorate less than 1,000) | Optional |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Financial loss | 5 (Electorate less than 1,000) | Optional |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------|

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Travel and subsistence | 5 (Electorate less than 1,000) | Optional |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Cost of care | 5 Mandatory (Electorate less than 1,000) |
|--------------|---|

There have been no changes made to payments for undertaking senior roles; allowances for travel and subsistence; care and personal assistance or attendance allowance.

All current Determinations will be published on our website.

Summary of Determinations 2024 to 2025

Determination 1

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils will set at £18,666.

Determination 2

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £69,998. All other payments have been decided in reference to this. All payments are set out in Table 1.

Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £9,333.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,667.

Determination 4

The basic pay of members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue authorities has been increased. All payments are set out in Table 2.

All current Determinations, including restrictions on receiving double allowances, will be published on our website. Other than the above increases, there are no changes proposed this year.

Determination 5

For co-opted member payments, the Panel proposes there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings.

The full and half day rates remain unchanged from 2023 to 2024. The only change is the stipulation of hourly rates, as set out in Table 3.

Determination 6

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 7

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment. The amount for financial loss was not increased last year.

Previously, the Panel determined that an appropriate level of payment should be set at the daily rate of ASHE.

To maintain this link, the figures for 2024 are now proposed as £119.62 for a full day and £59.81 for a half day.

Determination 8

The Panel proposes that from September 2024, the returns need only show the total amounts paid in respect of the mandatory payments mentioned above. That is the £156 contribution to the costs of working from home and the £52 set rate consumables allowance and the travel and subsistence expenses paid.

This brings these in line with the reporting of the costs of care and personal assistance allowances.

All other Determinations set out in the 2023 to 2024 [Annual Report](#) of the Panel remain valid and should be applied.

This document may not be fully accessible.

For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/independent-remuneration-panel-wales-draft-annual-report-2024-2025-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Consultation on Draft Report 2024 to 2025

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 **8 December 2023**, and you can either [email us](#) your comments or complete the form on our [website](#).

You are also welcome to submit comments in writing to the address below.

To request a printed versions of the Report please [email us](#) or write to:

Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales
Third Floor East
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Question 1 - Uplift of remuneration using the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

The Panel is fully aware of the current constraints on public funding and the impact its decisions will have on the budgets of Principal Authorities. The Panel is also mindful of our Aims and Objectives to provide a fair and reasonable remuneration package to support elected members and to encourage diversity of representation. We therefore propose to uplift their remuneration based on the average earnings of their constituents.

Do you think that the Panel has struck the right balance between affordability and adequate remuneration for representatives? If not, do you have other suggestions?

Yes

No

No Opinion

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Any additional comments

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Question 2 - Local flexibility for payments to co-opted individuals

The Panel has received evidence that it would be more cost effective and fairer to provide for flexibility in paying those who are co-opted to serve on committees of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The Panel has therefore proposed there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a few short meetings.

Do you agree with this proposal? If not, do you have any suggested alternatives?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Any additional comments

Question 3 - Encouraging sustainable travel

The Panel would like to ensure that we support environmental sustainability in our decisions about remuneration. We are aware that there are schemes in many bodies in Wales which encourage sustainable travel and we have advised that, if possible, elected members should be encouraged to participate in these schemes.

Do you have any examples of good practice or other ideas of ways in which we might use our powers to encourage more sustainable travel among members?

Yes

No

No Opinion

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Any additional comments

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Question 4 - Awareness of the entitlements of representatives

The Panel has seen evidence of a lack of awareness amongst local elected members of the payments to which they are entitled. We would like to find out if this is a significant issue, and if so, we will aim to raise awareness further, targeted at areas where this may be a problem.

Please identify which type of body you serve (select all that apply):

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Principal Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Community or Town Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fire and Rescue Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| National Park Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> |

What is your status?

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Member | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Co-opted Member | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Did you know that you may be entitled to some of or all the following?

- Remuneration for your role

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Pension (Principal Councils only)

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Reimbursement of expenses

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Reimbursement for caring responsibilities

Yes

No

| |
|--|
| |
| |

- Family absence payments (Principal Councils only)

Yes

No

| |
|--|
| |
| |

What steps does your council or authority take to make its elected members and co-opted members aware of their entitlements?

| |
|--|
| |
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Question 5 - Publication of consolidated sums for Community and Town Councils

Community and Town Councils are required to submit an annual statement of payments to the Panel by 30 September each year, and also publish this on their website. The Panel have provided a template return for clerks to use. The Panel have discussed and considered changing the requirements for Community and Town Councils when submitting their statement of payment returns. The Panel's aim is to simplify administration and encourage Councils to ensure all mandatory payments are made to individual members.

The Panel proposes that from September 2024, the returns need only show the total amounts paid in respect of the mandatory payments mentioned above. That is the £156 contribution to the costs of working from home, the £52 set rate consumables allowance and the travel and subsistence expenses paid.

This brings these in line with the reporting of the costs of care and personal assistance allowances.

Do you agree that these figures may be published as a global total rather than individually?

Yes

No

No View

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

What are the reasons for your view?

Question 6 - Publication of consolidated sums for other bodies

In future reports, we are thinking of allowing consolidation of the travel and subsistence expenses of members of principal councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities and would be interested in your views.

