



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

2.00 PM MONDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2024

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

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

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1. Declarations of Interest
2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 3 - 6*)
 - 22 July 2024
3. Draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (*Pages 7 - 52*)
4. Member Annual Report Scheme (*Pages 53 - 64*)
5. Members Personal Development Review (PDR) Process (*Pages 65 - 86*)
6. Survey of Elected Members 2024/2025 (*Pages 87 - 98*)
7. Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors Task & Finish Group Final Report (*Pages 99 - 116*)
8. Forward Work Programme (*Pages 117 - 120*)

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

5 November 2024

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

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

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

Notes:

- (1) If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*

Democratic Services Committee

(Hybrid – Council Chamber, Port Talbot Civic Centre and Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

22 July 2024

Chairperson: Councillor S.Rahaman

Vice Chairperson: Councillor N.Goldup-John

Councillors: M.Harvey, J.Henton, C.Lewis, P.A.Rees, S.H.Reynolds and P.Rogers

Officers In Attendance S.Curran, P.Chivers, D.Griffiths and I.Rees

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.

3. **Member Car Parking Scheme Proposals**

Officers provided members with an overview of the report contained within the agenda pack.

Members asked what times council car parks would be available for member use.

The Head of Engineering and Transport confirmed that members would have use of the car parks during the car parks operational

hours. It was noted that the operational hours differed between Neath and Port Talbot Multi Storey Car Parks.

Members commented that the Pontardawe Town Centre area was not included in the scheme.

Members enquired how the annual cost to members of the proposed scheme was decided.

The Head of Engineering and Transport confirmed that the charging tariff was reflective of the pre-Covid cost of the scheme and took into account increases in costs and public charging tariffs in the interim period.

Members queried the amount the proposed scheme could generate annually.

The Head of Engineering and Transport confirmed that the scheme was currently suspended, if all members joined the paid scheme this would raise £15k towards the council budget position.

Resolved: It is recommended that having due regard to the integrated impact screening assessment members approve the Member Car Parking Scheme annexed to the report at Appendix 1.

4. Verbal update on Task and Finish Group Progress

Officers provided a verbal update on the task & finish groups established by the committee in relation to Harassment, Abuse & Intimidation and Diversity in Democracy. The Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation group held two workshops which generated discussion and tangible ideas to take forward. Officers advised members that due to the timing of the snap general election, it had not been possible to consider Diversity in Democracy within previously stated timescales. It was proposed that work would be undertaken to identify outcomes from the Harassment Abuse and Intimidation workshops, with the Diversity in Democracy workshops being re-arranged following council recess. It is anticipated that both groups will be concluded by autumn, when ideas will be reported to the committee and council.

Members noted the verbal update.

5. **Forward Work Programme Consideration**

Officers referred to the proposed Forward Work Programme for the forthcoming civic year, which was included in the agenda pack. Members were advised that an additional meeting had been scheduled for 30th September to manage the workload of the committee. Members were given an opportunity to provide feedback on any of the items or to raise items for future consideration.

Members raised concern that there should be wider consideration when undertaking a review of the new scrutiny model.

Officers confirmed that the council decision to implement a new scrutiny model would be reviewed and the results would be reported to council. Democratic Services Committee can be included as part of the review process.

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

6. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

**Cllr. Saifur Rahaman
CHAIRPERSON**

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Democratic Services Committee

11th November 2024

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 2025/2026 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 2025/26 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 2024/25	Proposed by IRPW for 2025/2026
Basic Salary	£18,666	£19,771
Leader	£62,998	£66,727
Deputy Leader	£44,099	£46,709
Executive Members	£37,799	£40,036
Chairs of Committee	£27,999	£29,657
Leader of largest opposition Group	£27,999	£29,657
Leader of other Political Group	£22,406	£23,726
Civic Head	£27,999	£29,657
Deputy Civic Head	£22,406	£23,726

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.

Uplift of remuneration using the Welsh Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

Q1: 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 using the ASHE for all Wales to increase their remuneration in line with 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
- Blank

Any additional comments:

Impact of current determinations

Q2: Following evidence received from Heads of Democratic Services of Principal Councils, on local flexibility for payments to co opted members, serving on committees of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities. This Panel consulted on this proposal and responses (from the consultation on the 2024 to 2025 draft annual report) supported the Panel's determinations and so no changes were made in the final Determinations, resulting in the Panel allowing relevant officers to decide if it would 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.

The Panel would now like to know if this determination has been adopted by your relevant authority:

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- Blank

Any additional comments:

Q3: Last year, in conjunction with One Voice Wales, the Panel held a seminar on the treatment of tax on members Community and Town Councils (CTC) allowances. This was followed up with guidance on how to apply the exemption to the working from home allowance (£156).

The Panel is interested to learn if the seminar and or guidance has increased the number of CTC members receiving the allowance.

Q4: All allowances paid to elected members of Community and Town Councils should be recorded on the Annual Statement of Payments for Community and Town Councils (noting Statements already submitted by Community and Town Councils will be accepted would be accepted). This includes NIL returns.

Earlier this year, a revised Statement template and advice note were issued to Community and Town Councils. The Panel are interested if the Template has again increased the number of councillors claiming allowances?

