

# Public Document Pack



To: Members of the Democratic Services Committee

Date: 21 November 2023

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Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **MONDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2023** in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN AND BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**.

Yours sincerely

G Williams  
Monitoring Officer

## AGENDA

### 1 APOLOGIES

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Pages 3 - 4)

Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at this meeting.

### 3 URGENT MATTERS

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

### 4 MINUTES (Pages 5 - 16)

To receive the minutes of the Democratic Services Committee held on 24 March 2023 and the special meeting held on 9 June 2023 (copies attached).

### 5 APPROVAL OF DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION PRIOR TO RATIFICATION (Pages 17 - 60)

To consider a report by the Public Engagement Officer, Jo Sutton (copy attached) about the progress of the Council's Community Engagement Policy, and the Council's Public Participation Strategy.

**6 MEASURES TO TACKLE INTIMIDATION AGAINST MEMBERS** (Pages 61 - 70)

To consider a report by the Legal Services Manager, Lisa Jones, and the Democratic Services Manager, Steve Price (copy attached) about the measures the council has put in place to support members.

**7 A REVIEW INTO "HOW MEETINGS ARE HELD"** (Pages 71 - 82)

To consider a report by the Democratic Services Manager, Steve Price (copy attached), about the Council's arrangements for holding its member-level meetings.

**8 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES FOR 2024-2025** (Pages 83 - 134)

To consider a report by the Democratic Services Manager, Steve Price (copy attached) to consult on the proposals set out in the draft report.

**9 SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE** (Pages 135 - 138)

To consider a report by the Democratic Services Manager, Steve Price (copy attached) about the new Rules that set out the process for an election carried out using the Single Transferable Vote from 2027.

**10 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 139 - 144)

To consider a report by the Democratic Services Manager, Steve Price (copy attached) on the Committee's forward work programme and associated issues.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### **Councillors**

Michelle Blakeley-Walker  
Ellie Chard  
Karen Edwards  
Hugh Evans  
Justine Evans

Martyn Hogg  
Brian Jones  
Delyth Jones  
Cheryl Williams  
Elfed Williams

### **COPIES TO:**

All Councillors for information  
Press and Libraries  
Town and Community Councils

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

### Code of Conduct for Members

### DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, *(name)*

a \*member/co-opted member of

*(\*please delete as appropriate)*

**Denbighshire County Council**

**CONFIRM** that I have declared a **\*personal / personal and prejudicial** interest not previously declared in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, in respect of the following:-

*(\*please delete as appropriate)*

Date of Disclosure:

Committee *(please specify)*:

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

*(See the note below)\**

Signed

Date

\*Note: Please provide sufficient detail e.g. 'I am the owner of land adjacent to the application for planning permission made by Mr Jones', or 'My husband / wife is an employee of the company which has made an application for financial assistance'.

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

## DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Friday, 24 March 2023 at 10.00 am.

### PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Karen Edwards, Hugh Evans, Justine Evans, Martyn Hogg (Chair), Delyth Jones, Cheryl Williams and Elfed Williams

### ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Julie Matthews, lead member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities.

#### 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Michelle Blakeley-Walker, Chris Evans and Cheryl Williams.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3 APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIR FOR TODAY'S MEETING

The Democratic Services Manager reported that this agenda item was no longer required. He reminded the committee that the chair of the Democratic Services Committee was appointed by full Council, and Council had appointed Councillor Martyn Hogg.

The agenda item had been added following a change to the political balance of the committee, as a result of a by-election, which had temporarily resulted in the chair losing his seat on the committee. However, with Councillor Hogg's return as a member of the committee, he was able to continue in his role as the committee's chair.

#### 4 URGENT MATTERS

There were no urgent matters.

#### 5 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The chair of the committee, Councillor Martyn Hogg, invited nominations for the appointment of a vice chair of the committee.

In the absence of any proposals, the Democratic Services Manager advised the committee that a vice chair could be appointed at a subsequent meeting.

**RESOLVED – that the appointment of the vice chair of the Democratic Services Committee be deferred for consideration at a subsequent meeting.**

## **6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on the 30 September 2022 were submitted.

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held on the 30 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.**

## **7 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024**

The Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities, Councillor Julie Matthews, introduced this item on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2023 – 2024.

The committee was informed that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) was a body established by the Welsh Government which sets out decisions and certain options for councils' policies of payments and support to elected and lay-members. The previous month the Panel had published its Annual Report for the new financial year which started in April.

The committee was reminded of the IRPW's designation of roles that were remunerated by basic, senior and civic salaries, and the rules around the payment of these salaries such as the council size groupings which the IRPW used to set payment levels.

Members were advised that:

- Councillors would receive an increase of 4.76% in their basic allowances, which increased basic salaries by £800 to £17,600.
- The senior salaries for the Cabinet have received the full 4.76% increase, that is that both the basic salary and the senior salary for Cabinet duties elements have been increased by that amount.
- The role element for committee chairs and the leader of the largest opposition group have been increased by 3.15% as has the Civic Salary element for the Chair of Council.
- The civic salary for the Vice Chair of Council had received only the increase to the basic salary.

In terms of the lay or co-opted members, the committee was advised that the IRPW had not changed the rules or the amounts payable. The Democratic Services Manager outlined that:

- Co-opted voting members received a set daily or half daily fee according to the time commitment involved.
- Meetings eligible for the payment of a fee included committee meetings, working groups, briefings and training to which co-opted members had been requested to attend.
- The Panel allowed reasonable preparation time and any travel time to be claimed.
- The Council could decide on the maximum number of days for which co-opted members may be paid in any one year.
- The Panel allowed each council to decide on what was reasonable in determining what a full-day rate covered.
- Denbighshire had not set a cap on the number of days that could be claimed for payment, but it did use a single 'full day' rate to be the maximum that could be claimed for a single meeting or event attended, which included any preparation and travel time.
- The half daily fee was paid for any eligible time commitment of up to 4 hours.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the committee's views were sought on whether the council should retain or change its approach (within the parameters allowed by the IRPW) to the payment of the full-day rate to co-opted members.

Members focussed their discussion on the issue of payments to co-opted members, particularly in respect of the following points:

- The Council's approach to co-opted members' payments should not be a barrier to recruiting and retaining effective voting co-opted members.
- The voting co-opted members covered the Standards Committee, the Governance and Audit Committee, the Scrutiny committees and sat on some internal panels. Given the range of duties being undertaken it could be worth exploring whether the Council could vary the half and full day payments according to the demands of the duties, committee or panel.
- The effect on the Council's finances from any changes being proposed would need to be considered.
- The Committee agreed that it wanted the Council's approach to co-opted members' remuneration to be fair and to accord with the spirit of the IRPW's Annual Reports. Surveying the co-opted members for their views and experiences of their duties could provide useful information.

**RESOLVED – that the committee recommends that a survey of the views and experiences of the co-opted members be undertaken prior to future consideration by the committee of the Council’s approach to the remuneration of voting co-opted members.**

## **8 RESOURCES FOR SCRUTINY**

The Democratic Services Manager (DSM) introduced a report (previously circulated) that outlined the changes to the support arrangements for the Scrutiny function.

The DSM reported that under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 the Committee has a role in reviewing the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation, and other resources to discharge democratic services functions. These complemented the Head of Democratic Services’ roles in promoting and supporting the role of the Scrutiny committees.

Members were advised that:

- The Council had previously employed 2 Scrutiny Officers, but this was reduced to 1 officer following a ‘Democratic Services Efficiency Review’. This led to a rationing of Scrutiny activities so that they focussed on the main committee meetings to a much greater extent than before.
- In 2018 report the Wales Audit Office reviewed Denbighshire’s Scrutiny function. In their report ‘Overview and Scrutiny – fit for the future? – Denbighshire County Council’ they praised the quality of the Scrutiny provision but were aware that it did not have the capacity to cover what should be expected of it.
- The Wales Audit Officer therefore recommended that the Council ‘Review the adequacy of support arrangements, in terms of both the amount and type of support that overview and scrutiny committees may need’.
- An important area that required more support was the use of Scrutiny task and finish groups for complex issues that could not be tackled by the routine ‘report to committee’ approach. This lack of capacity to support member working groups had caused increasing difficulties recently.
- Increasingly, the Council’s Scrutiny function also needed to be able to scrutinise the developing and often complex joint and regional governance arrangements that affected the county.
- The Council had recognised the need to return to having 2 scrutiny officers and this had now been achieved following a successful recruitment exercise.
- A report to the committee outlining the position in respect of the scrutiny arrangements for joint and regional governance arrangements was requested.



**RESOLVED – that the committee notes the report and requests a future report outlining the position in respect of the scrutiny arrangements for joint and regional governance arrangements.**

## **9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Democratic Services Manager (DSM) introduced the Forward Work Programme (previously circulated). He reminded the committee that the information in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 of the report in respect of the chairing of the committee had been resolved. The report also summarised the findings of the councillor survey on the timing of meetings and a Local Government Association webinar in February on personal safety for councillors that had been made available to members of the council to join.

The DSM referred to a special meeting of the committee that was being arranged for the 9 June 2023, particularly to facilitate the discussion of member training and personal development review issues.

The committee agreed for items on tackling intimidatory behaviour against members and on single transferable vote provisions to be added to the forward work programme for the September meeting of the committee.

**RESOLVED – that, subject to the above amendments, the committee’s forward work programme be approved.**

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## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Friday, 9 June 2023 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Ellie Chard, Karen Edwards, Hugh Evans, Justine Evans, Martyn Hogg (Chair) and Delyth Jones

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillor Julie Matthews (lead member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities), Councillor Peter Scott and Councillor Andrea Tomlin

Corporate Director: Governance and Business (GW), the Public Engagement Officer (JS), Democratic Services Manager (SP)

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Michelle Blakeley-Walker, Cheryl Williams and Elfed Williams.

#### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3 URGENT MATTERS**

There were no urgent matters.

#### **4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

The committee did not receive any nominations for candidates for the role of vice chair of the committee.

#### **5 DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

Councillor Julie Matthews, the lead member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities, introduced a report on a draft public participation strategy (previously circulated).

Members were advised that the report aimed to update the committee on the progress made in producing the strategy, to get early engagement and feedback on the draft report, and to ensure that the strategy had the support of the committee.

The Public Engagement Officer (PEO) provided a detailed account of the draft contents of the strategy, the aim of which was to set out how the Council aimed to encourage local people to participate in Council decision-making.

The strategy would complement the existing Engagement Policy which gives guidance and support for officers and Councillors when carrying out a range of public engagement and consultation activities.

Members were informed that the adoption of a public participation strategy was a statutory requirement, having been introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Act specifically aimed to address:

- Ways of promoting awareness among local people of the principal councils' functions.
- Ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails.
- Ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the principal council.
- Ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the principal council about a decision before, and after, it is made.
- Arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees).
- Ways of promoting awareness among members of the principal council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people.