Do you agree that these figures may be published as a global total rather than individually?

Yes

No

No View

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

What are the reasons for your view?

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

27th November 2023

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

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Member Annual Report Scheme

Purpose of the Report

1. To remind Members of the current policy to support the production of annual reports by Members of the Council.

Background

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 introduced a number of statutory requirements to strengthen democracy in Wales. One of the requirements concerned making arrangements for every elected member to provide an annual report at the end of each civic year.
3. The detail of the legal requirement can be found in Section 5 of the 2011 Measure, which states:-

4. A local authority must make arrangements for:
 - a) each person who is a member of the local authority to make an annual report about that person's activities as a Member of the authority during the year to which the report relates;
 - b) each person who is a member of the authority's executive to make a report about the person's activities as a member of the executive during the year to which the report relates, and
 - c) the authority to publish all annual reports produced by its Members and by Members of its executive.
5. The arrangements may include conditions as to the content of a report that must be satisfied by the person making it and a local authority must publicise its arrangements.

Current process

6. In order to support Members in producing their annual reports at the end of the civic year, the content of such reports follows a standard template form (a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1)
7. In designing the scheme it was hoped that this would enable Members to strike the right balance between providing information that would be relevant and interesting for their electorate, whilst avoiding the risk that the annual reports became political in nature.
8. The scheme also proposed that annual reports would be published in PDF format on the Councillors' profile page accessed via the corporate website.
9. In a similar vein to the introduction of the Annual Personal Development Review (PDR) scheme, despite initial early interest from Members in completing an annual report this has subsequently declined over the past years.
10. Members of the Democratic Services Committee are asked to note the Members Annual Report Scheme and endorse the Democratic Services Manager communication with all Members reminding them of

the scheme and inviting them to complete an Annual Report should they so wish.

Financial Impact

11. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

12. As this matter goes to governance and publication of member's reports, no integrated impact assessment is required for this report.

Workforce Impacts

13. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Powers

14. Compliance must be had with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (S.5), reference of which is made in this report.

Risk Management

15. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

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

Recommendation

17. It is recommended that, having due regard that no integrated impact assessment is required that the Democratic Services Committee note the Members Annual Report Scheme and that the Democratic Services Manager communicates with all Members via email, reminding them of the scheme and inviting them to complete an Annual Report should they so wish.

Reason for Decision

18. Welsh local authorities are required to have regard to any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers.

19. To assist with the facilitation of the Members Annual Report Scheme.

Appendices

20. Appendix 1 - Member Annual Report Guidance

Officer Contacts

Craig Griffiths - Head of Legal and Democratic Services

e-mail: c.griffiths2@npt.gov.uk

Stacy Curran - Democratic Services Manager

e-mail: s.curran@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Elected Member Annual Reports

1. Definition

An annual report will enable elected Members to highlight to the electorate the work that they have undertaken or been involved in during a specific civic year.

2. Background

The Local Government Measure 2011 introduced a number of new statutory requirements to strengthen democracy in Wales. One of the requirements is concerned with making arrangements for every elected Member to provide an annual report at the end of each municipal year.

The details of the statutory requirements are found in section five of the Measure:

- i) A local authority must make arrangements for
 - a) each person who is a member of the local authority to make an annual report about that person's activities as a member of the authority during the year to which the report relates;*
 - b) each person who is a member of the authority's executive to make a report about the person's activities as a member of the executive during the year to which the report relates; and*
 - c) the authority to publish all annual reports produced by its Members and by Members of its executive.**
- ii) The arrangements may include conditions as to the content of the report that must be satisfied by the person making it.*
- iii) A local authority must publicise its arrangements.*
- iv) In exercising its functions under this section a local authority must have regard for any guidance issued by ministers.*

3. Approach

In order to support Members in producing their reports at the end of a municipal year, it has been agreed that the content of such reports follow a simple standard form. This will allow for the right balance between providing information that will be relevant and interesting for the electorate, whilst avoiding the risk that the annual reports become political in nature. The annual reports will be published in PDF format on the Councillors' pages of the Council's corporate website.

It has been agreed that any Annual Report by an elected Member should be concise and limited to two A4 sides. To assist elected Members in preparing an annual report five suggested headings have been agreed to assist in focussing the report:

- Role and Responsibilities;
- Community Activity;
- Initiatives and Special Activities;
- Learning and Development; and
- Other Activities and Interests.

Some examples of information that can be included under each heading are outlined below.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Democratic Services Unit will provide accurate information on the attendance of members at full Council and all other Council committees.

Individual Councillors will be expected to provide information on any external bodies that they sit on, including levels of attendance which must be recorded personally. Examples of external bodies/committees could include:

- School Governing Bodies;
- Local Town/Community Councils;
- Local Authority Consortium Committees; and
- Special Interest Groups

This list is indicative and not exhaustive.

Community Activity

This is an opportunity for Councillors to highlight the work they have undertaken on behalf of their local constituents. It should not include details of specific cases. It could include details of regular surgeries they have held and any relevant outcomes. The Democratic Services Unit will not provide any information within this section.

Initiatives and Special Activities

This is where Councillors have the opportunity to describe any major initiatives or special projects that they have been associated with on behalf of Neath Port Talbot Council.