The Committee is therefore invited to consider, and comment on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report and its Determinations for 2025/26, and to provide comments for inclusion in the response to the consultation. The consultation period ends on 29th November 2024.

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 increase to Member remuneration has the potential to attract public criticism at a time of severe and enduring austerity. The Panel acknowledges this in making its proposals but points 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 28th October 2024. 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.

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

Democratic Services Manager (Head of Democratic Services)

Tel: 01639 763194 or E-mail: s.curran@npt.gov.uk

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT, DOCUMENT

Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: draft annual report 2025 to 2026

Sets the range and level of payments for the financial year
2025 to 2026.

First published: 4 October 2024

Last updated: 4 October 2024

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Foreword

Welcome to the draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (“Panel), setting the decisions and determinations on pay, expenses, and benefits for elected members of Principal Councils, Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs), Community and Town Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2025. This is the final draft report before the Panel’s functions transfer over to the Democracy Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) from 1 April 2025.

You can find out more about our Panel members on our [website](#).

This has been a busy year for the Panel, with the focus on compliance, engagement, fairness and research, whilst also preparing for the transfer of functions to the DBCC.

Since its inception, I believe that the Panel has had a significant and beneficial influence on the value of elected members of local government in Wales at all levels and in respect of all the all authorities that are within its remit. In particular, the Panel has sought to ensure that remuneration issues do not act as a barrier to participation in local democracy.

The Local Government Measure requires the Panel to take cognisance of the overall cost to the public purse. We have continued to do this, and maintained the principle that the remuneration of elected members of our Principal Councils is linked specifically to the average wages of people in Wales. I am satisfied that the balance between fairness and support to elected members and the overall impact on public finances has been achieved for 2025 to 2026.

I wish to give my appreciation and thanks to the Panel for their professionalism, engagement and judgement during the last few years. This has enabled the Panel’s Determinations to be robust, sound and well supported by stakeholders.

Also, my grateful thanks to the members of our Secretariat who have supported the Panel.

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 29 November 2024 (you can either, write to us (see contact details), [email](#) us your comments or complete the form on our website 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 2025.

Frances Duffy, Chair
Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Introduction

Last year we published our first Strategic Plan, setting out the framework for our deliberations and wider context for our decisions from 2023 to 2025.

The strategy outlines an appropriate and fair remuneration framework, aimed at encouraging inclusion and participation in order to support local democracy, and giving communities their voice.

The Panel has a role to promote a wider understanding of the work of local and community council members, to encourage participation in local democracy and to improve diversity of councillors to better represent the diversity of local communities. The Panel has previously introduced reimbursement for cost of care (for all elected members) and a working from home and ICT allowance

(community and town councillors) aimed at removing potential barriers relating to caring responsibilities and home working enabling elected members to participate in local democracy.

The Panel continues to monitor, where it can, the impact of its determinations on improving diversity within local democracy, and with the support of Welsh Government, sought views on the association between remuneration and diversity within local democracy. The Panel has written to Welsh Government to ask for support in providing a better baseline of evidence to monitor and track changes in the demographics of our elected officials.

With a strengthened Panel, we continue to focus on building our research and evidence plan to support our discussions on our remuneration framework. We publish our Research and Evidence paper each year along with the final report in line with our aim to be open and transparent in all our decision making.

The Panel believes fair and reasonable levels of remuneration are crucial to local democracy. We therefore again agreed to continue to align levels of remuneration for elected members of Principal Councils, Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs), 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 **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011** states that “the Panel must take into account what it considers will be the likely financial impact on relevant authorities” of its decisions. We considered evidence on public sector finances and the impact on Principal Authorities’ budgets before determining remuneration levels across the local government family.

Whilst the total cost of remuneration for elected members is relatively low in terms of overall budgets, the Panel are aware of the continuing 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 requirements, the Panel this year looked at the reporting for Community and Town Councils (CTCs). We provided clerks of CTCs with a new template report and will continue to monitor the level of payments made. These annual returns form an important part of the evidence that the Panel considers in determining the impact and effectiveness of our decisions.

We addressed queries from CTCs 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 updated our guidance on this issue, and this has helped reduce the number of queries. We are mindful of the help that One Voice Wales continues to give to local clerks and councillors on remuneration issues and will again this year hold an online seminar for all community councillors during the consultation period.

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

We introduced a total sum reporting for all mandatory payments to members of CTCs for working from home, the flat rate consumables allowance and travel and subsistence claims. This is in line with the reporting of costs of care and personal assistance claims. The Panel feels 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.

Also, last year, the Panel introduced the option for coopted members of Principal Councils, National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities, to be paid an hourly rather than daily rate where thought appropriate. We will be looking at the annual payment returns for this year to monitor the take up of this.

We have reviewed and updated our **guidance** (previously called the Regulations) to better support relevant authorities to be able to comply with our determinations about members' remuneration, including payments, reporting and publication requirements as set out in this draft annual report.

A key issue that the Panel considered in depth this year was the development of the new Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs). After research into the progress being made and taking evidence and feedback from CJCs and Welsh Government policy colleagues, the Panel issued a draft Supplementary Report covering the remuneration of lay members of CJCs on 27 June 2024.