Principal Councils were required to consult with the local community in developing and reviewing the Public Participation Strategy. This strategy must be reviewed at least once after every ordinary local government election. The committee was informed that external researchers had been appointed by the Council and had undertaken an independent audit of the Council's existing services, an online survey and street surveys with members of the public. Some of this research had been commissioned for an existing corporate plan project entitled 'People are involved in shaping and improving service', with the research being relevant for the purpose of developing the public participation strategy. Findings from the research were included in the draft strategy.

The PEO reported that a final version of the draft strategy and its Well-being Impact Assessment would be presented to the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group in July prior to being brought to the committee in September.

In considering the presentation members queried whether the strategy could cross-reference the Council's different strategies that contribute to, or overlap with the public participation strategy's aims?

In response to questions, the PEO advised that consideration could be given to the regular compilation of social media posts and information relevant to councillors, to assist members appropriately share content of interest to their residents.

**RESOLVED – That the committee notes the contents of the draft Public Participation Strategy and agrees to the inclusion of the Strategy in the forward work programme for the September 2023 meeting.**

## **6 DUTY OF GROUP LEADERS TO PROMOTE ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Monitoring Officer (MO) submitted a report (previously circulated) on the duty of group leaders to promote ethical behaviour.

The committee was informed that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provided a new duty on the leaders of political groups to take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members. Members were advised that the duty did not make a group leader accountable for another members' behaviour, but the role was about group leaders taking reasonable steps to promote ethical behaviour within their groups.

The MO reported on committee roles in respect of the new duties. The Council's Standards Committee had a statutory role in monitoring group leaders' compliance with the duty and to advise and provide training for group leaders on discharging the duty. He added though that it was appropriate for the Democratic Services Committee to be consulted and kept informed on the implementation of the new duty.

Members considered the draft statutory guidance which included examples of how group leaders could discharge their duty, and the related activities of the Standards Committee members.

The committee agreed that training on the duty of group leaders to promote ethical behaviour would be beneficial.

**RESOLVED – that the committee notes the report and endorses the provision of training being made available for group leaders on the duty to promote ethical behaviour.**

## **7 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS**

A report by Councillor Julie Matthews, lead member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities on Personal Development Reviews (previously circulated) was submitted.

The committee was informed that the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 required that a Personal Development Review (PDR) be made available to each councillor. A PDR was a way for a member and the Council to mutually assess a member's personal development needs and would be set within the context of the role of the member, their aspirations for what they hoped to achieve, the purpose and aspirations of the Authority and the needs of the community.

Members were advised that a PDR was not an appraisal of their performance so the facilitator would not provide feedback to a councillor on their performance. It was not compulsory for any member to have a PDR. A PDR could include a review of the training, development and support a member had received or would wish to receive. It could also be a conversation to clarify expectations and roles or the how the Council works and its goals.

In terms of facilitating a PDR a councillor could ask their group leader to undertake the exercise, and the Democratic Services Manager confirmed that support and a briefing was available for any group leader undertaking a PDR. Alternatively, a councillor could ask for an appropriate officer to conduct their PDR.

Members identified the following points:

- The next round of PDRs should be started with a briefing for group leaders on how to undertake a PDR.
- Providing to group leaders a list of the training that could be provided would be helpful.

**RESOLVED – That, subject to the above comments, the committee notes the information on personal development reviews for councillors.**

## **8 COUNCIL POLICY ON MEMBER TRAINING**

A report (previously circulated) by Councillor Julie Matthews, lead member for Corporate Strategy, policy and Equalities on a Council Policy for Member Training was submitted.

The committee was advised that the Member training report was being presented in order to consult with members and to shape a future Council policy on Member Training. A report would be taken to full Council next month so the committee had an opportunity to make any formal recommendations on what the policy should be directly to Council.

Members were informed of the following points:

- The report summarised some of the training and development programmes that had been delivered from the initial induction after the elections in May last year.
- Member training and development, like officer training and development was on-going in nature and should reflect the needs of the individuals in relation to their roles and aspirations, and the goals of the organisation as well as any legislative requirements.
- Most of the training plan was provided by the Council's officers. This did not require extra funding but did require officer time and that was an important factor in the size and complexity of the training programme that could be delivered. For some types of training external facilitation could be required which, if coming at a cost, would need to be contained within the member training budget.

- The appendix to the report was a short guide on how to access the councillors' e-learning site and showed a listing of the modules available.

The committee was presented with the example of Code of Contract training, which was a mandatory training session for all councillors. The mandatory requirement was a part of the Code itself which councillors agreed to abide by when becoming a member. The committee was reminded that Council could decide to make other training mandatory for all, or certain members undertaking specific roles, and details of the previous Council's mandatory training policy had been included in the report.

As members were office holders and not employees of the Council it was not possible to replicate the mandatory training arrangements used for staff, but Council did have options to encourage compliance with mandatory training for councillors. The committee was advised that these could include:

- The provision of training records to the group leaders
- Reporting on mandatory training records, for example to the Democratic Services Committee
- Publishing training attendance and non-compliance details in respect of mandatory requirements
- Groups considering training issues in their allocation of roles to their members.

Members of the Committee discussed and agreed the following points:

- The setting of reasonable mandatory training requirements for appropriate subjects and roles. The use of 'once a term' as a timescale for mandatory training to be completed was regarded as being unsuitable by the Committee.
- The engagement of the political groups and the group leaders in encouraging compliance with any mandatory training requirements. To support this, the Committee asked that group leaders be provided with the training records for their members, and any necessary training and assistance to undertake their group leader duties in respect of member training.
- The engagement of officers in developing and promoting member training.
- The clarification of any exemptions from sanctions for individual members for whom it was not reasonable to comply with a Council requirement on mandatory training.
- Group leaders being informed prior to the publication of any non-attendance records.

**RESOLVED – that the committee recommends the agreed points above to Council in respect of the Member Training Policy.**

## **9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the committee's forward work programme report (previously circulated). Members were reminded of the committee's remit and the committee's attention was drawn to the forward work programme attached to the covering report.

Councillor Hugh Evans queried whether the committee had a role in overseeing or monitoring the governance arrangements for regional and community projects, such as those being developed in the Shared Prosperity Fund. The Corporate Director: Governance and Business advised that the Governance and Audit Committee or Scrutiny committee remits were probably closer aligned to undertake that work. He highlighted that a request using the Scrutiny Proposal Form could be made to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group asking them to consider allocating the topic, potentially to the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

**RESOLVED – that the Democratic Services Committee notes the forward work programme.**



<b>Report to</b>	Special Democratic Services Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Catrin Roberts (Head of Service for Corporate Support Services: People), Cllr Julie Matthews (Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities)
<b>Report author</b>	Jo Sutton (Public Engagement Officer)
<b>Title</b>	Approval of draft Community Engagement Policy and draft Public Participation Strategy for public consultation prior to ratification

## 1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report is about the progress of the Council's Community Engagement Policy, and the Council's Public Participation Strategy

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. The Council previously sought early views of the Special Democratic Services Committee in June 2023 on the draft document before preparing the final version for consultation.
- 2.2. We are now seeking approval from the committee to take these documents out to public consultation before they are ratified and implemented across the Council

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1. That the Committee approved both documents to be translated and disseminated to the public for a 'final steer' before seeking to ratify them and approve their implementation at a later date

### **4. Report details**

4.1. The Council does not currently have a formal approach to engagement, consultation or public participation in any other council decision-making process

4.2. In 2017 the Council appointed a Public Engagement Officer with the aim of researching and developing a formalised/standardised approach to assist Officers and to ensure consistency, transparency and fairness in council decision-making processes

4.3. Between 2019-2021, work to develop a Community Engagement Policy took place, including a three-year independent research project to understand and to benchmark residents' views on their understanding of opportunities for involvement and identifying areas where the Council could be doing better.

4.4. The Policy was almost ready for approval in 2021, however the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021 came into effect, requiring the Council to develop a Public Participation Strategy. The requirements of the Strategy had been partially met by pre-existing work developing the Engagement Policy, however not all requirements were met. The Community Engagement Policy was put on hold so that work to carry out legislative requirements of the Act could be researched and met.

4.5. The Strategy requires the Council to ensure that provisions are in place, but provides no guidance on the approach that officers should take, therefore the two documents went through 'final development' in tandem: with the Policy aiming to guide officers' thinking when considering approaches to engagement and consultation activities, and the Participation Strategy highlighting existing provision and identifying areas for improvement, to be kept under review.

4.6. It is important to note that a number of processes for which the local authority is responsible (planning, permanent changes to the local authority highway network, granting of some licenses and public space protection orders to name

but a few) etc have their own legislative requirements or guidance for carrying out consultations and the Policy was therefore designed to encourage officers to think about what they *could* do, rather than being overly prescriptive. This should ensure consistency of approach without contravening any existing legislative consultation requirements.

4.7. Both documents are included as appendices to this report

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

5.1. A better connected Denbighshire – Developing community engagement schemes to support community involvement and decision making in local regeneration.

5.2. A fairer safe and more equal Denbighshire – Ensuring that people from diverse backgrounds, seldom heard groups, and those from socio-economic disadvantage are heard and inform decision making.

5.3. A well-run, high performing council – Being a ‘learning’ organisation that uses feedback.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

6.1. There is no direct cost associated with implementing either the Strategy or the Policy

6.2. There is a cost implication for continuing to run the Council’s online engagement platform *the County Conversation Portal*. This is currently being funded by money from the 2017-2022 Corporate Plan cycle however when the current licence expires a new funding route will need to be sought. The platform is well-used (with a recent consultation on Libraries receiving over 4,600 responses) and at a current cost of approximately £8,000.00 per year, represents good value for money.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

7.1. Overall the Community Engagement Policy and Public Participation Strategy will have a mixture of positive or neutral impacts. Neutral impacts on areas of

the assessment pertaining to capital works, infrastructure etc. Positive impacts on areas of the assessment pertaining to community resilience, community cohesion etc.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

- 8.1. An independent research project was carried out over three years between 2019 and 2021 to support the development of the Community Engagement Policy. This included street surveys, an online survey, virtual workshops and interviews with members of SLT and key Lead Elected Members at the time
- 8.2. A further independent research project was carried out in 2023 to address some of the gaps in the Community Engagement Policy that were legislative requirements of the Public Participation Strategy. This also included street surveys, an online survey and additionally in June 2023 Officers attended the Special Democratic Services Committee to present the draft documents and seek their early input before developing the final drafts (now attached as appendices to this document)

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

- 9.1. Not required

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

- 10.1. Not implementing at least the Public Participation Strategy presents a risk of the authority being in breach of the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021. This can be mitigated by approving the document for public consultation and subsequent ratification.
- 10.2. Not implementing the Community Engagement Policy will mean that it may be difficult for the Council to take a consistent approach when creating and managing engagement activities, and additional internal resources and signposting will also be difficult to provide without the Policy to back them up. This can be mitigated by approving the document for public consultation and subsequent ratification.

