

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**7<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

### **Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer**

#### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** All wards

#### **Draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. 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 2019/20.
2. 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. It has also been given a general power to review councils' pay policy statements as far as they relate to heads of paid service, extended on a temporary basis to chief officers of principal 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 2019/20 are set out in the attached draft report which is before the Committee for consideration today.

## Summary of proposed changes to be implemented in 2019/20

### 1. Salaries

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

Element of Remunerations	2018/19	2019/20 (proposed)	Change (% change)
Basic Salary	£13,600	£13,868	+£268 (+1.97%)
Leader	£48,300	£49,100	+£800 (+1.65%)
Deputy Leader	£33,800	£34,600	+£800 (+2.37%)
Executive Members	£29,300	£30,100	+£800 (+2.73%)
Chairs of Committee	£22,300	£22,568	+£268(+1.2%)
Leader of largest opposition Group	£22,300	£22,568	+£268 (+1.2%)
Leader of other political Group	£17,300	£17,568	+£268(+1.55%)
Civic Head	£21,800	£22,568	+£768(+3.52%)
Deputy Civic Head	£16,300	£17,568	+£1,268(+7.78%)

#### Notes:

1. Increases to the senior salaries of £800 are inclusive of the increase proposed to the basic salary of £268
2. The Panel proposes to remove discretion as to the salary that should be paid to the Civic Head and Deputy Civic Head.

Comparisons contained in the table are against the Level 2 salary currently paid to both office holders

3. 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.

## **2. Other matters**

The Panel has re-emphasised the need for Democratic Services Committees to ensure that all elected members are given the support necessary for them to fulfil their duties effectively.

Work undertaken to date by the Committee is summarised below for reference:

- The Democratic Services Committee in Neath Port Talbot has already conducted a survey of Member development needs and created actions to respond to the survey findings;
- The Democratic Services Committee in Neath Port Talbot has already reviewed the arrangements for Member Annual Reports and Member Annual Development Reviews and agreed actions in relation to both of these matters;
- The Member ICT Scheme was reviewed and amended at the end of the last administration. The Democratic Services Committee has set up a Member ICT Reference Group to keep Member ICT arrangements under review;
- The Democratic Services Committee in Neath Port Talbot has initiated work to explore the extent to which facilities for Members meet the needs of Members, especially those with protected characteristics;
- The Democratic Services Committee is overseeing continuing work to modernise the Member accommodation in the civic offices, including facilities that support the Mayoralty. Improvements have been made to Group rooms; Member general facilities, audio-visual equipment in meeting rooms and to meeting tables and chairs.
- Members are reminded at regular intervals of the carer provisions in a general sense, but also when circumstances change, individual Members are approached by the Head of

Democratic Services to ensure they consider taking up the provisions available.

The Panel has determined that, through the Democratic Services Committees, authorities should ensure all voting co-opted members are given as much support as is necessary for them to fulfil their duties effectively.

3. The Democratic Services Committee has not yet considered the support needs of co-opted Members.

### **Financial Impact**

The draft budget proposals for the Council for 2019/20 includes a provision of a 2% uplift for Member remuneration. The proposals would be contained within the draft budget provision.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There would be limited impact from the proposed changes outlined in the draft Annual Report.

### **Workforce Impacts**

There are no identified workforce impacts identified for the proposed changes.

### **Risk Management**

Any proposed increase to Member remuneration has the potential to attract public criticism at a time of severe and enduring austerity. The Panel acknowledge this in making its proposals but point to the workloads and responsibilities being borne by elected Members as justification for the proposed changes. Furthermore, the Panel provides details of how councillor remuneration is continuing to diverge from the benchmark rate.

## **Legal Powers**

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.

## **Consultation**

All Members were sent a copy of the draft Report on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Only one Member has submitted comments to the Democratic Services team at the time of writing this report. The Panel is required to allow a minimum of 8 weeks between issuing its draft and final Annual Report. Views are sought on the draft proposals by 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

## **Recommendation**

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

## **Reason for Proposed Decision**

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

## **Implementation of Decision**

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

## **Appendices**

4. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – draft Annual Report February 2019

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