The Panel considered it important that payments and allowances to elected and appointed members of all relevant authorities within the local government family are fair and consistent. It was the Panel's view that the situation regarding remuneration of lay members of CJCs was anomalous with remuneration of coopted members with other local government authorities.

As a result, the Panel consulted with stakeholders about aligning the approach taken to remunerating lay members of CJCs with the remuneration of coopted members across the relevant authorities within the local government family, asking if lay members of a CJC should be paid in the same way as coopted members of other relevant authorities.

The Panel expresses its appreciation to those who took the time to send their views and comments. The responses were almost all supportive of the approach set out in the report.

The Panel issued a **final Supplementary Report** on 31 July 2024.

The final area that the Panel is considering actioning this year is to undertake a review of Framework and Methodology for Remuneration of Senior Roles in Principal Councils, Community and Town Councils (CTCs), and CJsCs. This is a considerable piece of work requiring full examination and subsequent research, and the Panel therefore intends to develop a more detailed scope of the nature of the research and methodology required over the coming months in order for the new Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) to take this work forward.

Additionally, the Panel has become aware of some concerns over the workload and demands on senior roles in National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel therefore proposes incorporating research questions that would support a review into these areas also within the scope of the research framework described above.

As we come to the end of the year, and the winding up of the Panel and the transfer of its functions to the DBCC, the Panel will be preparing a Legacy Report which we intend to act as a summary of the main issues we have researched and made decisions on over the past 10 or so years and form an evidence base for the DBCC to take forward.

Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Our role

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

- Principal Councils, County and County Borough Councils
- Community and Town Councils
- National Park authorities

- Fire and Rescue authorities
- Corporate Joint Committees

The Panel is an independent 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.

Panel membership

Frances Duffy, Chair
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 [website](#).

Transfer of functions to Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru

Following an independent ten-year review of the Panel in 2021, the Panel's functions will transfer over to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru on 1 April 2025. This is as a result of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act being passed in July 2024. Having received Royal Assent in the Autumn, the Act expands the role and remit of the DBCC across aspects of a healthy Welsh democracy, including setting the remuneration for members of the following bodies across Wales:

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- Principal Councils
- Town and Community Councils
- Corporate Joint Committees
- Fire and Rescue authorities
- National Park authorities

As the DBCC draws on the same evidence base and stakeholders to undertake its own work and its purpose is also rooted in promoting effective local democracy, there is already a strong connection between the work of the two organisations. Both agendas rely on having a real understanding and appreciation of the needs of the population of Wales, the way in which elected members and councils operate and an understanding of members' workloads.

As the Panel is required now, the DBCC will be expected to produce a draft Annual Report for consultation and take account of responses prior to publishing a final Report by 28 February each year. The Report will set out its determination about remuneration levels for the following financial year.

The Panel will be abolished via the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act on 31 March 2025.

We are working closely with the DBCC to ensure a seamless transfer of the Panel's functions on 1 April 2025. We have set up a transition workstream to capture requirements such as development of a legacy report which will provide details on the Panel's history as well areas which might be considered by the DBCC in the future.

Methodology

As set out in our strategic objectives the Panel has committed to making evidence-based decisions.

This year we again 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 2025 to 2026 financial year. This included:

- data on average UK and Wales weekly earnings, including ASHE the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
- public and private sector pay trends
- 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)
- data collected on the take up of remuneration and benefits packages by councillors
- democratic Health of Community and Town Councils
- 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 One Voice Wales, Society for Local Council Clerks, North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils. We also received evidence from the Chair of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Chair of National Parks Wales (who is also Chair of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and the Chair of South West Wales CJC (who is also the Leader of Swansea City Council).

In March, the Panel attended the One Voice Wales conference. This enabled the Panel to meet delegates and discuss issues relating to the Panel's deliberations. The Panel will be attending this year's conference and look forward to meeting CTC clerks and councillors.

The Panel also met with the Convention of Scottish local authorities (COSLA), Scottish Government and the Convener of Scottish local authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC) to discuss SLARC's independent review of councillor remuneration and particular methodology for setting councillor remuneration. The Panel found the conversation interesting and informative on how the Scottish remuneration methodology compares with Wales.

The Panel looks forward to engaging with Heads of Democratic services and Leaders of Principal Councils, during the consultation period. 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 would like to thank all those that contributed to our deliberations either directly or through feedback and questions on our last report.

Determinations for 2025 to 2026

Principal councils

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 3 days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment, and no changes are proposed for 2025 to 2026.

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 2025 to 31 March 2026 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 3 fifths of all Wales 2022 ASHE, the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £19,771.

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, 4 and 5.

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £74,141.

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	£19,771
Band 1 leader	£74,141
Band 1 deputy leader	£51,899
Band 2 executive members	£44,485
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£29,657
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£29,657
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£23,726
Civic Head (if paid)	£29,657

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Description	Amount
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£23,726
Presiding member (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£19,771

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	£19,771

Description	Amount
Band 1 leader	£66,727
Band 1 deputy leader	£46,709
Band 2 executive members	£40,036
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£29,657
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£29,657
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£23,726
Civic Head (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£23,726
Presiding member (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£19,771

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	£19,771
Band 1 leader	£63,020
Band 1 deputy leader	£44,114
Band 2 executive members	£37,812
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£29,657
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£29,657
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£23,726
Civic Head (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£23,726
Presiding member (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£19,771

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 £9,886.