## 11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Power to approve the documents for public consultation rests with the Special Democratic Services Committee

## 12. Appendices

### 12.1. Public Participation Strategy



Participation Strategy  
- Draft Strategy.docx

### 12.2. Public Participation Strategy Well-being Impact Assessment



WBIA Public  
Participation Strategy

### 12.3. Community Engagement Policy



Community  
Engagement Policy\_N

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# Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

<b>Approved by</b>	TBC
<b>Date implemented</b>	TBC
<b>Owner</b>	Corporate Communications and Engagement Team
<b>Review date</b>	June 2027

# Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

## Changes to this document

This document is reviewed regularly to keep up with changes in policy or legislation. The latest versions of our publications can be found on our website. Before contacting us about the content of this document, we recommend that you refer to the most recent version on the website and any relevant guidance.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date approved</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Notes / changes</b>
1.0			
2.0			



# Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

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# Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

## The purpose of this strategy

The purpose of this Public Participation Strategy is to set out how the Council aims to encourage local people to participate in Council decision-making.

It complements the existing Engagement Policy which gives guidance and support for officers and Councillors to carry out a range of public engagement and consultation activities.

## Legislative Background

*The Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021* (hereafter referred to as The Act) requires principal Councils (of which Denbighshire County Council is one such Council) in Wales to develop and implement a Public Participation Strategy that in particular addresses:

- Ways of promoting awareness among local people of the principal council's functions;
- Ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails;
- Ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the principal council;
- Ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the principal council about a decision before, and after, it is made;
- Arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees);
- Ways of promoting awareness among members of the principal council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people.

Principal Councils are required to consult with the local community in developing and reviewing the Public Participation Strategy. This strategy must be reviewed at least once after every ordinary local government election.

# Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

## Consultation requirements and key findings

The Act states (section 41.2) that *“In preparing that strategy the council must consult local people, and such other persons as it considers appropriate”*

To support the development of this strategy, Denbighshire County Council has carried out research over two separate projects:

1. Prior to the instigation of The Act, work was already being carried out by Denbighshire County Council under a project from the 2017-2022 Corporate Plan cycle. The project was called *People are involved in shaping and improving services*. This project aimed to investigate and address key concerns raised in previous Residents Surveys where respondents felt it was difficult to get involved in Council decision-making, and even if they did, respondents were not sure whether their involvement would make a difference. The eventual aim of the *People Are Involved...* project was to develop an Engagement Policy for the Council which would guide officers' thinking when creating and managing engagement and consultation projects, and bring transparency and consistency of approach to engagement activities carried out across the council. Research was carried out over three years to identify consistent requirements when consulting and engaging with the public.
2. Following the introduction of the Local Government Act (Wales) 2021 legislation, and the requirement to carry out a consultation to support the development of the Public Participation Strategy, additional research was carried out to address some 'knowledge gaps' required under the Act which was not covered by the work done on the Engagement Policy, such as the requirement to raise awareness on how to become a Councillor.

The research for both pieces of work was appointed to external researchers and included an independent audit of the council's existing activities, an online survey, and some street surveys where researchers would approach members of the public to ask them for their opinion. In terms of the surveys, both pieces of research received a combined total of 1,215 responses, of which approximately 750 were carried out as 'street surveys' (it should

## Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

be noted however that due to the Covid pandemic one year's worth of surveys was conducted exclusively online)

In summary the data from both pieces of research showed that:

1. On average, around 75% of survey respondents wanted to get involved in decisions made which affect them
2. On average, around 73% of respondents felt that 'meaningful engagement' meant that they felt included, informed and listened to (even if the eventual decision made was not one they agreed with). Around 19% of respondents only felt that engagement would be meaningful if the council made a decision that they personally agreed with. Around 8% of respondents weren't sure or didn't have an opinion
3. There is more knowledge around what the Council does and how it impacts people's lives in the south of the County. This is likely to be because communities in rural Denbighshire are generally smaller and therefore the decisions the council makes will have a wider impact within that community.
4. This was reflected in the number of respondents who said they had attended a Council committee meeting (or knew it was possible to do this). In Corwen, over 50% of respondents surveyed said they had either attended a meeting or knew it was possible to do this, compared to Rhyl where 27% of respondents had either attended a meeting or knew it was possible to do this.
5. Respondents were generally not interested in becoming involved in decision-making to the extent that they would consider becoming a Councillor. Across the county fewer than 1 in 10 people thought this would be something they might like to do.
6. Reasons why people felt they might not become a Councillor included: being unsure what would be involved, not having a campaign issue/not being sure people would vote for them, they were too busy, too old, or unsure as to what level of commitment would be required, or the remuneration received was not proportionate to the responsibilities of being a Councillor.
7. In terms of the mechanisms by which respondents wanted to find out or get involved in decision-making which affects or impacts them:

## Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

- a. Around 43% want the Council to write to them
  - b. Around 30% would like to attend a public information session or public meeting
  - c. Around 42% would like to see something on social media
  - d. Around 29% would like to see something on the Council's website
8. The important thing in terms of reaching people is to 'meet them where they are at' – letters (either email or post) as a means of direct contact are likely to be the most personal and most effective means of contacting people. Public meetings or information drop-ins should be as close to the target community as possible, rather than (for example) expecting people to visit the nearest Council office or other amenity to attend. To ensure both of these methods are effective, Council officers will need to have high levels of confidence before starting a project that they have accurately and adequately mapped all of their stakeholder groups and be confident they are approaching them via the most appropriate means.
9. A large number of respondents are on social media and would like to see it better used as a communication tool than it is currently. Further research may be needed to A/B test different mechanisms within social media (for example participation in local community groups/spaces on social media, versus paid advertising, versus standardised posts on the Council's own social media channels)

### Our key approach aims

The following aims will set out how we intend to approach each requirement of the strategy.

#### Consistency

Our approach to involving local people in Council decision-making will be consistent.

#### Transparency

Our approach to involving local people in decision-making will be transparent, and people will understand why we may take a particular approach.

# Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

## **Fairness**

We will recognise the differences between 'equality' and 'equity' and work to ensure that nobody who wishes to be involved in Council decision-making is prevented from doing so due to their particular circumstances. Where this means that some people require more support to participate in Council decision-making, we will do our best to enable this wherever it is possible to do so.

## **Compliance with the act**

This section will set out what the Council is currently doing, and where improvements can be identified, how we aim to carry out these improvements.

## **Ways of promoting awareness among local people of the principal council's functions**

Denbighshire County Council's existing approach includes:

- The Council's website
- Press releases
- The social media channels Twitter and Facebook

To improve this, the Council will consider:

- People who are digitally excluded
- People using social media channels other than Twitter and Facebook
- Supporting local Councillors to take a more active role in promoting their own work

## **Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)**

### **Ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails**

Denbighshire County Council currently has a website page called 'Be A Councillor':

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/your-council/voting-and-elections/be-a-councillor.aspx>

Ahead of election periods, this page is promoted via press release (which may be picked up in the local press) and via social media channels Facebook and Twitter

To improve this, the Council will:

- Regularly ask people how they would like to receive information – this is a standard item as part of the Council's Engagement Policy
- Ensure that the information is available in print or alternative format for people who are digitally excluded
- Continue to research how best to contact people, with specific considerations given to any circumstances which may be a barrier to their engagement

### **Ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the principal council**

The Council currently has an Engagement Policy which states that people must be able to obtain information:

- Online via any or all of the following:
  - The Council's main website
  - The County Conversation Portal
  - The Planning Portal
  - Via online drop-in or public meeting sessions (currently via Microsoft Teams)
- Offline via any or all of the following:
  - Information to be made available in local libraries
  - Information to be made available in the local press either by press release, advertisement or public notice

## Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

- Where appropriate, via public information sessions (either drop-in or meeting)
- Where appropriate, by posting letters to those impacted by decisions, or by carrying out door-knocking

To improve this, the Council will:

- Regularly ask local people if the channels we are using to provide them with information are the right ones
- To regularly review our Engagement Policy in line with what people are telling us

### **Ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the principal council about a decision before, and after, it is made**

The Council currently has an Engagement Policy which states that, where appropriate, people must be able to participate in local decision-making in (at least) the following ways:

- Online via any or all of the following:
  - The County Conversation Portal and associated citizen's panel *Y Panel*
  - The Planning Portal
  - Via online drop-in or public meeting sessions (currently via Microsoft Teams)
- Offline via any or all of the following:
  - By viewing consultation or engagement documents and completing feedback forms in local libraries or other venues as appropriate
  - Where appropriate, via public engagement or consultation drop-in sessions
  - Where appropriate, by facilitating discussions with specific communities or service users (e.g. focus groups)

To improve this, the Council will:

- Regularly ask local people if the channels we are using to engage with them and facilitate their participation are the right ones
- To regularly review our Engagement Policy in line with what people are telling us



# Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)

## Arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees)

The Council has arrangements in place to bring the views of the public to the attention of its three Scrutiny committees.

Members of the public may contact their local councillor, to raise issues through their councillor, or they can make a direct request using a 'Public Scrutiny Request Form', available from the Council's website on this page:

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/your-council/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/scrutiny-committees.aspx>

The following criteria are used when considering whether a request is suitable for consideration by a Scrutiny Committee:

- Public interest – is the matter of concern to residents?
- Ability to have an impact – can Scrutiny influence and change things?
- Performance – is it an underperforming area or service?
- Extent – does it affect a large number of residents or a large geographic area?
- Replication – is anyone else looking at it?

To improve how scrutiny committees are brought to public attention and to improve the means by which members of the public can raise issues or concerns, the council will:

- Seek to promote Scrutiny committee meetings on corporate social media channels in advance of their taking place
- Look at creating a digital 'web form' version of the Public Scrutiny request form (which is currently a Microsoft Word document).

## **Public Participation Strategy 2022-2027 (draft)**

### **Ways of promoting awareness among members of the principal council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people**

Denbighshire County Council currently includes some basic social media training as part of its Members' Induction Process.

To improve this, the Council will:

- Consult with Councillors after every ordinary Council election to ascertain their current level of understanding about the social media channels available to them, and how these can complement the channels the Council uses
- Arrange regular social media training for Councillors:
  - At least once per year
  - After any extra-ordinary election or by-election
- Develop and publish a social media toolkit to support officers and Councillors



## **Public Participation Strategy: Well-being Impact Assessment Report**

This report summarises the likely impact of the proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

**Assessment Number:** 1178

**Brief description:** We are impact assessing the Council's proposed Public Participation Strategy. It is a legislative requirement for all principle councils/unitary local authorities in Wales to produce a Public Participation Strategy to satisfy the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. In brief the Strategy must address: • Ways of promoting awareness among local people of the principal council's functions; • Ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails; • Ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the principal council; • Ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the principal council about a decision before, and after, it is made; • Arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees); • Ways of promoting awareness among members of the principal council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people. Principal Councils are required to consult with the local community in developing and reviewing the Public Participation Strategy. This strategy must be reviewed at least once after every ordinary local government election.