Learning and Development

Councillors can highlight in this section what Personal Development activities they have undertaken over the previous civic year. Examples can include events such as Council seminars or official training courses. In the future this information will mirror what a Councillor has included within section two of their Personal Development Review.

Other Activities/Interests

This is a general heading for Councillors to provide any information on themselves that they believe will be of interest to their constituents. It can be the opportunity to show the 'personal' aspect of your role as a Councillor.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Democratic Services Managers will be available to read the reports to offer advice on whether any of the content is inappropriate. We anticipate that many Members will wish to produce the content themselves without the need for administrative support, however, should any Members need assistance then please make contact with the Democratic Services Manager who will be pleased to help. Should there be demand, training can also be arranged.

The Democratic Services Committee will evaluate this scheme annually to ensure that the process is fit for purpose.

Guidelines

As with any publication that is in essence linked to the Council there are a number of areas that must be considered when writing annual reports. The next section ensures that elected Members are made aware of potential issues that can or cannot be included within Annual Reports.

In 1986 Parliament imposed controls on Local Authority publicity prohibiting what was described as “political publicity” which appeared to be designed to affect public support for a political party. Also the law made provision for a statutory code of recommended practice to which Local Authorities must have regard in undertaking any publicity. The current Code of Practice for Local Authorities in Wales was issued by the National Assembly for Wales in October 2001.

Officers do not wish to be seen as censors of Members’ publications but we have to ensure that anything that is published using public money complies with the Code.

In considering the subject areas of the annual reports, the following matters will be important:-

- i. the reports should be relevant to the functions of the authority;
- ii. it should not duplicate unnecessarily publicity produced by central government, another local authority or another public authority

Comment should be objective, balanced, informative, and accurate and issues must be presented clearly and as fairly as possible.

The reports may include information about individual Councillors only where this is relevant to their position and responsibilities within the Council and all content should be objective and explanatory. It is important that annual reports are not liable to misrepresentation as being party political.



Elected Member Annual Report (DATE)

Councillor XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Electoral Division: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Roles and Responsibilities:

Since I was elected as a Councillor for XXXXXXXX and as you will see in my report, I am very much hands on as a Member and very involved in my community including:

Chair of Governors of XXXXXXXX School

Vice Chair of Governors of XXXXXXXX School

Member of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

A Board Member of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Founding member of the XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

I am a member of the parish of xxxxxxxxxxxxx I am Chairman of the xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I sit on the below Committees in my role as County Borough Councillor:

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

Community Activity:

During the past year I have supported my local constituents in what has been a very difficult year for many of them.

I am very involved in the Campaign to xxxxx and have seen the completion of two major projects in my ward to
XX
XX

With the use of Communities First funding I oversaw the
XX. I was also able to receive funding to oversee the
XX

I am continuing to work on the regeneration of
XX
XX. I hold a regular surgery on a Saturday Morning and carry out street surgeries most days.

I also attend Community P.A.C.T Meetings.

Initiatives and Special Activities:

During the year as a County Borough Councillor I have been involved in :

- XX
- XX
- XX
- XX
- XX

Learning and Devolvement:

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

27th November 2023

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Mr C. Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Members Personal Development Review (PDR) Process

Purpose of the Report

1. To remind Members of the current policy in relation to the Annual Development Review (PDR) process.

Background

2. Section 7 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires local authorities to ensure the provision of reasonable training and development opportunities for its Members.
3. Each Member should have the opportunity to have a review of their training and development needs on an annual basis. However, it should be noted that these provisions do not apply to the executive Leader of an authority which operates a Leader and Cabinet Executive (as adopted in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council).

4. The original scheme outlined that reviews wherever possible should be undertaken by elected Members for elected Members.
5. In the previous administration a small cohort of Members from across the political groups were trained by officers from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) on how to undertake a review. Officers will be engaging with the WLGA and political groups to explore a cohort of current members undertaking this training.
6. In previous years, the submitted responses from Members who completed the personal development review exercise were classified as confidential and securely archived. Nevertheless, the information obtained did help to inform the annual training and development programme.
7. Despite initial early enthusiasm in the review scheme interest from Members in undergoing an individual review on an annual basis declined over the next four years with Members feeling that the exercise did not add any value in conducting their individual roles and responsibilities.
8. Members emphasised the importance for ensuring 'political buy in' from the various Group leaders to assist in maintaining the process on an annual basis.

Financial Impact

9. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

10. As this report relates to governance and member reviews, no integrated impact assessment is required.

Workforce Impacts

11. There are no significant workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Powers

12. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (S.7) sets out the obligations on local authorities, details of which are referenced in this report.

Risk Management

13. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

Consultation

14. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. However, the authority must ensure that the review includes an opportunity for an interview with someone who they regard as 'suitably qualified' individual.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended, that having due regard to the fact that no integrated impact assessment is required that the Democratic Services Committee:
 - Note the Members Personal Development Review Scheme
 - Approves that the Democratic Services Manager will communicate with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and political groups to explore a cohort of current members to undertake the training to conduct Personal Development Reviews.
 - Approves that the Democratic Services Manager will communicate with all Members via email, reminding them of the scheme and inviting them to complete a Personal Development Review should they so wish.