The salary of a vice-chair is set at 50% of the Chair and will be £4,943.

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 three fire and rescue services (FRAs) in Wales: Mid and West Wales, North

Wales and South Wales were formed as part of Local Government re-organisation in 1996. FRAs comprise elected members who are nominated by the Principal Councils within each fire and rescue service area.

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. 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	£5,576
Chair	£15,462
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£9,531
Committee Chair or other senior post	£9,531

Table 2: payments to fire and rescue authorities

Fire and rescue authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,788
Chair	£12,674
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£6,743
Committee Chair or other senior post	£6,743

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 coopted 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 therefore determined 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

Payments to co-opted (lay) members of Corporate Joint Committees: determination 6

Co-opted lay members of a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) will be paid on the

same basis as coopted (lay) members with voting rights of other bodies within the local government family.

The amounts are set out below.

Table 4: payments made to co opted (lay) members of Corporate Joint Committees

Role	Hourly rate payment	Up to 4 hours payment rate	4 hours and over payment rate
Lay chairs of committees	£33.50	£134	£268
Ordinary lay members with voting rights	£29.75	£119	£238

This determination is valid from 31 July 2024.

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 7

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 8

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment.

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 2025 to 2026 are now proposed as:

£126.74 for a full day and £63.37 for a half day.

Reporting requirements: determination 9

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 proposed 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	Requirement
Extra costs payment	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory for all members
Senior role	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory £500 for 1 member; optional for up to 7
Mayor or chair	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Mayor Chair	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £500
Attendance	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional

Type of payment	Group requirement	Requirement
allowance		
Financial loss	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional
Travel and subsistence	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional
Costs of care or personal assistance	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory
Extra costs payment	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Mandatory for all
Senior role	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Mandatory for 1 member; optional up to 5
Mayor or chair	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional; up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or mayor chair	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional; up to a maximum of £500
Attendance allowance	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional
Financial loss	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional
Travel and	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to	Optional

Type of payment	Group requirement	Requirement
subsistence	13,999)	
Costs of care or personal assistance	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional
Extra costs payment	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Mandatory for all members
Senior role	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Mandatory for 1 member; optional up to 5
Mayor or chair	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional; up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or mayor chair	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 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional
Travel and subsistence	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional

Type of payment	Group requirement	Requirement
Costs of care or personal assistance	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Mandatory for all
Extra costs payment	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Mandatory for all members
Senior role	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional; up to 3 members
Mayor or chair	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional; up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or mayor chair	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional; up to a maximum of £500
Attendance allowance	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional
Financial loss	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional
Travel and subsistence	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional
Costs of care or personal assistance	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Mandatory for all
Extra costs payment	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Mandatory for all

Type of payment	Group requirement	Requirement
Senior role	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or chair	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional; up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or mayor chair	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
Costs of care or personal assistance	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Mandatory for all

Payments to Community and Town Councils

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 2025 to 2026

Determination 1

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils is set at £19,771.

Determination 2

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £74,141. 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 £9,886.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,943.

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 2024 to 2025. The only change is the stipulation of hourly rates, as set out in Table 3.

Determination 6

Co opted lay members of a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) will be paid on the same basis as co opted members with voting rights of other bodies within the local government family, as set out in Table 4.

Determination 7

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 8

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment.

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 2025 are now proposed as £126.74 for a full day and £63.37 for a half day.

Determination 9

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 2024 to 2025 [Annual Report](#) of the Panel remain valid and should be applied.

Contact details

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

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

Telephone: 03000 616095

Email: irpmailbox@gov.wales

This Annual Report and other information about the Panel and its work are available on our [website](#).

This document may not be fully accessible.

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

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Go to <https://www.gov.wales/independent-remuneration-panel-wales-draft-annual-report-2025-2026.html> for the latest version.

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Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: draft annual report 2025 to 2026

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 29 November 2024.

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

Uplift of remuneration using the Welsh Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

Q1: 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 using the ASHE for all Wales to increase their remuneration in line with 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
- Blank

Any additional comments:

Impact of current determinations

Q2: Following evidence received from Heads of Democratic Services of Principal Councils, on local flexibility for payments to co opted members, serving on committees of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities. This Panel consulted on this proposal and responses (from the consultation on the 2024 to 2025 draft annual report) supported the Panel's determinations and so no changes were made in the final Determinations, resulting in the Panel allowing relevant officers to decide if it would 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.

The Panel would now like to know if this determination has been adopted by your relevant authority:

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- Blank

Any additional comments:

Q3: Last year, in conjunction with One Voice Wales, the Panel held a seminar on the treatment of tax on members Community and Town Councils (CTC) allowances. This was followed up with guidance on how to apply the exemption to the working from home allowance (£156).

The Panel is interested to learn if the seminar and or guidance has increased the number of CTC members receiving the allowance.

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- Blank

Any additional comments (please do not provide members personal information)

Q4: All allowances paid to elected members of Community and Town Councils should be recorded on the Annual Statement of Payments for Community and Town Councils (noting Statements already submitted by

Community and Town Councils will be accepted would be accepted). This includes NIL returns.

