



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

27TH NOVEMBER 2023

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES: DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2024 TO 2025

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with the opportunity to submit representations to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRP) in respect of their draft Annual Report 2024 to 2025 by 8th December 2023. This is in accordance with the requirements of Section 147 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to publish the annual report by 28th February 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge and comment on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales's Draft Annual Report 2024 to 2025 attached at Appendix 1; and
- 2.2 Request the Head of Democratic Services to submit the representations of the Democratic Services Committee by 8th December 2023 to be considered by the IRP prior to the production of a final report for publication in February 2024.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that members are aware of the contents of the draft annual report 2024 to 2025 and proposed changes to the remuneration framework including a modest increase in the basic salary for Elected Members of Principal Councils.
- 3.2 That all members of the Democratic Services Committee are afforded the opportunity to comment on the proposals set out in the draft annual report and their representations are taken into account by the IRP under the requirements of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4 DRAFT REPORT AND CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 The Panel have worked with key stakeholders to help inform the draft report and to explore areas for future consideration, giving the Panel opportunity to hear the direct experiences of a range of elected members, prospective candidates and organisations working to broaden representation in local government.
- 4.2 During October 2023, the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales published its draft report for the period 2024 – 2025. The report can be accessed by using the following link:

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report – February 2024](#)

- 4.3 This has been circulated to the Minister for Finance and Local Government and other interested parties.
- 4.4 The IRP welcome general feedback in respect of their draft Report and have identified some additional questions where they would appreciate Members views.
- 4.5 The questions identified are outlined below:

1. Question 1 - Uplift of remuneration using the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

The Panel is fully aware of the current constraints on public funding and the impact its decisions will have on the budgets of Principal Authorities. The Panel is also mindful of our Aims and Objectives to provide a fair and reasonable remuneration package to support elected members and to encourage diversity of representation. We therefore propose to uplift their remuneration based on the average earnings of their constituents.

Do you think that the Panel has struck the right balance between affordability and adequate remuneration for representatives? If not, do you have other suggestions?

Yes
No
No Opinion

2. Question 2 - Local flexibility for payments to co-opted individuals

The Panel has received evidence that it would be more cost effective and fairer to provide for flexibility in paying those who are co-opted to serve on

committees of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The Panel has therefore proposed there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a few short meetings.

Do you agree with this proposal? If not, do you have any suggested alternatives?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Question 3 - Encouraging sustainable travel

The Panel would like to ensure that we support environmental sustainability in our decisions about remuneration. We are aware that there are schemes in many bodies in Wales which encourage sustainable travel and we have advised that, if possible, elected members should be encouraged to participate in these schemes.

Do you have any examples of good practice or other ideas of ways in which we might use our powers to encourage more sustainable travel among members?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Question 4 - Awareness of the entitlements of representatives

The Panel has seen evidence of a lack of awareness amongst local elected members of the payments to which they are entitled. We would like to find out if this is a significant issue, and if so, we will aim to raise awareness further, targeted at areas where this may be a problem.

Did you know that you may be entitled to some of or all the following?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remuneration for your role <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pension (Principal Councils only) <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimbursement of expenses <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimbursement for caring responsibilities <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family absence payments (Principal Councils only) <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

What steps does your council or authority take to make its elected members and co-opted members aware of their entitlements?

5. Question 5 - Publication of consolidated sums for Community and Town Councils

Community and Town Councils are required to submit an annual statement of payments to the Panel by 30 September each year, and also publish this on their website. The Panel have provided a template return for clerks to use. The Panel have discussed and considered changing the requirements for Community and Town Councils when submitting their statement of payment returns. The Panel's aim is to simplify administration and encourage Councils to ensure all mandatory payments are made to individual members.

The Panel proposes that from September 2024, the returns need only show the total amounts paid in respect of the mandatory payments mentioned above. That is the £156 contribution to the costs of working from home, the £52 set rate consumables allowance and the travel and subsistence expenses paid.

This brings these in line with the reporting of the costs of care and personal assistance allowances.

Do you agree that these figures may be published as a global total rather than individually?

Yes

No

No Opinion

6. Question 6 - Publication of consolidated sums for other bodies

In future reports, we are thinking of allowing consolidation of the travel and subsistence expenses of members of principal councils, National Park

Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities and would be interested in your views.

Do you agree that these figures may be published as a global total rather than individually?

Yes
No
No View

4.6 Members feedback in respect of the consultation questions are to be submitted by the 8th December 2023.

4.7 In accordance with the requirements of Section 147 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 the Panel must publish its final annual report by 28th February 2024.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel report looks to promote equality and diversity across Principle Councils. The Panel is also mindful of its aims and objectives to provide a fair and reasonable remuneration package to support elected members and to encourage diversity of representation.

6. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

6.1 The provision of appropriate support and resources to elected Members is critical in ensuring the interests of local people are represented, governance of local communities is undertaken and value-for-money public services are secured for local tax-payers through effective scrutiny. The continued ability to effectively fulfil these duties will make a positive contribution to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

7. CONSULTATION.

7.1 The draft report has been shared with all Members through the Members daily update and through links on the Consultation links page.

7.2 Members are able to contribute to the consultation via the Democratic Services Committee and individually as Elected Members.

7.3 The consultation closes on the 8th December 2023.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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BACKGROUND PAPERS - Democratic Services – Support for Members