Reason for Decision

16. Welsh local authorities are required to have regard to any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers and must allow for the further development of the Member Annual Personal Development Review process.

Implementation of Decision

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

Appendices

18. Appendix 1 - Personal Development Review Scheme

List of Background Papers

19. None

Officer Contacts

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Appendix 1

Member Personal Development Review

1. Definition

Personal development review (PDR) is a way for a member and the Council to mutually assess a member's personal development needs. The review should be set within the context of the role of the member, his/her aspirations for what s/he hopes to achieve, the purpose and aspirations of the Council and the needs of the community.

2. Purpose

PDR schemes enable members to build confidence, develop skills and knowledge and improve their own performance and contribution to the council and the community. They can provide:

- a) Clarity for members about the expectations and accountabilities placed upon them;
- b) Understanding of and support for the individual and collective development needs of members;
- c) Support for members in preparing for new roles (succession planning);
- d) An understanding and ownership of organisational goals; and
- e) Support for improved member performance.

3. Statutory Provisions

The Local Government Measure 2011 introduced a new requirement on councils to make available to all members (except the Leader of Council) the opportunity for a development review on an annual basis.

The statutory guidance on personal development reviews that has been issued by Welsh Government provides that:

3.1 Annual Review

- a) Every local authority member, other than an executive leader, must be offered the opportunity to have their training and development needs reviewed on an annual basis. It is recommended that much of the training and development needs of local authority members are identified by such reviews;
- b) The review must include an opportunity for a pre-planned interview between the member and a suitably qualified person. The interview could include a review of the training and development received by the member over the last year (or appropriate period if the local authority member has only been recently elected);
- c) Local authorities may wish to consider detailing the outcome of the interview in an agreed plan which sets out training and development needs, if any, identified for the year ahead. It is recommended that this personal development plan is provided for the member and signed by both member and reviewed. This is a private document which is not expected to be published by the authority or member, although a member is free to publicise in his or her annual report any training and development undertaken if he or she so wishes.

- d) Authorities can apply for Charter status. In achieving the standard required for the Charter, local authorities will need to adopt role descriptions for the posts of leader, deputy leader, executive member, scrutiny member, chair of scrutiny and chairs of statutory and area committees; and
- e) The review is an assessment of training and development needs. A local authority may wish to consider making it clear to members that the review is not a performance review or an assessment of how well or how badly a member has conducted their duties. That is not a statutory requirement and is a matter for the electorate to judge at the ballot box.

3.2 Suitably Qualified

- a) It is for the local authority to determine who could be considered a suitably qualified person to conduct the interview with local authority members to discuss their training and development needs a part of their annual review. This responsibility could be allocated the Democratic Services Committee within the authority. In most cases, this may not be a question of naming individuals, but of describing a post or office holder. It would probably be neither suitable nor desirable for a single person to be made responsible for conducting all interviews;
- b) Some local authorities already carry out various practices in relation to the review of the training and development needs of its members. Practices include group leaders conducting interviews with their members or interviews being conducted by the leader and the

executive members. Both these practices are perfectly acceptable methods of complying with the requirements of the Measure.

- c) Authorities may prefer, however, to divest the duty with their human resources officers. If this is the preferred option, local authorities may consider making the Head of Democratic Services responsible for co-operating with human resources officers for this part of their work. If the Head of Paid Service was selected as a suitably qualified person to conduct an interview it would not be expected that they would work under the supervision of the Head of Democratic Services;
- d) Some authorities may prefer to hire external consultants or peers to conduct interviews, which is also acceptable. Local authorities are encouraged to appoint a Member Development Champion from amongst its councillors;
- e) It is recommended that there should be no surprises in the system and that individual members know who they can expect to conduct their interview. Local authorities may wish to consider including an option in their arrangements for members to make a request to the Head of Democratic Services to arrange for a different person to conduct their interview if there is a good reason for so doing; and
- f) Finally, authorities must ensure that anyone conducting an interview must themselves have received suitable training in how to do this and are advised to liaise with the WLGA to ensure the provision of this. Therefore, even if the authority has chosen to allocate the duty of conducting reviews to a post, rather than an individual, that post holder should have receive the necessary training before conducting reviews.

Executive Leader of the Local Authority

Section 7 of the Measure does not apply to the executive leader (or elected mayor) of an authority. However, there may, of course, be occasions where the leader wishes to receive training or development and there is no suggestion that, by excluding them from the provisions of the Measure, they should not be able to receive training, nor, indeed an annual review or an interview with a suitably qualified person.