Earlier this year, a revised Statement template and advice note were issued to Community and Town Councils. The Panel are interested if the Template has again increased the number of councillors claiming allowances?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- Blank

Any additional comments (please do not provide members personal information)



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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

11th November 2024

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 an 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
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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

I am continuing to work on the regeneration of
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. 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 :

- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Learning and Devolvemement:

In the previous Civic Year I have attended a large number of seminars and training sessions on a wide cross-section of important topics including xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I have also undertaken training in xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Other Activities and Interests:

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

11th November 2024

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

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

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

11 November 2024

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

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title:

Survey of Elected Members 2024/2025

Purpose of the Report:

To outline a proposed survey to conduct with elected members and for the Democratic Services Committee to agree the process for conducting the survey.

Background:

Previously, surveys have been undertaken with members to gain information, feedback and recommendations for improvement on a range of topics based on the support they receive from the Democratic Services Team. These have included-

1. Scrutiny arrangements and support
2. Member Development, seminars and training

3. IT and Mod.Gov issues
4. Facilities
5. General administration and support

It is a requirement to survey members annually on the timings of committee meetings, and the Member Survey gives the opportunity to do so while also capturing other valuable feedback from members. The responses allow members to reflect whilst providing officers with important feedback to allow them to continually improve and develop the services provided to them.

Additionally, information is gathered relating to the training and development needs of members which in turn feeds into the annual training and seminar programme.

It is proposed that a survey is conducted with members in winter 2024 with a view that any feedback/recommendations for improvement can be prepared ready for the 2024/25 civic year. Additionally, any training requirements identified can be built into the programme for the forthcoming year.

A draft survey is attached at Appendix 1 based on previous surveys conducted. Members of the Committee are asked to comment on the content and agree a final version to be conducted with all elected members.

Members are regularly surveyed on different topics throughout the year via email and the response rate is variable, and very rarely more than 50%. Therefore, in an attempt to obtain the highest possible response rate Members of the Committee are asked to approve that the proposed method for this survey is for Democratic Services staff to undertake the survey on a one to one basis with elected members. This is a model which has been utilised previously with good results.

Financial Impacts:

There will be no financial impacts from undertaking the survey. However, there could be costs associated with the implementation of any recommendations for improvement depending on the survey results.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications.

Workforce Impacts:

There will be no workforce impacts from undertaking the survey. However, there could be impacts associated with the implementation of any recommendations for improvement depending on the survey results.

Legal Impacts:

No Impacts

Risk Management Impacts:

There are no risks associated with this report.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that members agree:

- (a) That an annual survey be conducted with all elected members between November 2024 and January 2025.

(b) The content of the annual survey based on the draft attached at appendix 1.

(c) That the survey be conducted on a 1:1 basis by Democratic Services staff.

Reason for the Proposed Decision:

To approve the member survey for elected members for to inform arrangements for the 2024/25 civic year.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft Member Survey

Officer Contact:

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

MEMBER NAME:

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER:

Scrutiny:

Questions for Scrutiny Members:

- Please rate the current overall scrutiny arrangements out of 10 and make any comments (If not 10 out of 10 then why not? If 10 out of 10, what made you score this?)

- Please give us your feedback on the new scrutiny model and how it is working for your committee?

- How useful do you find the Scrutiny Pre-Briefings (timing in relation to meetings and usefulness)

- Have you raised any questions in advance of the meetings?
(If not, why not? Is this process helpful?)

- How would you rate the arrangements for the following:
Forward Work Programmes
Support at meetings
Follow up information in relation to any information not available at a meeting?
(forward work programmes, agenda planning, pre briefings, support at meetings, follow up)

- How would you rate scrutiny's involvement in the budget setting process in the last year?
 - (If not 10 out of 10 why not? If 10 out of 10 what made you score this?)

Executive/ Regulatory:

Questions for Cabinet Members and non-scrutiny members:

6. How do you rate the support you receive in your Cabinet Member role?

7. How do you find the new process following the removal of Cabinet Boards and the responsibilities that come with Cabinet? (i.e Answering questions and Leading Reports)

8. If you have chaired a meeting are you happy with the support you receive? (i.e Pre-briefing, briefing notes, Meeting Support)

9. How do you usually prepare for a meeting? (Opening documents before meetings etc)

Member Seminars/Training

Questions for all Members:

1. Would you like to identify any topic areas you would like training on for the next Civic Year?

2. Would you like to identify any topic areas you would like to see in the Member Seminar programme for the next Civic Year?

3. How would you rate any training/Member Seminars that you have attended over the last 12 months? Please provide specific examples.

IT Matters

Questions for all Members:

1. Do you feel you have ample support with using the Modern Gov system at home and during meetings? Do you need any advice on the Modern Gov app?

2. Do you feel you have ample support from the IT section in using your equipment?

General

- How often do you use the members room and what do you use it for?

1. Do you feel you receive adequate support from Democratic Services?

2. Do you have a preference for timings of meetings?

3. Any final comments or observations?

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Democratic Services Committee

11th November 2024

Report of the Chair of the Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation towards Elected Members Task and Finish Group

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected

All Wards

To consider the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation to Elected Members.

