

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Democratic Services Committee

29th November 2022

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 2023/2024 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 2023/24 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	2022/2023	Proposed by IRPW for 2023/2024
Basic Salary	£16,800	£17,600
Leader	£56,700	£59,400
Deputy Leader	£39,906	£41, 580
Executive Members	£34,020	£35,640
Chairs of Committee	£25,593	£26,400
Leader of largest opposition Group	£25,593	£26,400
Leader of other Political Group	£20,540	£21,340
Civic Head	£25,593	£26,400
Deputy Civic Head	£20,540	£21,340

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

In addition to the determinations, the IRPW asks 5 consultation questions relating to the Draft Annual Report. It is proposed that the Authority responds as follows.

Question 1

The Panel has continued to use the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office for National Statistics as the benchmark for setting the basic salary of elected members of principal councils. There is a corresponding proportionate increase proposed for the members of National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel has continued to refer to the last published ASHE which was 2021. Do you agree that the basic salary element should be referenced to the ASHE 2021 data?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Any Additional Comments

The Authority believes that linking salaries to the AHSE 2021 ensures an independence and clarity for payments to Councillors. It helps ensure that the former 'Race to the Bottom' approach by Authorities will not be returned to by putting in place a clear mechanism of how salaries are calculated.

Question 2

The Panel has made changes to the payment of costs and expenses of members of community and town councils. Do you agree with the addition of the "consumables" element?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Any Additional Comments

It ensures that Community / Town Councillors are reasonably remunerated for such costs.

Question 3

The Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed to

inform future Determinations. Are you content that the Panel should build this review into its future work plan and build the evidence base to support decisions?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Any Additional Comments

The creation of evidence-based decisions ensures that remuneration levels are appropriate and reasonable.

Question 4

We have significantly reduced the size of the report this year to concentrate on key decisions made and intend to make more use of the website to provide easy to use guidance to users. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet. How would you like to access information and guidance from the Panel? (choose all that apply)

Summary report with links to detailed guidance

Social media

Easy to use guidance notes

Information events

Frequently asked questions

Website

Other

If Other, Please Specify:

The views of the Committee are sought. It is suggested that detailed, easy to use guidance notes together with frequently asked questions on the IRPW website would be welcomed.

Question 5

The Panel intend to undertake a series of engagements with all relevant stakeholders over the next year as part of the development of its forward planning and building of its evidence and research strategy. Have you any comments that would help the Panel shape this engagement? For example, a preference for online polls, the holding of engagement events, virtual or face to face, which groups should be involved, how do we engage with prospective candidates etc.

The views of the Committee are sought

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 increased 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.

Consultation:

All Members were sent a copy of the draft Report on the 11th November 2022. The Panel is required to allow a minimum of 8 weeks between issuing its draft and final Annual Report.

Recommendations:

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.

Reasons 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:

Appendix 1 – Draft IRPW Annual Report

Appendix 2- Draft IRPW Consultation Questions

List of Background Papers:

None

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