4. Methodology

In developing an approach to Member Development Review, the Democratic Services Committee has considered the provisions of the Local Government Measure 2011, the guidance issued by the Welsh Local Government Association and approaches being adopted by other councils across Wales. The Democratic Services Committee proposes an approach based on the guidance issued by WLGA, supported by the following principles:

- a) The personal development review **is not** a performance appraisal but a means of supporting and developing members;
- b) The scheme is available to all members of the council;
- c) The scheme will be Member-led with professional support to be provided by the Head of Democratic Services, in co-operation with the human resources department;

- d) The development needs identified from the process will inform the creation of the member development programme for the following period;
- e) The development needs of members will be linked to the roles performed by members (the role descriptions to be based on those published by the WLGA, albeit those roles are not considered to be prescriptive and are intended for guidance only. See Appendix 2 for details);
- f) All member development must provide value for money and be affordable;
- g) The personal development review will be based on a self-assessment conducted by the reviewee, using the prescribed template. (See Appendix A);
- h) The personal development review will be undertaken by a “suitably qualified” person. The “suitably qualified” person may be an experienced member (ie a Member who has served in a previous administration) **or** a Member considered suitable for other reasons;
- i) Members wishing to participate in the scheme may identify up to three “suitably qualified” persons to undertake their review ensuring choice for reviewees and equitable distribution of workload for reviewers;
- j) Reviews will, generally, be carried out between the annual meeting of Council and the August recess;
- k) All “suitably qualified” persons will be required to undertake the relevant training to ensure consistent application of the scheme;
- l) The administration of the scheme will be the responsibility of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services;

- m) The development needs identified and recorded from the process will be confidential to the reviewee. The details of individual member development needs will not be for public disclosure, unless the member wishes to provide details, eg in his/her annual report. However, the member development programme overall will be accessible by the public;
- n) Access to individual member development records will be controlled by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services;
- o) The impact of development activity and the scheme as a whole will be evaluated and reviewed on a two yearly basis, or at other intervals, should the Head of Legal and Democratic Services consider this to be appropriate.

5. Implementation

The scheme will be trialled in the first instance with a small group of members to ensure it is fit for purpose. The trial will be evaluated and a final scheme, supported by an implementation plan, presented to Council for adoption prior to the annual meeting of Council 2013.

6. Resources

There are no additional resources available to the Council support the introduction of the annual personal development reviews. Consequently, the introduction of the scheme and the programmes developed to

respond to training and development needs identified from each personal development reviews will need to be met from within existing resources.

7. Evaluation and Review

An evaluation of the trial will be carried out to inform the development of the final scheme. Thereafter, it will be for the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Democratic Services Committee to ensure the scheme is regularly reviewed on at least a two yearly basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Framework for a Personal Development Review.

Guidance for Reviewers

Before conducting your review (s) you may find it useful to consider the following:

1. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of your meeting will be to provide your reviewee with an opportunity to review their role generally, identify any specific tasks for the year ahead, consider the areas where they feel confident and identify areas where they will be more challenged and may need support and development. Their learning and development needs together with the usefulness or otherwise of previous development will then be fed back to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to create development programmes.

2. Preparation

You may want to familiarise yourself with the role description of the person whose review you are conducting and consider some of the questions that you will ask to help the review meeting explore their role and needs. Your reviewee will contact you to plan a time and place convenient to you both where you can have a confidential undisturbed conversation. The meeting should take no longer than an hour and a half.

3. Undertaking the Review

Please remember that the conversation you have with your reviewee needs to be kept confidential.

Your role is to help the reviewee consider his/her role/contribution, strengths/weaknesses and training needs. You should act as an objective sounding board in this exploration.

Your role is not to give your own feedback on the performance of your colleague.

Use the template as the basis for your discussions.

It is the responsibility of the reviewee to undertake any actions resulting from the conversation, keep any documentation and discuss any emerging development needs with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Any additional support required from the Council may also be identified and fed into the organisation as appropriate.

Guidance for Reviewees

Before undertaking your review you may find it useful to consider the following guidance.

1. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of your meeting will be to provide you with an opportunity to review your role generally, consider any specific tasks for the year ahead, consider the areas where you feel confident and identify areas that you might find challenging and may need support and development. You will have an opportunity to identify learning and development needs which you will then be able to feed back to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to organise development programmes.

2. Preparation

Before your meeting you will need to complete the template. This will, help you to think about your role, specific tasks for this year and any support that you might need. You'll also find it useful to review your role description and person specification.

Make contact with your reviewer and plan a time and place convenient to you both where you can have a confidential undisturbed conversation. The meeting should take no longer than an hour and a half.

3. Undertaking the Review

Please remember that the conversation you have with your reviewer needs to be kept confidential to yourselves.

Use the template as a basis for your discussions.

Your reviewer will help you consider your role/contribution, strengths/weaknesses and training needs. They will act as an objective sounding board in this conversation.

Their role is not to give their own feedback on your performance.

Please note that it is your responsibility to undertake any actions resulting from the conversation, keep any documentation and discuss any emerging development needs with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Any additional support required from the Council may also be identified and fed into the organisation as appropriate.

TEMPLATE FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

Please complete this pro forma and bring it to the meeting, this form is confidential to you and the person who is conducting your review except for the final sheet which will be used by member support officers for your personal development plan and to prioritise activities for the Authority's training programme.