Purpose of the Report

To consider the draft Action Plan developed by the Democratic Services Committee, Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors Task & Finish Group and to commend to Council.

Executive Summary

Following the consideration of the increasing levels of intimidation, harassment and abuse faced by elected members in the course of their work, committee members supported the establishment of a task and finish group. The groups aim was to identify the issues faced by elected members and to consider actions that could be taken to address the identified issues. The Action Plan attached as an appendix to this report outlines the outcomes from this work.

Background

The Task and Finish Group was established in response to increasing levels of intimidation, harassment and abuse faced by elected members in the course of their work. Whilst debate and expressing different opinions is part of a healthy representative democracy, unacceptable behaviours undermine the key democratic principles of free speech, debate and engagement, and sometimes pose a risk to councillors' safety.

At the Democratic Services Committee meeting held on 27th November 2023, Committee Members supported the establishment of a Task and Finish Group in relation to handling harassment, abuse and intimidation for Councillors while promoting Councillor safety at a local level. The scoping document for the Task & Finish Group was considered by the committee at the meeting held on 8th April 2024 and it was decided to offer membership of the group to all non-executive members.

The Task and Finish Group held repeat workshops on 7th and 14th June 2024 to identify member's issues and any actions that can be taken to address these issues. Following the workshops, members of the group who were unable to attend were invited to contribute to the discussion and share their thoughts via a Microsoft Forms questionnaire.

The information gathered from members was collated into an action plan which is attached at appendix A. The draft action plan was considered by the Task and Finish Group at a meeting on the 10th October and is now presented to the Democratic Services Committee for comment and onward endorsement to Full Council.

Integrated Impact Assessment

No specific integrated impact assessment is included for this task and finish report due to it being an internal scrutiny exercise.

Workforce Impacts

There are no direct workforce impacts associated with this report however, if the recommendations are agreed and taken forward there potentially could be workforce impacts from the actions suggested.

Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this report however any legal elements will have to be considered from the actions suggested.

Risk Management

There are no direct risk management impacts associated with the report.

Consultation

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

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. That members of the Democratic Services Committee endorse the outcomes of the Task and Finish Group included at Appendix A.
2. That the action plan be monitored by the Democratic Services Committee on a 6 monthly basis for progress and performance monitoring.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To assist members in addressing the ongoing concerns in relation to harassment, intimidation and abuse towards elected members.

Implementation of Decision

Not applicable

Appendices

Appendix A - Task and Finish Group Report.

Officer Contact

Cllr Saifur Rahaman, Chair of the Democratic Services Committee.

cllr.s.rahaman@npt.gov.uk

Pamela Chivers, Democratic Services Officer.

p.chivers@npt.gov.uk

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Report of the:

**Handling Harassment, Abuse and
Intimidation for Councillors Task &
Finish Group**

Date: 11 November 2024

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

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Appendix 1 – Draft Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors Action Plan	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Democratic Services Committee meeting held on 27th November 2023, Committee Members supported the establishment of a Task and Finish Group in relation to handling harassment abuse and intimidation for Councillors while promoting Councillor safety at a local level. The scoping document for the Task & Finish Group was considered by the committee at the meeting held on 8th April 2024 and it was decided to offer membership of the group to all non-executive members.

The Task and Finish Group held repeat workshops on 7th and 14th June 2024 to identify member's issues and any actions that can be taken to address these issues. Following the workshops, members of the group who were unable to attend were invited to contribute to the discussion and share their thoughts via a Microsoft Forms questionnaire.

The information gathered from members was input into an action plan which is attached at appendix A. The draft action plan was considered by the Task and Finish Group at a meeting on the 10th October and is now presented to the Democratic Services Committee for comment and onward endorsement to Full Council

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Task and Finish Group was established in response to increasing levels of intimidation, harassment and abuse faced by elected members in the course of their work. Whilst debate and expressing different opinions is part of a healthy representative democracy, 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.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title	Handling Harassment Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors Task & Finish Group
Reasons for undertaking Task and Finish Group	To consider how harassment, abuse and intimidation of Councillors can be addressed and promote Councillor safety at a local level.
Key Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are members concerns in relation to harassment, abuse and intimidation in the course of their work as an elected member? • How can risks be mitigated and members supported in the event of severe intimidation and threats? • Why there is a change in culture and what are the underlying issues that create this behaviour? • What actions can be taken to address the change in culture and identify the routes that intimidation and harassment can take.
Intended Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a local protocol setting out procedures, should a councillor feel they are being publicly harassed, intimidated or abused. • To establish 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. • To identify what steps should be taken by the Council to mitigate the risk to Councillors in the event of severe intimidation and threats.
Background Information	Local Authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) have undertaken work in relation to increasing levels of intimidation, harassment and abuse elected members are experiencing whilst carrying out their role in public office.