**Date Completed:** [TEXT HERE] Version: 0

**Completed by:** [TEXT HERE]

**Responsible Service:** Corporate Support Service: People

**Localities affected by the proposal:** Whole County,

**Who will be affected by the proposal?** The proposal affects Denbighshire County Council officers who facilitate public participation in decision-making, it affects County Councillors and it affects residents or other members of the public who wish to be involved in how Denbighshire County Council makes decisions which affect them

**Was this impact assessment completed as a group?** Yes

## Summary and Conclusion

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

### Score for the sustainability of the approach

**3 out of 4 stars**

**Actual score : 26 / 36.**

### Summary for each Sustainable Development principle

#### Long term

The Strategy once in place must be reviewed after every ordinary Council election. We are impacting assessing a Strategy, therefore some of the questions relating to capital works projects (e.g. highways infrastructure) are not relevant in this case.

#### Prevention

The Strategy aims to facilitate public participation in Council decision-making. Where the Council aims to co-produce services with local communities this will promote independence, however where the Strategy requires the Council to facilitate involvement in the democratic process (e.g. by standing to become a Councillor) the strategy will promote other ways of working.

#### Integration

The LDP has its own engagement process. The development of the Public Participation Strategy may make it easier for people to get involved in participation processes to support the development of the LDP but this is not a specific aim of this Strategy. The Strategy will aim to make a positive contribution to peoples' overall wellbeing by ensuring they are empowered to get involved in decisions which impact their lives

#### Collaboration

## Public Participation Strategy

The strategy development will be supported by a comprehensive research programme which includes consulting with teams from around the authority as well as a period of public consultation.

### Involvement

We have carried out stakeholder mapping to ensure that everyone who wants to contribute to the development of a Participation Strategy is facilitated to have their say

### Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
<a href="#">A prosperous Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A resilient Denbighshire</a>	Neutral
<a href="#">A healthier Denbighshire</a>	Neutral
<a href="#">A more equal Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A Denbighshire of cohesive communities</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</a>	Neutral
<a href="#">A globally responsible Denbighshire</a>	Neutral

### Main conclusions

Overall the Public Participation Strategy will have a net positive impact on themes around a more equal Denbighshire, a Denbighshire of cohesive communities and a resilient Denbighshire. This is because increased public awareness of principal council functions and aiming to increase public participation in corporate decision-making processes should lead to a greater percentage of people within communities being empowered to get involved in decisions which affect them.

## Public Participation Strategy

It has neutral or no impact on themes around global responsibility, prosperity, health, Welsh language or the Welsh culture

## **The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world.**

### **A prosperous Denbighshire**

#### **Overall Impact**

Positive

#### **Justification for impact**

Flexibility in the means of participation enables greater participation

#### **Further actions required**

[TEXT HERE]

#### **Positive impacts identified:**

##### **A low carbon society**

More engagement online, reducing travel need

##### **Quality communications, infrastructure and transport**

The Strategy would aim to work in conjunction with other policies to facilitate greater online involvement and digital literacy

##### **Economic development**

Local voice coming through in council decision-making may present opportunities to support the local economy

##### **Quality skills for the long term**

Participation does improve community capacity

##### **Quality jobs for the long term**

N/A



**Childcare**

Virtual participation options may allow those with caring or childcaring responsibilities to get involved in Council decision-making

**Negative impacts identified:**

**A low carbon society**

Where groups are identified who need more support to get involved, if we are facilitating this, there could be a net negative carbon impact

**Quality communications, infrastructure and transport**

N/A

**Economic development**

[TEXT HERE]

**Quality skills for the long term**

[TEXT HERE]

**Quality jobs for the long term**

N/A

**Childcare**

N/A

**A resilient Denbighshire**

**Overall Impact**

Neutral

**Justification for impact**

The Public Participation Strategy would have a neutral impact on A Resilient Denbighshire because it has no direct impact on the environment or biodiversity.

**Further actions required**

N/A

**Positive impacts identified:**

**Biodiversity and the natural environment**

N/A

**Biodiversity in the built environment**

N/A

**Reducing waste, reusing and recycling**

N/A

**Reduced energy/fuel consumption**

N/A

**People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity**

N/A

**Flood risk management**

N/A

**Negative impacts identified:**

**Biodiversity and the natural environment**

N/A

**Biodiversity in the built environment**

N/A

**Reducing waste, reusing and recycling**

N/A

**Reduced energy/fuel consumption**

N/A

**People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity**

N/A

**Flood risk management**

N/A

**A healthier Denbighshire**

**Overall Impact**

Neutral

**Justification for impact**

The primary purpose of the Participation Strategy will have no impact on improving people's physical health and mental health and wellbeing

**Further actions required**

N/A

**Positive impacts identified:**

**A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being**

N/A

**Access to good quality, healthy food**

N/A

**People's emotional and mental well-being**

The Strategy aims to ensure that people are empowered to get involved in making decisions which impact them, which may have a positive impact on their mental health.

**Access to healthcare**

N/A

**Participation in leisure opportunities**

N/A

**Negative impacts identified:**

**A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being**

N/A

**Access to good quality, healthy food**

N/A

**People's emotional and mental well-being**

A small risk that known barriers to engagement and participation continue to be an issue whilst the council works toward improvements

**Access to healthcare**

N/A

**Participation in leisure opportunities**

N/A

**A more equal Denbighshire**

**Overall Impact**

Positive

**Justification for impact**

Overall the Participation Strategy aims to identify gaps where people are not participating in decisions which affect them, and ensure that they are facilitated to get involved and have their say if they wish to do so.

**Further actions required**

[TEXT HERE]

**Positive impacts identified:**

**Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation**

The Participation Strategy should identify any areas where people with protected characteristics are currently unable to participate in meaningful engagement, and set out ways to improve or remove these barriers.

**People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage**

The Participation Strategy should consider any disadvantages within communities and seek to equalise these, as far as getting involved in Council decision-making and public life is concerned

**People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes**

The Participation Strategy should consider any disadvantages within communities and seek to equalise these, as far as getting involved in Council decision-making and public life is concerned

**Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage**

N/A

**Negative impacts identified:**

**Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation**

None

**People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage**

None

**People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes**

[TEXT HERE]

**Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage**

N/A

**A Denbighshire of cohesive communities**

**Overall Impact**

Positive

**Justification for impact**

The Participation Strategy aims to build the confidence of individuals and communities to get

involved and have their say in decisions that impact them.

**Further actions required**

[TEXT HERE]

**Positive impacts identified:**

**Safe communities and individuals**

N/A

**Community participation and resilience**

The Participation Strategy will encourage communities to take a more active role in how the council designs, develops and delivers services which meet their needs

**The attractiveness of the area**

N/A

**Connected communities**

N/A

**Rural resilience**

N/A

**Negative impacts identified:**

**Safe communities and individuals**

N/A

**Community participation and resilience**

None

**The attractiveness of the area**

N/A

**Connected communities**

N/A

**Rural resilience**

N/A

**A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**

**Overall Impact**

Neutral

**Justification for impact**

The Public Participation Strategy has no direct impact on the Welsh language and the Welsh culture

**Further actions required**

N/A

**Positive impacts identified:**

**People using Welsh**

N/A

**Promoting the Welsh language**

N/A

**Culture and heritage**



N/A

**Negative impacts identified:**

**People using Welsh**

N/A

**Promoting the Welsh language**

N/A

**Culture and heritage**

N/A

**A globally responsible Denbighshire**

**Overall Impact**

Neutral

**Justification for impact**

The Public Participation Strategy will have no direct impact on "A Globally responsible Denbighshire"

**Further actions required**

N/A

**Positive impacts identified:**

**Local, national, international supply chains**

N/A

**Human rights**

N/A

**Broader service provision in the local area or the region**

N/A

**Reducing climate change**

N/A

**Negative impacts identified:**

**Local, national, international supply chains**

N/A

**Human rights**

N/A

**Broader service provision in the local area or the region**

N/A

**Reducing climate change**

N/A



# Community Engagement Policy

## Contents

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## Executive Summary

This policy aims to describe how Denbighshire County Council involves its communities in decision-making.

The policy will be a public document, and Council staff will be supported with an Engagement Framework and further resources to enable them to carry out their duties in accordance with this policy.

## Purpose and scope of this policy

Denbighshire County Council aims to create a culture of engagement whereby:

Staff and contractors working for Denbighshire County Council know and understand what is expected of them in terms of involving communities in decisions which affect them

Communities in Denbighshire are engaged with the Council and understand how and when the Council will be able to involve them in decision-making

This policy will cover all forms of community engagement, across all service areas and across all geographical regions of the County. This policy is in line with legal duties around consultation and engagement, however it will not provide legal definitions or set out legal guidelines for engagement as these may be subject to change, and will aim instead to provide a broad overview of the principles and standards by which the Council expects engagement to be managed from a strategic perspective.

It is also important to note that some statutory processes such as Planning processes, the creation of Traffic Regulation Orders, granting of some licences etc. come with their own statutory guidelines for consultation which are set out by authorities other than Denbighshire Council, but to which the Council must adhere. The intention of this Policy is to be supplementary to other guidance and where legal guidance on statutory consultations exists this Policy will not override or supersede it.

## Definitions

### The Council

Denbighshire County Council, or 'The Council' – a county council and unitary authority performing local government functions in the county of Denbighshire

### Communities

Communities are groups of people who hold a shared identity based on a range of factors.

For the purposes of this policy, Communities will be loosely described as sharing one of three common factors:

# Community Engagement Policy

Communities of Place	Communities of Interest	Communities of Circumstance
<p>Communities of place are those communities which exist within geographical borders.</p> <p>Most people identify with a range of place-based communities at any given time.</p>	<p>Communities of interest are communities that people identify with based on shared common interests, and where people have a choice about being active in that community. There can be a lot of overlap between communities of interest and communities of circumstance or communities of place</p>	<p>Communities of circumstance are communities that people belong to or identify with because of who they are as people. For many, there is significant overlap between their circumstances and their interests, and most people are proud to identify with the communities they belong to.</p>
<p>Some examples of Communities of Place include:</p> <p>A residential building or workplace; a street or a housing estate; a village, town or city; the county of Denbighshire</p>	<p>Some examples of Communities of Interest:</p> <p>Businesses; environmental action groups; sporting communities; arts/crafts communities; volunteering communities; veterans groups; interest groups based on place; interest groups based on circumstances</p>	<p>Some examples of Communities of Circumstance:</p> <p>Young people; older people; disabled people                      People of different nationalities; people with different ethnic backgrounds; people who are carers or young carers; parents and people who are pregnant; people who identify as LGBTQA+ and people who identify as transgender or non-binary</p>

The Council understands that most people will identify with multiple communities, and that the strength of their identity with any particular community is context-dependent and subject to change.

## Our principles for engagement

Following the participation spectrum model allows the Council and communities to understand what types of engagement can be used, as well as when they are appropriate.

In addition to understanding these types, the Council also has some principles by which it will aim to engage with communities.

