



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Democratic Services Committee**

**2nd November 2020**

**Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Digital Officer  
(Karen Jones)**

#### **Matter for Decision**

#### **Wards Affected:**

All Wards

**Report Title: Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW)  
– Draft Annual Report 2021/22**

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

1. To advise Members of the remuneration arrangements proposed for councillors of principal councils in Wales for 2021/22.
2. To seek the view of the Committee regarding a proposed response to the consultation that the IRPW are carrying out on their proposals for 2021/22.

#### **Executive Summary:**

3. There are three proposed changes in the draft Annual Report for 2021/22:

1. The IRPW propose that the basic salary for elected members of principal councils be increased by £150 per annum, effective 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Senior salaries will be increased at the same rate (1.06%) as basic salaries.
2. The IRPW propose the replacing of the £403 monthly cap for the reimbursement of costs of care with the following arrangements:
  - i. all relevant authorities must provide for the reimbursement of the contribution towards necessary costs for the care of dependent children and adults (provided by informal or informal carers) and for personal assistance needs as follows:
  - ii. Formal (registered with Care Inspectorate for Wales) care costs to be reimbursed in full
  - iii. Informal (unregistered) care costs to be reimbursed up to a maximum rate equivalent to the Real Living Wage at the time the costs are incurred
3. The IRPW propose the fees paid for co-opted members (with voting rights) increase by £12.00.
4. In the foreword of the draft report, the Chair of the IRPW comments on the implications the pandemic has had and continues to have on local authorities in Wales resulting in the IRPW limiting the extent of the changes to the Framework for 2021/22. Therefore, all other elements of the framework remain the same.

**Background:**

5. The remuneration of councillors elected to principal councils is set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. Each year, the Panel set out their proposed determinations in a draft Annual Report.

6. The proposed determinations are subject to consultation before the Panel makes its final determinations.

### Basic Salary

7. The proposed increase to the basic salary of councillors of £150 per annum represents an increase of 1.06%.
8. When making financial determinations for the draft Annual Report, the Panel has considered the progression of a variety of benchmark figures for the period 2012 to 2020. The Panel acknowledges the financial constraints on the public sector and particularly on local authorities over many years have meant that the link with average Welsh earnings has not been maintained. The proposal to increase the basic salary of councillors by £150 is intended to minimise the further erosion in relation to average earnings.
9. Senior salaries will be increased at the same rate (1.06%) as basic salaries.

### Financial support provided to cover the costs of care and personal care

10. The Panel has reviewed the arrangements for the financial support provided to cover the costs of care and personal care and proposes the following changes:
  1. As payments are taxable under the current HMRC rules, full reimbursement is not possible so for clarity this will be retitled to "Contribution towards the costs of care and personal assistance" replacing "Reimbursement of Costs of Care".

2. Claims can be made in respect of a dependant under 16 years of age, or a minor or adult who normally lives with the member as part of their family and who cannot be left unsupervised.
  3. Clarification in respect of a member's own care and support needs: Reimbursement may be claimed where the support and or cost of any additional needs are not available or are not met directly by the authority such as Access to Work, Personal Payments or Insurance. These could arise when the needs are recent and or temporary.
11. Members, including co-opted members are entitled to claim towards the costs of care and personal assistance, for activities that the individual council has designated official business or an improved duty which might include appropriate and reasonable preparation time. It is a matter for individual authorities to determine specific arrangements to implement this and for each authority to ensure that any payments made are appropriately linked to official business or approved duty.
12. The Panel has reviewed the maximum monthly payment (£403) in recognition that this has not changed for several years and information indicates that monthly costs and claims vary considerably. Therefore the Panel is proposing to replace the monthly cap monthly with the following arrangements:
1. Formal (registered with Care Inspectorate for Wales) care costs to be reimbursed in full
  2. Informal (unregistered) care costs to be reimbursed up to a maximum rate equivalent to the Real Living Wage at the time the costs are incurred.
13. (Care costs cannot be paid to someone who is a part of a member's household)

#### Fees paid for co-opted members

14. The IRPW propose the fees paid for co-opted members (with voting rights) increase by £12.00.
15. On the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020, the IRPW facilitated a meeting with Heads of Democratic Services and Chairs of Democratic Services Committees to discuss the Draft Annual Report 2021/22. The meeting was attended by Cllr J D Morgan (Chairperson) and Mrs Caryn Furlow-Harris (Strategic Manager – Policy & Democratic Services) A verbal update on the discussions will be provided at the Committee meeting.

### **Financial Impacts:**

16. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services has been asked to make additional budget provision to accommodate the proposed increases.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

17. There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment as remuneration for councillors is the responsibility of the IRPW.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

18. There are no specific impacts for valley communities arising from the draft Annual Report.

### **Workforce Impacts:**

19. There are no workforce impacts arising from the proposed determination.

### **Legal Powers:**

20. The Welsh Government has provided legal powers to the IRPW to set remuneration for councillors.

**Risk Management Impacts:**

21. There are no specific risks that arise from the proposals

**Consultation:**

22. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item. However, the Council has an opportunity, as do individual members, to respond to the draft Annual Report.

**Recommendations:**

23. Members note the draft Annual Report and proposed determinations for 2021/22.

24. Members determine whether to respond to the consultation and if so, to identify the key points to enable the Head of Democratic Services to prepare the Council's response on behalf of the Committee.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

25. To ensure the IRPW draft Annual Report has been formally considered by the Council.

**Implementation of Decision:**

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

**Appendices:**

27. Appendix 1 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, Draft Annual Report February 2021

**List of Background Papers:**

28. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, Draft Annual Report February 2021

**Officer Contact:**

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