	<p>During October/November 2022, Democratic Services Committee members were updated on the areas of work being undertaken in relation to Councillor Safety and Wellbeing by various organisations. A Local Government Association (LGA) guidance document in relation to How Councillor's Handle Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation provided practical advice to enhance Councillors personal security and to minimise the risk of physical abuse in various settings including surgeries, home visits and whilst travelling to and from council meetings.</p> <p>Following the publication of the guidance, the Democratic Services Committee noted steps that this Council are considering.</p>
<p>Member Involvement</p>	<p>Cllr. Wayne Carpenter Cllr. Carol Clement Williams Cllr. Charlotte Galsworthy Cllr. Nathan Goldup-John Cllr. Wyndham Griffith Cllr. Stephanie Grimshaw Cllr. Jo Hale Cllr. Sian Harris Cllr. James Henton Cllr. Rob Jones Cllr. Scott Jones Cllr. Caroline Lewis Cllr. Alan Lockyer Cllr. Andy Lodwig Cllr. Saifur Rahaman Cllr. Peter Rees Cllr. Sonia Reynolds Cllr. Phil Rogers Cllr. Chris Williams</p>

	To open member involvement to other non-executive members, if requested by committee members.
Officer Support	Head of Legal and Democratic Services Democratic Services Manager Democratic Service Scrutiny Officer
List of potential key officers, stakeholders, partners or other agencies to involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Wales Police • WLGA • LGA
Timeframe/ plan for meetings	1/2 meetings

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members of the Democratic Services Committee endorse the draft Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors Action Plan and the same be forwarded to Full Council for approval.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The following Members took part in the Task & Finish Group:

Cllr. Saifur Rahaman (Chair)
Cllr. Wayne Carpenter
Cllr. Charlotte Galsworthy
Cllr. Wyndham Griffith
Cllr. Jo Hale
Cllr. Sian Harris
Cllr. James Henton
Cllr. Scott Jones
Cllr. Caroline Lewis
Cllr. Alan Lockyer
Cllr. Andy Lodwig
Cllr. Sonia Reynolds
Cllr. Phil Rogers

Members were provided with support from the following officers:

Craig Griffiths
Stacy Curran
Pamela Chivers

Appendix A

Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation for Councillors Task & Finish Group

Action Plan 2024

Theme: Social Media				
Issue	Action to Address Issue	Responsibility	Monitoring/Progress	Completed Date
Public debate on social media channels has increased. There is public perception that members tagged in social media posts should contribute to online debates, personal comments are made if councillors do not respond to tags.	Members to be offered training on social media settings to enable them to apply settings to prevent tagging.	Communications and Marketing Team		
	Members to consider whether they wish to use closed groups on social media for ward resident information only.	Councillors		
Members of the public inciting aggressive and intimidating behaviour online.	Members to consider whether they wish to utilise face to face meetings as opposed to other forms of communication and suitable risk assessment documents to be provided to identify issues.	Health and Safety		
	When dealing with issues on social media, respond with facts. Members to consider if they wish to limit comment if information has been provided and be clear what comments are acceptable. Suitable draft wording to be provided to members that will highlight such comments/terminology are inappropriate	Councillors Legal and Democratic Services		

It is difficult for Councillors to respond to personal/critical posts on social media.	Councillors should remove themselves from inflammatory situations on social media. Offer to discuss offline either by phone/e-mail or in person. Consider blocking residents if abusive behaviour continues.	Councillors		
It is hard to ascertain the tone of a social media post.	Suitable draft wording to be provided to members that will highlight such comments/terminology are inappropriate	Legal and Democratic Services		
Politically motivated abuse can be received online from other Councillors.	Support and respect other Councillors regardless of political ideology.	Councillors		
	Guidance on the Code of Conduct and applicability to Social Media be issued to all members	Legal and Democratic Services		
Theme: Harassment by E-Mail				
Issue	Action to Address Issue	Responsibility	Monitoring/Progress	Completed Date
Councillors have received harassment via e-mail, despite providing a suitable response. Potential to be reported to the ombudsman if an e-mail is unanswered.	Advise the member of the public that no further responses would be made and seek advice from Legal and Democratic Services	Councillors		
	Suitable draft wording to be provided to members that will highlight such comments/terminology are inappropriate	Legal and Democratic Services		
Theme: Harassment and Abuse in the Community				

Issue	Action to Address Issue	Responsibility	Monitoring/Progress	Completed Date
Councillors harassed by certain groups of people prior to the last Local Authority election.	All Councillors to be reminded that they are able to remove their home address from the Council website.	Legal and Democratic Services		
	Legal and Democratic Services identify a named contact within South Wales Police that member harassment can be directed to	Community Safety Team/South Wales Police/Legal and Democratic Services		
	Develop local support, make contact with the police through local PCSO.			
Councillors being physically threatened by aggressive members of the public. Aggressive members of the public enticing other people in the community to threaten councillors. The potential threat to Councillors was increasing in seriousness	A protocol on dealing with harassment, intimidation and alarm to be developed and issued to all members.	Legal and Democratic Services Team		
	Provide a set paragraph for Councillors use when members of the public are displaying aggressive/intimidating behaviour; stating the behaviour would not be tolerated and there may be possible further action.	Legal and Democratic Services Team		
	Develop local support, make contact with the police through local PCSO.	Community Safety Team/South Wales Police		
Young people are being fed incorrect information and influenced by others in the community.	Discussions to be had with Youth Council, Education, Leisure and Lifelong Directorate on potential ways to address this	Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate		
Councillors experiencing abuse and threats from known violent members of the community.	All members be afforded the opportunity to attend Conflict Resolution Training	Legal and Democratic Services Team		