1. What are my current roles and responsibilities? (e.g. the council executive/cabinet portfolio, overview and scrutiny member, chair, member of a statutory committee such as planning, licensing etc. In the community, ward member/community leader)

2. What Learning and Development have I undertaken this year?

3. What additional learning and development would be useful, use the table below.

| Areas that I would like to develop are: | Preferred method of development (e.g. visits to other authorities, peer networking, practical workshops, e learning etc.) |
|--|---|
| Skills (e.g. meeting management, questioning techniques, media interviews, | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Knowledge (e.g. the code of conduct, equalities, the planning process, local policy etc.) | |
|---|--|

My learning and development needs for this year (please discuss this section of your pro forma with your member support officer, it will be used to create development plans and training programmes)

| Area for Development | How | Priority |
|--|--|----------|
| <p><i>example</i></p> <p><i>How to Chair scrutiny meetings effectively</i></p> | <p><i>I'd like to observe meetings in other authorities</i></p> <p><i>A workshop on chairing skills would be handy</i></p> <p><i>I'd like to receive some written guidance for scrutiny chairs</i></p> | 1 |
| <p><i>example</i></p> <p><i>Understanding of the planning system to answer constituents enquiries</i></p> | <p><i>A workshop on all the planning basics would be useful</i></p> <p><i>A meeting with planning officers on specific issues raised by people in my community about planning permission</i></p> | 3 |
| <p><i>example</i></p> <p><i>Local Government Finance, how do I contribute to the budget setting process?</i></p> | <p><i>I'd like to have discussions with finance officers and some mentoring from Cabinet member for Finance and Resources as this is an area I'd like to move into.</i></p> | 2 |
| <p><i>example</i></p> <p><i>Training in the use of social media</i></p> | <p><i>A meeting with someone who can explain how to use Twitter safely to publicise what I do and encourage the public to contact me.</i></p> | 4 |

My evaluation of the training I have already received

| <p>Training undertaken</p> | <p>What difference has this made to the way I work as a member</p> |
|---|---|
| <p><i>example Council induction programme on the work of the council and who's who.</i></p> | <p><i>Has given me a good refresher of how the council operates which has enabled me to explain this to people attending my surgeries and know who the appropriate officers are to speak to. It also highlighted areas where I need further training.</i></p> |
| <p><i>example media skills training</i></p> | <p><i>Helped me represent the council more effectively at a radio interview last week</i></p> |
| <p><i>example attended the Leadership Academy</i></p> | <p><i>Helped me understand my own leadership style and how it differs from other I am now working more effectively with other Cabinet members I also had help on a personal leadership challenge.</i></p> |

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

27th November 2023

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

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group on Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors.

Purpose of the Report

To propose that the Democratic Services Committee establish a Task and Finish Group on Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors.

Background

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

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 their meetings of October/November 2022 Democratic Services Committee members were updated on the areas of work in relation to Councillor Safety and Wellbeing being led by various organisations..

It was noted that the WLGA had 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 would engage in such processes as and when they arise.

Members were also notified that there had been a recent guide published by the LGA in relation to How Councillor’s Handle Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation that has been made available by the information sharing forum ‘Protect UK’.

The guidance from the LGA provided 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 contained some suggestions that local authorities may wish to consider and the Democratic Services Committee noted the 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 allegation of criminal activity may have to be taken further. | The Council’s Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Democratic Services Manager undertake this role. |

| | |
|---|---|
| <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> <p>Officers will then develop a protocol specifically for Neath Port Talbot Council</p> |
| <p>Working with the local police, establishing a named officer responsible for handling the</p> | <p>Officers will liaise with South Wales Police to identify a named</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>serious threats to councillors and to advise on personal safety and security.</p> | <p>officer and this will be included in any protocol development.</p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>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</p> |
| <p>Ensuring that council insurance arrangements cover injuries or loss suffered by elected members arising from their role as councillors in respect of any intimidation.</p> | <p>Work is ongoing with the Council's Insurance Section and Insurance Brokers to consider this element.</p> |
| <p>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.</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> <p>Officers will then develop a protocol specifically for Neath Port Talbot Council</p> |

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."

Proposal:

It is proposed that a Task and Finish Group of the Democratic Services Committee be established to focus on handling harassment abuse and intimidation for Councillors while promoting Councillor safety at a local level.

It is intended that the Task and Finish Group establishes proposals around:

- Establishing a council policy setting out procedures and protocols, should a councillor feel they are being publicly harassed, intimidated or abused.
- Establishing 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.
- Considering what steps should be taken by the Council to mitigate the risk to Councillors in the event of severe intimidation and threats,

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:

Approve the establishment of a Task and Finish Group of the Democratic Services Committee to focus on handling harassment abuse and intimidation for Councillors while promoting Councillor safety at a local level.

Reason for report

To approve the creation of a Task and Finish Group in relation to Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors.

Appendices

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

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

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

27th November 2023

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

Matter for Decision:

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group on Diversity in Democracy.

Purpose of the Report

To propose that the Democratic Services Committee establish a Task and Finish Group in respect of updating the Council's Diversity in Democracy Action Plan.

Background

Members will be aware that the WLGA embarked on an ambitious Diversity and Democracy Programme to ensure council chambers are more representative of their communities following local elections in May 2022. As part of this at a meeting of the WLGA on the 5th March 2021, the WLGA Council agreed:

- a. to encourage all political parties, through the WLGA Political Groups, to commit to proactive and coordinated activities to improve diversity in local government democracy;
- b. a formal position calling for the introduction of resettlement grants for all councillors and senior salary holders;

- c. to encourage all councillors to claim any necessary allowances or expenses;
- d. to encourage a declaration by July 2021 from councils in Wales, on becoming 'Diverse Councils'; to:
 - i. Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
 - ii. Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
 - iii. Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support councillors with other commitments; and
 - iv. Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections.
- e. that councils should set targets to be representative of the communities they serve at the next elections;
- f. to support the use of voluntary quotas for Welsh local elections; and
- g. the WLGA reviews the impact of voluntary quotas following the next local elections.

