

# NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 March 2020

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

#### Matter for Decision

**Wards Affected:** All wards

#### Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales and Draft Supplementary Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

#### Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Members of the Democratic Services Committee of the content of the final Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for the civic year 2020/2021.

The link to the Annual Report is [Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: annual report 2020 to 2021](#)

2. To advise Members of the Democratic Services Committee of a consultation exercise initiated by the IRPW on draft supplementary guidance which proposes a set of principles that the Panel propose should be adopted by all relevant authorities to increase the take up of financial support for Members who have care responsibilities or personal needs.

#### 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.

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

Each year, and before making its final determinations for the next civic year, the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales publishes a draft report and invites comments on its draft proposals. The proposals proposed for the civic year 2020-21 were considered by this Committee on 14 November 2019 and the following comments were forwarded to the IRPW:

“Whilst Committee supported the increase to the basic allowance, Members felt that the implementation of the changes should be the new Civic Year and not the Financial Year as proposed in the report.

The Council will continue to promote the use of the Carers' Allowance, as suggested in the report, and will shortly be making representations to HMRC in relation to the taxation of the allowance.

In addition, Council will endeavour to schedule a meeting where you will be able to meet with representatives of the County Borough Council along with representatives of the Community and Town Councils within our area.”

The IRPW has now published its final proposals for the civic year 2020-21 and Members are asked to note that proposals are unchanged from those contained in the draft report.

### **Summary of changes to be implemented in 2020/2021**

#### **1. Salaries**

The changes that will affect the existing arrangements in this Council are summarised in the table overleaf:

Element of Remunerations	2019/20	2020/21	Change (% change)
Basic Salary	£13,868	£14,218	+£350
Leader	£49,100	£49,450	+£350
Deputy Leader	£34,600	£34,950	+£350
Executive Members	£30,100	£30,450	+£350
Chairs of Committee	£22,568	£22,918	+£350
Leader of largest opposition Group	£22,568	£22,918	+£350
Leader of other political Group	£17,568	£17,918	+£350
Civic Head	£22,568	£22,918	+£350
Deputy Civic Head	£17,568	£17,918	+£350

Notes:

1. Increases to the senior salaries of £350 are inclusive of the increase proposed to the basic salary of £350
2. 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.

AS advised on 14 November 2019, work undertaken to date by the Committee is summarised below for reference:

- The Democratic Services Committee in Neath Port Talbot is in the process of undertaking the Members Annual Survey;

- The Democratic Services Committee in Neath Port Talbot has 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 IT Reference Group to keep Member ICT arrangements under review;
- The Democratic Services Committee in Neath Port Talbot continues to assess Members' facilities to ensure they are fit for purpose;
- Members are reminded at regular intervals about 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; and
- A Task and Finish Group has been established to take forward the webcasting of council meetings and the development of a Public Participation Strategy.

The IRPW ask that the following arrangements be promoted to all elected members. Please also note that they propose to issue supplementary guidance also in relation to carers' allowances which is dealt with later in this report:

- 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.

As the Democratic Services Committee has not yet considered the support needs of co-opted Members, it is suggested that this be included in the Committee's Forward Work Programme for 2020-21.

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

The IRPW has issued draft guidance that it proposes to issue as a supplementary report on the “Principles Relating to the Reimbursement to Costs of Care” in an effort to promote the take up of the care element of the financial support available. Appendix 1 provides a copy of the table extracted from the draft guidance, together with this council’s current position on the actions IRPW propose we should take:

### **Financial Impact**

The draft budget proposals for the Council for 2020/21 includes as uplift to cover the additional costs created by the £350 increase in the basic salary for Members.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The draft supplementary guidance would have a beneficial impact on those Members who have caring responsibilities and may assist in attracting people from diverse backgrounds to stand for election as councillors.

### **Workforce Impacts**

There are no workforce impacts identified in relation to 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. I wrote, on behalf of the Chair and Committee to the IRPW, summarising Members' views on the draft proposals as outlined above.

## **Recommendation**

1. Members of the Democratic Services Committee are invited to note the contents of the final Annual Report issued by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
2. Members are asked to consider the draft supplementary guidance on the costs of care that the Panel are proposing to make and offer views on those proposals.
3. Members ask the Head of Democratic Services to provide a formal response to the draft supplementary guidance based on the discussion at the meeting.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 –Draft Supplementary Guidance – Costs of Care

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