These are similar to Participation Cymru's [National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales](#) and are as follows:

- We will ensure that our communities understand what we are doing and why we are doing it
- We will help our communities to understand what they can expect from us
- We will encourage and enable our communities to take part in an appropriate way
- We will ensure that any engagement is timed and planned in an appropriate way
- We will make it as easy as possible for our communities to take part
- We will support our engagement activities with appropriate resources, support and training
- We will ensure that communities understand what difference their involvement will make
- We will learn from our engagement activities and foster a culture of continuous improvement

## Understanding what we mean by 'engagement'

'Engagement' and 'consultation' are not the same thing, although consultation **is** a form of engagement.

The Council should always aim to engage communities in the most appropriate manner for the activity at hand, however consultation is not always appropriate because the Council may have limited powers to consider the outcomes of a consultation, for example during an emergency response or due to legislative limitations.

With this in mind, the Council will work to a model known as a *participation spectrum*. This model treats all mechanisms of engagement equally and requires that the Council and communities understand what is most appropriate under the circumstances of the project/activity at hand. Several different mechanisms for participation from the spectrum model are likely to be employed over the life cycle of a project.



A full copy of the participation spectrum model is on the next page, however in brief the model revolves around:

**Inform** when the Council is unable to (for whatever reason) involve a community in a decision, the Council will ensure that the community is well-informed

**Consult** when the Council has to make a decision, but could benefit from community input, it should carry out a consultation

**Involve** when a Council needs to work with a community more closely than a consultation will allow, but the community are not or cannot be equal partners in the design/development of a project/activity/service

**Co-produce** when the Council and the Community can be equal partners in the design and development of a project/activity/service

**Empower** when the Community is in control of the decision-making and the Council is there as an enabler

The table on the next page sets out a range of activities which officers may wish to consider undertaking when planning or managing a programme of public participation. Prior to engaging in any public participation programme (and the suggested activities outlined for each type of participation), Officers should consider:

- Undertaking stakeholder mapping activities which demonstrate that Officers have considered who may be impacted by a decision the Council makes and/or may wish to have a say in it
- Ensuring that appropriate consideration is given to the best ways to reach any identified stakeholders, with a focus on 'digital first' where possible, in accordance with the Council's objectives towards in reducing carbon emissions and preventing nature's decline. Where digital engagement is not possible or not appropriate, Officers should be able to demonstrate they have considered the Council's environmental obligations in any print or procurement processes associated with public participation activities



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Co-produce	Empower
Our participation Goal	We will aim to provide balanced, bias-free information which will help our communities to understand: - What is going on - Any opportunities for community involvement - Any solutions available to us (the Council)	We will aim to obtain community feedback or analysis that we can use to help us decide what to do next. We may combine community feedback with other research/feedback to help us make the right decision	We will aim to work with communities on some aspects of the design and delivery of services, so we can better understand what matters to them	We will work with communities as equal partners to design, develop, deliver, monitor and evaluate services together	We will work with communities to support them to design and develop their own services, using their own assets and resources, and only becoming involved if requested
Our promise to communities	We will keep you informed at all times	- We will keep you informed at all times - We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns - We will let you know how your feedback has influenced our decision	- Your contributions are valuable to us - We will provide opportunities for you to get involved and we will let you know how your contributions will help us	- We will work with you to build a partnership based on trust, with mutual benefits and a common goal - We will work with you to design, develop and deliver services, and you will monitor them	- We will have the flexibility to assist you when you need us to - We will do what we can to help you realise your own potential as a community
How we'll do it	Press releases, social media posts, fact sheets or leaflets/flyers, public drop-in meetings or sessions, letters	Focus groups, open forums, public drop-in meetings or sessions, questionnaires/surveys	Workshops, focus groups or knowledge-sharing networks, peer support groups and participatory budgeting	Advisory committees comprised of community members, workshops, participatory decision-making, community networking	Facilitate and encourage community-led initiatives, sharing of best practice / lessons learned, provision of assets/resources

## Measuring and monitoring engagement

Where possible, the Council will aim to make sure that the engagement it is carrying out with communities is effective. Depending on the nature of the work being undertaken, we may:

- Monitor the number of people we who are engaging with us including:
  - on social media
  - on our website/via a mobile app
  - via the telephone or by post
  - physical footfall at events and activities
- Measure the extent to which people who are engaging with us understand what is happening. Amongst other methods of measurement we may use:
  - Surveys
  - Focus groups/workshops
  - Telephone calls
  - Pop-up shops/drop-in surgeries

## Staff responsibility towards engagement

Where decisions are being made by the Council that are likely to impact communities in Denbighshire, it is reasonable for those communities to expect the Council to engage with them in an appropriate way.

Responsibility for ensuring that appropriate engagement happens will primarily lie with staff with decision-making powers (i.e. Middle Managers and above), although they may take a coordinating rather than a participatory role.

Engagement is listed a specific consideration in the Council's **Wellbeing Impact Assessment** (WIA) process, meaning that Council staff with decision-making powers should generally be considering how they can engage with target communities as part of their project-planning objectives.

## Resources and support for this policy

For communities, additional information about how the Council aims to facilitate and practice engagement is available by contacting the Council's Public Engagement Officer.

Email: [public.engagement@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:public.engagement@denbighshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01824 708027

Write: Public Engagement, Customers and Communities, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin LL15 1YN

For Council staff:

A wide range of resources can be obtained from the Council's staff intranet *Linc*, including:

- Further guidance, templates and resources
- Equipment for loan
- Access and training to the Council's *County Conversation* engagement platform

If you do not have access to Linc then please call 01824 708027 or email

[public.engagement@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:public.engagement@denbighshire.gov.uk)

<b>Report to</b>	Democratic Services Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Policy and Equalities.
<b>Head of Service</b>	Catrin Roberts, Corporate Support Services People
<b>Report author</b>	Lisa Jones/Steve Price
<b>Title</b>	Measures to tackle intimidation against members.

## 1. What is the report about?

The report is about the measures the Council has put in place to support members suffering intimidation and to set out any further actions which could be put in place following the Committee's observations or recommendations.

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

To consider endorsing a package of information and measures to support Councillors experiencing hostile, intimidatory, defamatory or violent behaviours due to carrying out their role as Councillors.

## 3. What are the Recommendations.

3.1 That members note the report and provide their observations on whether the measures are sufficient and provide any further direction or suggestions on support that could be put in place from their own and group's perspective.

3.2 That members consider the recommendation within the report that a single point of contact be provided to members and that the relevant officer is provided with appropriate training.

3.3 That the arrangements are piloted for a 12 month period with the item placed for review on the Democratic Services Committee' forward work programme.

3.4 In the event that this report and associated actions are agreed, that awareness of the support and framework is highlighted to members directly and by Group Leaders.

3.5 That all new members in the future receive information regarding this framework as part of the training programme and induction process.

## **4. Report details**

4.1 The world is a very different and dynamic place in which Members operate today. The historical approaches of supporting members and they being left to deal with abuse alone and advised to 'get on with it, it's part of the job' are now outdated. The deaths of Jox Cox and David Amiss are a reminder that we should take harassment and abuse seriously and as a Council certain behaviours over a threshold will not be tolerated.

4.2 It is Welsh Government policy that attracting members from all walks of life is part of a 'Fairer Wales' and this report contributes to that so that individuals who may consider a life in politics but are put off as they do not want to be a target for abuse, can be assured that as far as possible, in the event they are experiencing personal abuse and intimidation, the Council has a framework in place that works in practice. This is particularly important if we are to attract a diverse membership.

4.3 The following measures have been or are recommended to be put in place:

- A Single Point of Contact (SPOC) be appointed from the existing workforce who will follow the framework attached at Schedule 1. What is clear from the discussions on how this framework could operate, is that there needs to be one person (or a known team) who are the central point of contact. The obvious areas where the skillset may be found are Corporate Health & Safety, HR, Public Protection or Democratic Services but there may be other services as well who have experience of working with members and external potentially contentious or volatile situations.
- A dedicated Members Welfare page is in the process of being finalised on the intranet. This will provide members with various resources on how to stay safe online and suggested scripts which they can copy in their response to residents.

- The Community Safety team being put on notice regarding the framework and that working closer with NWP on this area so they are aware that we putting a SPOC in place. There may be an opportunity to benefit from information or training.
- Group Leaders will be briefed on the framework and the new Members Welfare page and will be expected to cascade the initiative.

4.4 Attached at Schedule 1 is the simple and low cost guiding framework in which the SPOC shall operate whilst supporting the member with their concerns. The actions that are set out therein are not exclusive and no doubt as the framework is piloted this will evolve. The SPOC is not a substitute for the role of the Group Leader and any political party in providing support to their Councillors. It is the case that Members are not employees who are by law entitled to be protected from abuse and harassment in the workplace; however it is the Councils position that no one should be subject to such behaviour and that as a large organisation a proportionate framework should be put in place to enable all Members to carry out Council and Ward business without fear but also go about their personal life without restrictions.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

The decision contributes to a fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire as a Council where Councillors feel safe in going about their duties as Members and a Council that does not tolerate abuse or serious unacceptable behaviour.

This report has a neutral contribution to the Council becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030. More information on these two goals can be found within the Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

There may be some cost to providing the relevant officer with training in order to be able to support a Member and we would expect there to be a low impact on that Officer's day job in carrying out the support and signposting needed, then assigning any activities to others.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

This is not required.

## **8. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

It is appropriate that the Council has measures in place to support elected members suffering intimidation. Costs associated with the report are contained within existing budgets.

## **9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

No identified risks in establishing the framework; there are greater risks to health and safety in not delivering some initiative.

## **10. Power to make the decision**

Local Government and Elections Wales Act – general power of competence.



## SCHEDULE 1

### Denbighshire County Council

#### Process /Check List for supporting Members experiencing intimidation or online abuse.

When a Member informs us that s/he is experiencing problems within the ward – intimidation, threatening or sinister behaviour, cyber bullying or other behaviours which make them feel vulnerable or otherwise unsafe, there are a number of things which we as the Council can do. A Single Point of Contact will be provided who will assign and co-ordinate actions that are proportionate to the risk.

This is a check list which can be used when supporting members who are being intimidated or who feel uncomfortable.

**Every situation will be different and it will need personal judgement about whether it is worthwhile pursuing the incident, ignoring it or politely acknowledging. If a Member has been subject to, or witnessed a hate incident or crime they have a duty under the Member Code of Conduct to report it. By taking appropriate action this may help prevent a similar incident reoccurring.**

<b>LEAD OFFICER/SPOC NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS</b>		
<b>DATE OF REVIEW (if required)</b>		DATE DIARISED Y/N
<b>CONSENT FROM MEMBER TO DISCLOSE TO AGREED RECEIPIENTS AND INFORM GROUP LEADER.</b>	List recipients below:	CONSENT OBTAINED? Y/N DATE: VERBAL or WRITTEN CONSENT ?
<b>POTENTIAL WIDER SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS</b>	Y / N	If yes follow local safeguarding procedures immediately.