Councillors are unaware of potentially violent members of the public in their communities.	Investigate whether Councillors can access information on the Potentially Violent Persons Register (PVP).	Legal and Democratic Services / Health and Safety		
Police have been called to provide protection at meetings attended by Councillors.	Legal and Democratic Services identify a named contact within South Wales Police that member harassment can be directed to	Community Safety Team/South Wales Police/Legal and Democratic Services		
	Develop local support, make contact with the police through local PCSO.			
Councillors holding surgeries are vulnerable.	Consider the location of surgeries, ensure surgeries are held in populated venues; Councillors should not conduct surgeries alone. Suitable risk assessment documents to be provided to identify issues.	Councillors Health and Safety		
	Consider not holding face to face surgeries due to potential intimidation in the political arena. Suitable risk assessment documents to be provided to identify issues.			
	Ensure risk assessments are in place if holding a Members Surgery. Suitable risk assessment documents to be provided to identify issues.			
National cases of politicians being attacked.	Risk assessments should be in place if Councillors are concerned about their personal safety.	Councillors / Health and Safety		
Councillors are unaware of the existence of right wing/abusive groups who may target councillors in the course of their work.	Briefings regarding national groups who may target local events or events that may draw community tension.	Community Safety Team		

Councillors concerned around the possibility of being called out for mis-gendering individuals.				
Theme: Items outside of Councillors Remit				
Issue	Action to Address Issue	Responsibility	Monitoring/Progress	Completed Date
Public criticising the local authority/Councillors for items outside of the council's control.	Toolkit/information (job description & sample responses) to share with the public to assist in educating on the remit of a Councillor.	Legal And Democratic Services		
Unrealistic public expectation and misunderstanding of a councillor's remit.				
Theme: Miscellaneous				
Issue	Action to Address Issue	Responsibility	Monitoring/Progress	Completed Date
The Local Authority is unable to support Councillors financially in making slander/defamation claims. More protection/safeguarding is needed through the local authority and Welsh Government with funding available to enable action to be taken against perpetrators.	Raise an issue with Welsh Government concerning local authorities having no duty of care towards Councillors.	Legal and Democratic Services		
	Support Councillors by providing standard letters and advising on legal options.	Legal and Democratic Services		
	Investigate the potential for a consortium to be formed with neighbouring authorities; whereby Councillors could contribute to a fund that provided access to independent legal advice.	Legal and Democratic Services / Welsh Local Government Association		
Hybrid working does not allow for new Councillors to build relationships with fellow Councillors.	In cases of severe abuse, intimidation or threats, members to be advised of the situation so that support can be given to the affected Councillor (with their prior consent).	Legal and Democratic Services		

Politically motivated abuse can be received during council meetings	<p>Support and respect other Councillors regardless of political ideology.</p> <p>All members to undertake Code of Conduct training and attend a refresher session</p>	<p>Councillors</p> <p>Legal and Democratic Services</p>		
Access to support/counselling services	Ensure all members are aware of the Peer mentoring Network through WLGA	Legal and Democratic Services		
	Ensure that all members have access to WLGA guidance on Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation	Legal and Democratic Services		
	Investigate the Occupational Health Support offer for Councillors	Legal and Democratic Services		
	All members of Democratic Services Team to be made aware of protocols in place and how to sign post members to access available support	Legal and Democratic Services		
Poor Communication between officers and Councillors can aggravate situations	<p>Improved communication between officers and Councillors when there are issues in specific wards. Proactive communications may diffuse complaints from the public and reduce online abuse.</p> <p>All members and officers to be made aware of the Member/Officer Protocol and obligations contained there in and all accountable managers to undergo training.</p>	All Council service areas.		
Community organisations and the third sector also face abuse in the course of their work	Utilising existing networks to ensure that issues of concern are given prominence and how organisations can work collaboratively to address	Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum		

Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme

2024/2025

<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
22nd July 2024	Member Car Parking Scheme Proposals	Decision	
	Verbal update on Task and Finish Group Progress	Information	
	Forward Work Programme Consideration		
11th November 2024	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Report	Information	Stacy Curran/Craig Griffiths
	Member Annual Reports	Decision	Stacy Curran/Craig Griffiths
	Member Personal Development Reviews	Decision	Stacy Curran/Craig Griffiths
	Annual Member Survey/Timing of Meetings	Decision	Stacy Curran/Craig Griffiths

	Final Report- Handling Harassment, Abuse and Intimidation.	Decision	Stacy Curran/Craig Griffiths
SPECIAL DECEMBER TBA	Levelling Up Fund Round 3 - Princess Royal Theatre, Update to Elected Members.	Decision	Craig G/Richard Jenkins/Chris Saunders/Simon Brennan
3rd February 2025	Final Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Report	Information	
	Assessment of Resources for Democratic Services Committee	Monitoring	
	Diversity in Democracy Action Plan	Monitoring	
	Outcomes of Annual Member Survey	Information	
	Draft Training Programme for Members	Decision	

28th April 2025	Democratic Services Committee Annual Report 24/25 Draft Charter WLGA (focus for 25/26?) Annual Review of E-Petitions/Public Speaking	Decision Monitoring	

- 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
- Review of Scrutiny Model

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