Accordingly, in light of paragraph 6(d) above, in the Council meeting held on May 26th 2021, members formerly declared that the Council will:

- Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
- Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
- Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support councillors with other commitments; and
- Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections.

In order to establish the best way to implement these requirements, Democratic Services Committee were tasked to consider the same as part of their consideration of the Member Induction Programme for 2022.

In response to the task set out in the WLGA requirements and instructed at Council, a Diversity in Democracy Action Plan of activity ahead of the 2022 elections was approved.

Work has been continuous and ongoing to deliver the commitments set out, and the majority of actions in the original action plan (as attached at Appendix 1) have been completed or are ongoing.

Proposal:

It is proposed that a Task and Finish Group of the Democratic Services Committee be established to focus on developing the next phase of Diversity in Democracy for the Council, considering national developments and local priorities.

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 approve the establishment of a Task and Finish Group of the Democratic Services Committee to focus on developing the next phase of Diversity in Democracy for the Council, considering national developments and local priorities.

Reason for report

To approve the creation of a Task and Finish Group in relation to Diversity in Democracy.

Appendices:

Appendix 1- Diversity in Democracy Action Plan 2022

Officer Contacts

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| Objective | Action Plan | Current Position |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Increase understanding of different tiers of government in Wales, the role each plays in society and how they operate.</p> | <p>Dissemination of Welsh Government educational resources to accompany the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds in Wales</p> | <p><u>Education resources</u> have been developed by the Electoral Commission and have been disseminated to schools.</p> |
| | <p>Utilising the opportunities for engagement and awareness raising and the educating of a 'role of a Councillor' through Key Stage 3, the welsh bacalaureate and citizenship lessons within schools and linking in with any new curriculum provided.</p> | <p>The education resources designed and developed by the Electoral Commission have been updated and utilised as part of modern citizen lessons in NPT schools at their discretion</p> |
| | <p>Ongoing review of the effectiveness of the voting awareness raising campaigns elections and to build upon these campaigns ahead of the Local Government Elections 2022, ensuring wider partnerships arrangements are taken forward to allow engagement with wider audiences.</p> | <p>The intention was to focus on the need to encourage new franchise groups to register to vote. However, it is clear that with this type of work there remains no quick fix solutions and relies more on a willingness to maintain steady consistent progress over the longer term.</p> |
| | <p>Promote Welsh Government's Guidance / materials for 16 and 17 year olds regarding Democracy in Wales. Explore Web-based platforms.</p> | <p><u>Education resources</u> have been developed by the Electoral Commission and promoted to local schools within the NPT area.</p> |
| | <p>Establishment of a Council website page 'Becoming a Councillor' to inform prospective Councillors on information</p> | <p>Website prepared and utilised as part of the streamlined on-boarding process for the 2022 intake of Members</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | that might assist in determining whether to stand. | |
| | Elections and Education Directorate to explore other potential avenues through school forums / youth councils / career fairs. Continue to engage with schools (subject to pandemic), including links with school councils and youth councils. | As detailed above the intention was to focus on the need to encourage new franchise groups to register to vote. However, it is also clear that this type of work requires an ongoing long term commitment. Maintaining a steady consistent approach building on the specialist resources by key stakeholders such as the Electoral Commission remains as important as ever. |
| Increase engagement with the public to raise awareness of the role and activities of the Council provide clarity about how the public can better inform local decision making; | Overview of the Council website page 'Becoming a Councillor' to be reviewed and promoted. | Website prepared and utilised as part of the streamlined on-boarding process for the 2022 intake of Members |
| | Work with Town and Community Council's to ensure links with 'Becoming a Councillor page' are promoted. | Website prepared and utilised as part of the streamlined on-boarding process for the 2022 intake of Members |
| | Liaise with local community groups, school governors and other such organisations to ensure links with 'Becoming a Councillor page' are promoted. | Website prepared and utilised as part of the streamlined on-boarding process for the 2022 intake of Members |
| | Publication of Council's Constitution. Constitution guide now a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. | Completed. The Constitutional Guide was placed on the Council's website in May 2022 |

| | | |
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| | Develop Public Participation Strategy Scheme for compliance with duty under the 2021 Act. Encouraging people to participate in decision making and promoting awareness of how to become a Member, what membership entails, promoting / facilitating processes | Completed. The Public Participation Strategy was approved by Council in Spring 2023. |
| | To continue the webcasting of meetings as specified under the 2021 Act and develop a hybrid meeting policy and ensure availability of translation facilities for Full Council meetings to be conducted bilingually and any other meetings required in legislation. | Completed. All meetings now take place in a hybrid manner. |
| | Liaise with Group Leaders to suggest they appoint Diversity Champions for each political group. | Completed |
| Comprehensive training and awareness programme available through a variety of routes available for members to support them in their role. | Review and implementation of an Elected Member Learning and Development Strategy identifying areas and development available for Members. | Member Induction Training Programme established for training for all members. |
| | Survey of members to be undertaken in May 2022 to identify any reasonable adjustments that maybe necessary to assist them in fulfilling their requirements as an elected member | All members surveyed in May 2022 in respect of any appropriate adjustments. |