<b>RISK ASSESSMENT</b>	HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW	All High risk concerns SPOC to inform CHAS and Corporate Director.
<b>MEMBERS' EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS (including home and mobile and any close friend, neighbor or relative)</b>		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Assignee</b>
Advise that we can take their address off the web site (if not already done so)		
Advise that they can apply to the Monitoring Officer for their home address and other sensitive information not to be published/available for public inspection		
Any immediate action required such as reporting abuse to the social media company for it's deletion or raise concerns about an account?		
Advise Councillor that they can respond that they find the communication abusive, threatening or intimidating , if they want to highlight the poor behavior. Balance the risk and likely success of this approach.		
If a Community or campaign group – consider referral for advice to the Council's Communications Team.		
<b>If appropriate, and in all serious cases ask whether they have informed the local police of the issues which make them feel threatened. Crime reference number?</b>		
Advise that the Community Safety Team [insert tel number ] may be able to assist.		
Is the behavior threatening, harassing or abusive? Does the Councillor wish to be		

supported with contacting the police eg via Group Leader or the SPOC?		
Consider a check of the Council's Corporate Violent Persons' Register / discussion with Corporate H&S if appropriate.		
Advise Councillor to keep any records /diary/screen shot of intimidatory behavior or abuse.		
Councillors are able to access a confidential dedicated care line that is available to staff and councilors - Vivup. Phone number is 0800 023 9387		
Impact on Mental health/well being? Ask whether they would like to discuss in confidence with one of the trained Council officers who are Mental Health First Aiders? Preference for male or female/which service area?		
Remind them that their details may also be held and published by other public bodies of which they are a member (eg. Community or town Council, North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority, an outside body to which the Council has nominated them)		
Social media – refer to the Council's social media policy, the WLGA guidance Councillors' guide to Handling Online Abuse. Direct the member to the dedicated Denbighshire County Council Members' web page where resources are also available (see below)		
Advise that some Members have a phone which they use solely for council business and which they can switch off, or put on silent when they are not doing their council work. 'Down time' is important.		
Advise how to block certain telephone numbers.		
Advise on blocking/muting social media contact and temporarily suspending their own social media accounts.		
Advise councillors who have not already set up separate social media accounts for		

councillor work, to do so. This can distance bullying or harassing behaviour from friends and family who might be able to see abuse on personal accounts		
Advise of DCC members' welfare section on the intranet with links to unacceptable behaviour policies. Remind member that there is a standard response therein that the member can use.		
Advise on how to have their name taken off the Electoral register		
Advise that they can share concerns – in confidence- with senior officers Corporate Director Governance & Business, Head of Democratic services or Head of Corporate Support Services- People or Chief Executive.		
Advise that they consider sharing their concerns within their group, or with their group leadership.		
If appropriate, set up a review meeting so that contact is maintained. Talking about problems or issues can make them more manageable.		
If abuse continues further steps required such as a letter to the individual (from Councillor/Group or Council) that such abuse will result in a referral to the police and stopping of further communication.		
Provide a copy of the LGA/WLGA Councillors' Guide to Handling Intimidation.		

FORM COMPLETED BY:

DATE OF COMPLETION:

FORM SAVED ON CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE DRIVE:

<b>Report to</b>	Democratic Services Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	27 November 2023
<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities
<b>Head of Service</b>	Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Service: People
<b>Report author</b>	Steve Price, Democratic Services Manager
<b>Title</b>	A Review into 'How Meetings are Held'

## 1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report is about the Council's arrangements for holding its member-level meetings.

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. Shortly before the last council elections the previous Council administration took decisions on how Council meetings would be held. This was in response to changes during 2020 and 2021, a period of pandemic lock-downs which temporarily halted traditional face-to-face meetings, changes in the law governing certain Council and committee meetings, and the technical advancements made during that period that have allowed business to be conducted using virtual or hybrid meetings.

## 3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 That the Democratic Services Committee considers the issues around how the Council's meetings are held and comments accordingly.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1. In December 2021 full Council considered a report on “Proposals for Members to adopt New Ways of Working”. That report outlined recommendations agreed at a members’ task and finish group and by the Democratic Services Committee that looked at the New Ways of Working agenda, primarily focusing on how members’ meetings should be conducted, and the ICT equipment required for Members.
- 4.2. The report and discussion at Council considered points in favour of virtual meetings, and points in favour of face-to-face meetings.

### **In favour of virtual meetings**

- Council has declared a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency. Virtual meetings don’t have the carbon emissions generated from member and officer journeys to meeting venues.
- Reduction in travel expenses.
- Reduction in time spent travelling to meetings.
- Virtual meetings can be more accessible (participants can attend from wherever they happen to be, and the time commitment is limited to the meeting time itself) and likely to promote participation in local democracy.

### **In favour of face-to-face meetings**

- Some members feel that face to face meetings enable them to engage better in debate and to be able to interpret the atmosphere of a meeting, or the body language of participants.
  - Some members miss the social benefits of interacting directly with their peers in the same location.
  - Any technical problems can affect the business being undertaken or the participation of those experiencing a technical problem.
- 4.3. Council acknowledged that it could not hold public meetings of its statutory committees as face-to-face meetings. Recent changes in the law in Wales arising from the COVID pandemic required local authorities to offer remote attendance for those meetings, thereby leaving the virtual or hybrid meeting options.

4.4. In addition to the main public Council and committee meetings, councillors participate in a range of internal meetings, for panels and groups established by the Council to consult and engage with members on specific topics. These meetings are not under the statutory requirements of the public committees and therefore the Council can choose whether they are held as face-to-face, virtual or hybrid meetings. In 2021, Council decided that these internal meetings would by default be held as virtual meetings (unless an overriding necessity required specific meetings to be held as face-to-face or hybrid meetings).

### **The 'How Meetings are Held' (2023) Working Group**

4.5. In 2023 the Council's Group Leaders called for a new member working group to be formed to review the 2021 decisions. This would allow the new Council to express its views on the meeting arrangements left by the previous Council. The working group's task was to consider the legal framework and options available in order to present any recommendations to the Democratic Services Committee and full Council. The 'How Meetings are Held' working group met on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and agreed that a survey would be conducted to capture the views of members and relevant officers. It is intended that the survey will be available during November, and an update will be provided to the Democratic Services Committee at today's meeting. The working group will re-convene once the results of the survey are available.

4.6. The 2023 working group is also looking at best practices for hybrid and virtual meetings. In 2021 Council adopted a hybrid committee meetings protocol designed to guide participants and clarify expectations. The provisions in the protocol are in most respects appropriate for virtual meetings too. The protocol is attached as appendix 1.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

5.1. The issues covered in this report relate to the corporate plan themes of 'a better connected Denbighshire' and 'a well-run, high performing Council'.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

- 6.1. Paragraph 4.2 outlines the cost elements of how meetings are held that were considered by full Council in 2021. These include carbon emissions, travelling costs and the time spent or saved by how members and officers attend meetings.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

- 7.1. A well being impact assessment is not required for this report.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

- 8.1 The relevant forum for reporting and consulting on the issues raised in this report is the Democratic Services Committee.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

- 9.1. A Chief Finance Officer Statement is not required for this report.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

- 10.1. The 'How Meetings are Held' Working Group's review is considering the advantages and disadvantages of each meeting format, and through reviewing the Council's hybrid meeting protocol it is seeking to have appropriate measures in place that have the support of the current membership.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

- 11.1. This is a consultation report and no formal decisions are required. The legislation referred to in this report includes the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021 and emergency legislation and regulations from the Coronavirus Act 2020.



**DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HYBRID COMMITTEE MEETINGS PROTOCOL**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE PROTOCOL**

- 1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance to Members and the public as to the processes to be undertaken by the Council when conducting hybrid committee meetings.
- 1.2 Hybrid meetings are a combination of face to face meetings and virtual meetings, whereby some Members, officers and the public attend the Council Chamber and some members attend remotely.
- 1.3 During Hybrid meetings, all participants will be able to see and hear each other and translation facilities will be available for all.

**2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to make and publish arrangements that enable persons who are not in the same place to attend meetings of the Council. This provision in effect requires hybrid meetings.
- 2.2. To continue to ensure the public and press have access to public meetings of Council and to ensure transparency of decision-making, principal meetings will be live streamed simultaneously. Recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website for public record and be available for viewing for 6 months from the date of the meeting.
- 2.3. All voting will be carried out either by affirmation of the meeting, by using the electronic voting system within the Council Chamber and on the virtual meeting platform in use, or by means of a roll-call of all Members present both remotely and in person.
- 2.4. All voting results will be announced by the Chair before moving to the next item of business.
- 2.5. Underpinning this Protocol are the fundamental principles that conduct shall be compliant with the Code of Conduct for Members and that the integrity and security of any confidential information is maintained.

- 2.6. Hybrid meetings will follow the Council's usual meetings practice in terms of publication of agendas and reports, and they will follow normal procedural rules in the Constitution where possible.
- 2.7. A fundamental principle is that the attendance of a Member or an Officer is equally valid irrespective of whether they are attending in the Council Chamber or from a remote location. It will not be appropriate for any Member to make any adverse comment or inference in respect of any other Member or Officer's chosen location for attendance.
- 2.8. No member will record the proceedings of any meeting, which, for the avoidance of doubt includes all remote and hybrid meetings whether open to the public or not, without notifying and seeking the consent of the members and officers attending the meeting.
- 2.9. Meetings which are being webcast to the public will be recorded by Democratic Services and made available on the Council's website.

### **3. PROTOCOL FOR HYBRID MEETINGS**

- 3.1. Council will operate hybrid meetings using the video conferencing and webcasting facilities within the Council Chamber to enable both remote attendance and physical attendance at meetings.
- 3.2. Prior to the meeting, Democratic Services will ensure that all Members, relevant officers and any other relevant participating individual have been invited to join the meeting and have been informed as to how they must connect to the meeting.
- 3.3. Any Member wishing to attend in person will need to give prior notice to Democratic Services as soon as possible that s/he wishes to attend in person
- 3.4. Members attending remotely will be expected to join the meeting at least ten minutes before the proposed start time for the meeting to ensure that they are able to connect and that the translation channel may be tested.
- 3.5. If a quorum is achieved the meeting will proceed in any event, notwithstanding a Member's or Members' failure to achieve a connection. If a Member joins the meeting at a later time they must make themselves known immediately to the Chairman and comment and vote only on those complete agenda items remaining.
- 3.6. When attending remotely, Members need to use their best endeavours to remain on-line throughout debates and during voting in order to maintain the integrity of the decision-making process and to reduce the opportunity for legal challenge of any decision.

