

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

7 March 2019

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All wards

Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Members of the Democratic Services Committee of the details of the final Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for the civic year 2019/20.

The link to the Annual Report is [IRP Annual report-2019-2020](#)

Background

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) 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 published a draft report and invited comments on its draft proposals. These proposals were considered by this Committee on 7 November 2018 and Committee's

views were conveyed to the IRPW for its consideration. A copy of the e mail is attached for Members' information, at Appendix A.

Summary of changes to be implemented in 2019/20

1. Salaries

The changes that will affect the existing arrangements in this Council are summarised in the table below and have not been amended from those considered originally in the Draft IRPW Report.

Element of Remunerations	2018/19	2019/20	Change (% change)
Basic Salary	£13,600	£13,868	+£268 (+1.97%)
Leader	£48,300	£49,100	+£800 (+1.66%)
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 has removed 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.

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 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 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 points 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 9th October 2018. Only one Member submitted comments to the Democratic Services team. I wrote, on behalf of the Chair and Committee to the IRPW, summarising Members' views on the draft proposals. A copy of the e mail is attached at Appendix A.

At the request of the Chairman:

- Members have been reminded about the Care Allowance.
- A survey of Co-opted Members will be carried out, during 2019/20, to establish any unmet support needs.

Recommendation

Members of the Democratic Services Committee are invited to note the contents of the Annual Report.

Appendices

Committee's response to the consultation on the Draft IRPW Annual Report.

Officer Contact:

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APPENDIX A

Dear Mr Bader,

I refer to your correspondence dated 2 October 2018 containing the Panel's draft Annual Report for 2019/2020.

The draft Annual Report was discussed and debated at the meeting of the Council's Democratic Services Committee on 7th November 2018 and we offer the following comments on the Panel's proposals:

- The Committee noted the proposed increase in both the basic salary and senior salaries payable to Members of principal councils and agreed this does not sit well with the cuts that elected Members are having to make to council budgets against a backdrop of austerity. It is of course open to individual Members as to whether they take the full entitlement or not. The Committee feels that if the Panel remain of the view that an increase should be introduced in 2019-20, the case for doing so should be communicated very clearly when presenting the final Report, particularly why the Panel considers the increases are deemed affordable and acceptable.
- The Committee noted the proposed increase in the deputy civic head allowance would be far in excess of the rate of inflation for this Council. The Committee does not support this increase and asks that the Panel look again at the level of remuneration that should be available to deputy civic heads.
- The Committee noted that in 2009 the Panel aligned Members' payments to the median gross earnings of all full-time employees resident in Wales as reported in the Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings (ASHE). The Committee requests that when reviewing future remuneration the appropriateness of this particular benchmark rate is carefully considered.

Other comments made by the Democratic Services Committee:

- In relation to the proposal to remove Council discretion as to the salary that should be paid to the various roles performed by elected Members, the Committee was pleased to see and supported the Panel's changed position.
- The Committee noted the Panel's comments regarding the limited use of the provision in the Framework to reimburse the costs of care by Members. The Democratic Services Committee acknowledges the reluctance of some Members to claim all that they are entitled to and will continue to take steps to encourage and facilitate greater use of this element of the Framework.
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Yours sincerely,

Karen Jones

Head of Democratic Services

(Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Digital Officer)

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

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