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| | Review areas of training and development which can be made available online, core set of training materials which can be used for all Members. | Member Induction Training Programme established for training for all members |
| | Members Induction Programme - work with the WLGA and share good practices with other councils. | Member Induction Training Programme established for training for all members |
| | Ensuring training opportunities are available bilingually whenever possible. | Ongoing |
| | Provide the opportunity for mentoring / shadowing for newly Elected Members and undertaking Personal Development Reviews. | All members are encouraged to participate in Personal Development Review process on an annual basis. |
| | Ensure members receive training in equalities as part of member induction programme in May 2022. | Completed. Training provided as part of member induction programme. |
| | Promoting the WLGA's online "Councillor Guide" for the 2022 elections and the suite of National e'learning modules specifically developed for Members and freely available via the NHS learning@wales website or any replacement website. | Promoted as part of member induction in May 2022 and on an ongoing basis. |
| Improve the safety of councillors and their families when undertaking their council duties | Ensure that members undertake health and safety training, cyber/social media security and lone working training to ensure their safety during elections and when they are elected. | Completed. Training provided as part of Member Induction Process. |

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| | Regularly review health and safety training, lone working training | Ongoing. |
| | Publish official addresses on council website rather than personal addresses for Members (where requested). | Complete. All members afforded the opportunity to remove personal address. |
| Maximise opportunities for individuals to work in ways that enable them to achieve a work / life balance which protects their welfare and wellbeing and allows them to manage their own health and any caring / dependency relationships. | Newly Elected Members to have identity cards to allow secure access to council buildings. | Completed as part of member induction. |
| | To continue the streaming of Council meetings as specified under the 2021 Act and development of hybrid meeting policies | Completed |
| | Social media safety training to be delivered to members through the Member Induction Programme and built upon during their term of office. | Completed |
| | Promote the WLGA's advice and support service to newly elected Members who receive online abuse. | Ongoing |
| | Arrangements in place for remote attendance in meetings in light of the experience of virtual meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Development policy for hybrid meetings. | Hybrid Meetings now the norm for Council meetings. |
| | Promote job-sharing by executive leaders and other office holders and how it can apply in any circumstance | Completed. Constitution updated to allow for possibility. |

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| | Promote the remunerations that are available to Members on the Council website and to candidates standing for Election | Ongoing |
| | Promote family absence provisions | Ongoing |
| | Promote the IRPW Contribution Towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance Encourage all Members to claim any necessary allowances or expenses incurred. | Ongoing |
| | Support the Welsh Government's and IRPW's commitment to explore Resettlement grants or 'parachute payments' payments for Members who lose their seats at election. | Ongoing |
| | Reviewing meeting times to have more flexibility to suit the committee Members. | Completed. In accordance with the 2011 Measure this must be undertaken at least once per term. Members of individual committees are provided flexibility to change meeting times in accordance with rules approved by Full Council |
| | Ensure Members are advised of the support available to them through the Head of Democratic Services – providing contact details at the earliest opportunity during the Member Induction. Ensuring Members are aware of the 'Open Door' | Ongoing |

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| | policy of the Head of Democratic Services. | |
| Assess the effectiveness of the provisions in 2011 Measure in relation to data collection, and in relation to other candidate data that could be collected in order for political parties to support diverse candidates at elections | Undertake a diversity and inclusion survey with Members which will provide a benchmark for future elections and allow the feedback to be reviewed to support / barriers that may have been experienced by a Member during their term of office. The survey feedback will help to deliver a positive and diverse environment for future Members to undertake their roles. | Completed and ongoing gathering of data takes place. |
| | Share survey feedback with Members. | Completed. |
| Greater respect and support for those standing for and securing elected office. | Promote duty on political group leaders to promote high standards of conduct. | Ongoing training provided to Group Leaders and ongoing engagement with Standards Committee. |
| | Standards Committee to monitor compliance in relation to standards of conduct and provide training. | Ongoing. All Members required to have Code of Conduct Training. Refresher training took place June 2023. |
| | Ensure any proposals for hybrid meetings and venues for such meetings are appropriate in line with Equality Act 2010 requirements | Ongoing |
| | Supporting the Welsh Government's plans to introduce an Access to Elected Office fund to assist disabled people to stand for elected office at the 2022 Local Elections | Ongoing |

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| Increase awareness of the role of members, the contribution they make to society and how to become an Elected Member. | Overview of the Council website page 'Becoming a Councillor' to be reviewed and promoted. | Ongoing |
| | Produce a series of short explainer videos and sessions for the public highlighting the role of the member including: the benefits from both a member and community perspective, type of work undertaken, the remuneration received, training provided to undertake the role. | Completed |
| | Promote the WLGA website 'Becoming a Councillor'. | Ongoing |
| | Seek the participation of Group Leaders to champion the diversity expectations within the selection processes of their political parties and to encourage Group Leaders to promote the advice available to future candidates or individuals considering standing for office at the earliest opportunity. | Ongoing |
| | Encourage Members to utilise own media platforms to promote the role of a Councillor through Member blogs / 'day in the life of'. | Ongoing |