- 3.7. When attending remotely, Members and any participants must ensure that the room from which they are accessing the remote meeting is suitable in terms of privacy and that no disturbance occurs during the course of the meeting as it is important to ensure a degree of formality in the proceedings. It must be remembered that as proceedings will be live, viewers will effectively be able to view you working in your home.
- 3.9. When attending remotely, Members must access the meeting individually via their Council issued equipment and ensure a suitable background. Members are able to make use of other Council facilities to ensure a stable internet connection but they must liaise with Democratic Services in advance of the meeting giving sufficient time for such arrangements to be made.
- 3.10. If remote attendees declare a personal and prejudicial interest in a particular item, in order to continue to comply with the Code of Conduct for Members, they will be removed from the meeting by the Democratic Services Officer and placed in the 'waiting room' for the duration of the relevant item. The Democratic Services Officer as moderator can also add and remove other attendees such as public speakers. If attendees are in the chamber, they will physically leave the chamber for the duration of the item.
- 3.11. During the meeting whilst a Member is not speaking, their microphone should be set to mute and this should be clicked to un-mute (sound) when s/he is invited to speak by the Chairman. Members should avoid setting their devices to the highest volume, sit too close to the microphone, have other electronic devices operating or shuffle papers in front of the microphone as this is likely to cause feedback. Committee Members are encouraged to keep their cameras on at all times in order that they may be seen by members of the public throughout debates and voting. However, it is recognised that if a Member is experiencing poor connectivity it may be necessary to turn their video off.
- 3.12. Members recognise and accept that their microphones may be switched off remotely by Democratic Services Officers if they have been left on inadvertently when the Member is not speaking.
- 3.13. Members should ensure that the name that appears on screen in connection with their image should be their full name and include the title Councillor in order that the public can identify elected members.
- 3.14. It is accepted that the Chair plays a vital role in the orderly conduct of the committee meeting. Chairs will be fully supported by Democratic Services

Officers and the Monitoring Officer to enable the Chair to conduct the meeting in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and the principles of this Protocol

- 3.15. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will ensure that the system allows everyone to participate. The Chair will make an introduction to the meeting, and provide a reminder of the meeting arrangements.
- 3.16. Given the nature of hybrid meetings the Chair will ensure that every member has the opportunity to participate in the meeting and that members are called to speak in the order that they indicate their wish to do so wherever they are attending the meeting from. Members who are attending remotely should use the 'raise hand' function to indicate that they wish to speak. Democratic Services officers will assist the Chair in monitoring the requests to speak. The Chair must allow officers to speak if they indicate that they wish to do so.
- 3.17. Members use of the 'chat' function should be restricted to issues such as informing the meeting that they are leaving temporarily or permanently, or that they are having connectivity issues. The 'chat' function should not be used to make contributions to the debate or to send informal messages to other attendees. Members are reminded that 'chat' messages will be visible to viewers of the meeting.
- 3.18. In relation to reports that are presented that are deemed exempt from publication, Members will be reminded that the item is an exempt report and asked to vote to recognise this accordingly. If the debate then proceeds in 'Part II', Members must ensure that they are able to strictly maintain the privacy of the proceedings at their location. The live link will cease before the item commences and therefore there may be a hiatus in proceedings to ensure that no recording is taking place. Individuals who are not entitled to be present during the item will physically leave the meeting in the chamber, and will be removed from the virtual meeting by the Democratic Services Officer.
- 3.19. If connectivity is lost for any remote attendee during the proceedings so that the quorum is not met, the Chairman will require the meeting to be paused in order to allow re-establishment of connectivity if at all possible. If it proves impossible to re-establish connection for a sufficient number of Members to reach a quorum, the meeting will be adjourned to a later date. The Chairman will make every effort as is reasonable to enable those Members experiencing connectivity problems to take part in the debate.
- 3.20. Public speakers will be contacted by Democratic Services in advance of the committee meeting to establish whether they wish to attend in person or remotely. Remote attendees will be provided with a link to the meeting. All remote public speakers will be invited to join the meeting when they enter the

'waiting room' but must remain in mute mode and not speak unless invited by the Chair to do so. The Chair will invite each speaker to begin their presentation at the appropriate time. Speakers are requested to provide their presentation in writing to the Chair in advance of the meeting. In the event of issues with connectivity, the Chair will read the speaker's presentation on their behalf. Speakers will then 'leave' the meeting following the relevant agenda item, if necessary with support from the meeting host.

3.21. Members of the press will be able to view the livestream of the meeting.

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<b>Report to</b>	Democratic Services Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	27 November 2023
<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities
<b>Head of Service</b>	Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Service: People
<b>Report author</b>	Steve Price, Democratic Services Manager
<b>Title</b>	Draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for 2024 - 2025

## 1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report is about the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' (the 'Panel') draft annual report for the 2024 – 2025 financial year.

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. The Panel is consulting on the proposals set out in the draft report. In reviewing the draft report, the committee will be aware of the proposals for the remuneration of members and will be able to respond to the Panel before the consultation period closes on the 8 December 2023. The Panel will issue its final annual report in February.

## 3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 That the committee considers the draft Annual Report of the Panel and comments accordingly.

3.2 That the committee comments on the proposed arrangements for the payment of co-opted members.

3.3 That the committee considers responding to the Panel's consultation.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1. The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales was established in 2008. The Panel's remit and functions were extended in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. The Panel's remit includes councillors, other members of national park authorities, Welsh fire and rescue authorities and community and town councils in addition to county and county borough councils. The Panel stipulates the roles undertaken by members that can be remunerated, and the amount of those payments.
- 4.2. The Panel is required to produce an annual report setting out the levels at which members are to be paid for various duties and responsibilities for the coming municipal year. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires local authorities to implement the recommendations of the Panel. The draft 2024 - 2025 annual report is attached as appendix 1.
- 4.3. The questions the Panel would like responses to are attached as appendix 2. Naturally, the committee could choose to submit responses on relevant issues beyond those prompted by the Panel's set questions.

### **Draft Determinations for 2024 to 2025**

- 4.4. The basic salary, paid to all elected members, is remuneration for the responsibility of community representation and participation in the scrutiny, regulatory and related functions of local governance. It is based on a full time equivalent of 3 days a week. The Panel considers it appropriate to retain the link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. The basic salary for the next financial year is proposed to be aligned with three fifths of the 2022 (the latest figures available to the Panel at the time the draft Annual Report was written) statistics for Wales of the 'Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings in Wales'. This would result in the basic salary rising from £17,600 to £18,666 a year.
- 4.5. The Panel classifies Denbighshire as a group C council and is proposing a corresponding increase to the senior salary elements i.e., the part of the senior salary payments beyond the basic salary, that are for the role being undertaken by a Cabinet member or committee chair for example.



## **Co-opted Members**

- 4.6 The Panel's rules currently stipulate that co-opted members of the Council must be remunerated on a day or half day basis, based on set payments for up to 4 hours, and 4 hours or more. The Panel allows the relevant Council officer to decide on the total number of days remunerated in a year and to set a reasonable time for meeting preparation. Earlier consultations with full Council and the Democratic Services Committee have resulted in Denbighshire not applying a cap on the total of days that can be remunerated or on the amount of preparation time that can be claimed.
- 4.7 The Panel has noted the changes to working practices over the last few years, with more frequent use of often short online meetings or training courses, as well as more regular committee meetings. The panel also received feedback from Heads of Democratic Services raising this issue. The Panel therefore proposes there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

- 5.1. This report outlines the draft decisions of the Panel and does not in itself contribute to the Corporate Priorities

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

- 6.1. The Panel's annual report largely continues the previous payment structure. The Panel's proposals for the basic, senior and civic salaries would equate to an increase of £65,355 or 6% in the salary costs for elected members in 2024 - 2025. The costs associated with the work of the voting co-opted members would be dependent on the amount of official business they are required to undertake, and any changes the Council makes to the time-commitment payment rules.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

7.1. This report is made in accordance with statutory obligations and the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. An impact assessment is not required for this report.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

8.1 This report facilitates the consultation exercise with the Democratic Services Committee.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1. Not required for this report.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1. The majority of the payments (basic salaries, leader of the largest opposition group, co-opted members with voting rights) set out in the annual report have to be made available and a budget has been allocated to cover the payments.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1. Section 111 Local Government Act 1972; and the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

# Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

## Annual Report

DRAFT

October 2023

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**Summary of Determinations 2024 to 2025**

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# Foreword

Welcome to the draft report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, setting out our proposals on pay, expenses and benefits for elected members of Principal Councils, Town and Community Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2024.

This has been a year of change for the Panel, with 1 longstanding member leaving us and the appointment of 2 new members. I would like to thank Helen Wilkinson for her contribution over the years to the Panel and wish her well for the future.

Last year we were down to only 3, which is the minimum for a Panel meeting to be quorate. Earlier this year we were able to appoint 2 new members to bring our current complement up to 5. I welcome Dianne Bevan and Kate Watkins to the Panel and thank Saz Willey, Vice Chair, and Bev Smith for their continued contribution throughout the year. You can find out more about our Panel members on our website.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 8 (The Measure), which gives the statutory authority for the Panel's work, allows the appointment of a minimum of 3 and up to 7 members.

This draft annual report is now issued for consultation. We have again put forward a set of specific questions where we would welcome your feedback. We welcome any additional comments either on the detail of the proposed Determinations or on other relevant areas you think the Panel should consider.

The Consultation period ends on 8 December and after deliberating on your feedback, and taking cognisance of any change in circumstances, the Panel will issue its final Determinations and annual report by the 28 February 2024.

Frances Duffy

Chair

## Panel Membership

- Saz Willey, Vice Chair
- Bev Smith
- Dianne Bevan
- Kate Watkins

Detailed information about the members, our strategic plan, our deliberations and supporting research and evidence can be found on the [Panel website](#).

## Introduction

This year we published our first strategic plan. This covers the period from 2023 until 2025 and sets the framework for our deliberations and wider context for our decisions. The key elements are set out below under Roles and Responsibilities of the Panel.

With a strengthened Panel, we were able to focus on building our research and evidence plan to support our discussions on our remuneration framework. Our evidence plan will be published on our website inline with our aim to be open and transparent in all our decision making.

Our goal continues to be to ensure that levels of remuneration are fair and reasonable. We agreed to continue to align levels of remuneration for elected members of Principal Councils, National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities within the context of average Welsh earnings. This has meant using the Annual

Survey of Hours and Earnings within Wales (ASHE) published by Office for National Statistics (ONS) as the main benchmark for setting remuneration.

The Measure states that “the Panel must take into account what it considers will be the likely financial impact on relevant authorities” of its decisions. The Panel considered evidence on public sector finances and the impact on Principal Authorities’ budgets. Whilst the total cost of remuneration for elected members is relatively low in terms of overall budgets, the Panel were mindful of the heightened economic and fiscal strain on Principal Councils.

In reaching our decision to continue the link between elected members remuneration and the average earnings of their constituents, the Panel remain of the view that a fair and reasonable remuneration package will continue to support elected members and not act as a barrier to participation. This is an important principle, underpinning our considerations on appropriate remuneration.

In line with our commitment to simplifying reporting and compliance, the Panel this year looked at the reporting requirements for Community and Town Council. We continue to receive queries regarding the PAYE treatment of the mandatory allowance for working from home (£156 per annum) and the option of a flat rate of £52 a year for consumables. We will update our guidance on this issue which should ensure clarity for local clerks.

We are also mindful of a continuing, albeit reducing, number of Community and Town councillors who decide to forego all or part of their entitlement. We strongly believe that councillors should be reimbursed for some of the expenses they necessarily incur whilst carrying out their duties.

Currently each council must annually report to the Panel, and publish on its website, the details and names of each councillor in receipt of any expenses. In previous years we agreed that in respect of costs of care and personal assistance allowances, it would be inappropriate to name individual councillors,

and that it would be sufficient to simply list the total amounts paid and the total number of recipients.

The Panel feels that it would be appropriate to extend this to the mandatory payment for working from home, the flat rate consumables allowance and travel and subsistence claims. This will give the right balance between public accountability and individual privacy, and we hope will encourage all to accept the payments they are entitled to.

We will therefore provide a new template report for use from September 2024 and will continue to monitor the level of payments made.

The final area that the Panel considered this year, was the method of calculating payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Following feedback on last year's annual report and queries raised through the year by some co-opted members and by several Heads of Democratic Services, the Panel took evidence from the correspondents on the impact of both the increase in numbers of co-opted members and the changing nature of working patterns. This showed that the current arrangement of either a half day rate for anything up to 4 hours and a full day rate for anything over, was insufficiently flexible to reflect the patterns of working now more normally in place, mainly due to more online or hybrid working.

The Panel therefore proposes that the local relevant officer should have the flexibility to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate and when to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings.

The Panel is aware of feedback that our website can be difficult to navigate and that finding the right Determination to deal with a specific issue is not always straightforward, especially for new elected members or officials. We will



therefore update the links on the website and created a new link to a page setting out all the current Determinations that should be applied. It will be updated every year when the final annual report is issued, and we hope this will be easier to navigate than having to refer to every year's report.

We are also reviewing our guidance (previously called the Regulations) and frequently asked questions pages.

## Role and responsibilities of the Panel

### Our Role

The Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of elected and co-opted members of the following organisations:

- Principal Councils: County and County Borough Councils
- Community and Town Councils
- National Park Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Joint Overview Scrutiny Committees
- Corporate Joint Committees

The Panel is an independent organisation and the organisations listed above are required, by law, to implement the decisions it makes.

We make determinations on:

- the salary structure within which members are remunerated
- the type and nature of allowances to be paid to members
- whether payments are mandatory or allow a level of local flexibility
- arrangements in respect of family absence

- arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Panel's decisions

## Our aim

- supporting local democracy and giving communities their voice, through setting up an appropriate and fair remuneration framework, which encourages inclusion and participation

## Our goals

- our determinations should ensure that levels of remuneration are fair, reasonable, represent value for money for the taxpayer, and are set within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances of Wales
- our Determinations should support elected members from a diverse range of backgrounds, and levels of remuneration should not act as a barrier to participation

## Our strategic objectives

- to make evidence, based Determinations
- to use clear and accessible communications
- to proactively engage and consult
- to simplify compliance and reporting
- to work collaboratively

## The Panel

- Frances Duffy (Chair)

- Saz Willey (Vice Chair)
- Dianne Bevan (Member)
- Bev Smith (Member)
- Kate Watkins (Member)

Further information on Panel members can be found on the [Panel's website](#).

## Methodology

As set out in our strategic objectives the Panel has committed to making evidence-based decisions. This year we prepared an evidence and research paper to pull together the various sources of information that the Panel considered in making its draft Determinations. This provided a wide range of data, evidence and contextual factors to inform the Panel's decision-making process in relation to its Determinations for the 2024 to 2025 financial year. This included:

- data on average UK and Wales weekly earnings, including ASHE the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
- annual CPIH and CPI inflation rates
- benchmarks, including councillor remuneration in Scotland
- research on councillor workload, views and attitudes to remuneration and diversity (Welsh Government)
- findings of Senedd Cymru Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee (2019)
- data collected on the take up of remuneration and benefits packages by councillors
- data on local authority finances

The full set of evidence and research considered, will be published on our [website](#).

The Panel engaged directly with key stakeholder representative groups including the Welsh Local Government Association and its Heads of Democratic Services committee, One Voice Wales, the Society for Local Council Clerks and North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils. These discussions provide an opportunity for the Panel to explore views about existing arrangements, the impact decisions are having on individuals, how the arrangements are operating in practice and any issues or concerns individuals wish to raise. It also provides an opportunity for discussion about emerging situations which the Panel may need to consider in respect of its decision making.

The Panel helped facilitate sessions at the Welsh Government's "Diversity in Democracy" events earlier this year. This gave us the opportunity to hear the direct experiences of a range of elected members, prospective candidates and organisations working to broaden representation in local government. We have drawn on that information to inform this report and to explore areas for future consideration.

This year this focused on 3 main issue, affordability, payments made to co-opted members and reporting requirements for Community and Town Councils. The Panel would like to thank all those that contributed to our deliberations either directly or through feedback and questions on our last report.

The Panels' proposals will now be consulted on and following consideration of views received in response to this consultation the Panel will make its final determinations and issue the 2024 to 2025 final report, in February 2024.

# Deliberations and determinations for 2024 to 2025

## Basic salary for elected members of principal councils: Determination 1

The basic salary, paid to all elected members, is remuneration for the responsibility of community representation and participation in the scrutiny, regulatory and related functions of local governance. It is based on a full time equivalent of t3 days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment, and no changes are proposed for 2024 to 2025.

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.

The Panel also noted that in previous electoral cycles, the remuneration of councillors fell far behind the key benchmark of Average Hourly Earnings in Wales (ASHE) and a significant uplift was therefore required in 2022.

The Panel has therefore determined that for the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 it is right to retain the link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of all Wales 2022 ASHE, the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £18,666.

## Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils: Determination 2

The limit on the number of senior salaries payable (“the cap”) will remain in place.

All senior salaries include the basic salary payment. The different levels of additional responsibility of and between each role is recognised in a banded framework. No changes to banding are proposed this year.

The basic pay element will be uplifted in line with ASHE and this uplift will also apply to the role element of Bands 1, 2, 3 and 4. Where a Band 5 is paid, there is no increase to the role element as this remains temporarily frozen. The increase in the basic salary will apply.

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £69,998. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out in Table 1.

### Group A

- Cardiff
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Swansea

## Table 1: salaries payable to basic, senior, civic and presiding members of principal councils (Group A)

Description	Amount
Basic salary	£18,666
Band 1 Leader	£69,998
Band 1 Deputy Leader	£48,999
Band 2 Executive Members	£41,999
Band 3 Committee Chairs (if paid)	£27,999
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£27,999
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid)	£22,406
Civic Head (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£22,406
Presiding Member (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£18,666

## Group B

- Bridgend
- Caerphilly
- Carmarthenshire
- Conwy
- Flintshire
- Gwynedd
- Newport
- Neath Port Talbot
- Pembrokeshire
- Powys
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Wrexham

**Table 1: salaries payable to basic, senior, civic and presiding members of principal councils Group B**

Description	Amount
Basic salary	£18,666
Band 1 Leader	£62,998
Band 1 Deputy Leader	£44,099
Band 2 Executive Members	£37,799
Band 3 Committee Chairs (if remunerated)	£27,999



Description	Amount
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£27,999
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid)	£22,406
Civic Head (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£22,406
Presiding Member (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£18,666

## Group C

- Blaenau Gwent
- Ceredigion
- Denbighshire
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Monmouthshire
- Torfaen
- Isle of Anglesey

## Table 1: salaries payable to basic, senior, civic and presiding members of principal councils Group C

Description	Amount
Basic salary	£18,666
Band 1 Leader	£59,498
Band 1 Deputy Leader	£41,649
Band 2 Executive Members	£35,699
Band 3 Committee Chairs (if remunerated)	£27,999
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£27,999
Band 5 Leader of other political groups	£22,406
Civic Head (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£22,406
Presiding Member (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£18,666

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members. All current Determinations will be published on our [website](#).

There have been no changes made to allowances for:

- travel and subsistence
- care and personal assistance
- sickness absence
- corporate joint committees
- assistants to the executive
- additional salaries and job-sharing arrangements

### **Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Determination 3**

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to be aligned to Band 3 and will be set at £9,333.

The salary of a vice-chair is set at 50% of the Chair and will be £4,667.

There are no other changes.

### **Payments to national parks authorities and fire and rescue authorities: Determination 4**

The 3 national parks in Wales, Eryri (Snowdonia), Pembrokeshire Coast and Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons), were formed to protect spectacular landscapes and provide recreation opportunities for the public. **The Environment Act 1995** led to the creation of a National Park Authority (NPA) for each park. National Park authorities comprise members who are either elected members nominated by the principal councils within the national park area or are members appointed by the Welsh Government through the Public Appointments process. Welsh Government appointed and council nominated members are treated equally in relation to remuneration.

The 3 fire and rescue services (FRAs) in Wales: Mid and West Wales, North Wales and South Wales were formed as part of Local Government re-organisation in 1996. FRAs comprise elected members who are nominated by the Principal Councils within each fire and rescue service area.

In line with the Panel's decision to increase the basic salary of elected members of principal councils, the remuneration level for ordinary members of both NPAs and FRAs is also increased in line with ASHE.

The remuneration for Chairs will remain linked to a principal council Band 3 senior salary. Their role element will therefore increase accordingly. Deputy chairs, Committee chairs and other paid senior posts will remain linked to a Band 5. This means the role element of their pay will continue to be temporarily frozen. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of NPAs and FRAs is set out in Table 2.

## Table 2: payments to national parks authorities

National parks authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£5,265
Chair	£14,598
Deputy chair (where appointed)	£9,005
Committee chair or other senior post	£9,005

## Table 2: payments to fire and rescue authorities

Fire and rescue authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,632
Chair	£11,965
Deputy chair (where appointed)	£6,372
Committee chair or other senior post	£6,372

All current Determinations, including restrictions on receiving double allowances, will be published on our website. Other than the above increases, there are no changes proposed this year.

## Payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5

The current Determination (made in the 2022 to 2023 Annual Report) states that co-opted members of the relevant bodies should be remunerated on a day or half day basis. In addition, the relevant officer may decide on the total number of days remunerated in a year and set a reasonable time for meeting preparation.

The Panel has noted the changes to working practices, put in place during Covid and now becoming more routine, that has meant a move towards more frequent use of online meetings and or training courses, often short, as well as more regular committee meetings. The panel also received feedback from Heads of Democratic Services raising this issue.

The Panel considered moving to an hourly rate instead. This would better reflect new ways of working and hours actually worked. However, the Panel recognised that this may not always be appropriate, especially to cover in person meetings scheduled to last several hours.

The Panel therefore proposes there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings, as outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3: payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities**

Role	Hourly rate payment	Up to 4 hours payment rate	4 hours and over payment rate
Chairs of standards, and audit committees	£33.50	£134	£268
Ordinary Members of Standards Committees who also chair Standards Committees for Community and Town Councils	£29.75	£119	£238
Ordinary Members of Standards Committees; Education Scrutiny Committee; Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee	£26.25	£105	£210
Community and Town Councillors sitting on Principal Council Standards Committees	£26.25	£105	£210

## **Community and Town Councils**

The Panel continues to mandate payments for the extra costs of working from home and payments for office consumables. There is no change to the Determination made last year.

### **Mandatory payments: Determination 6**

#### **Payment for extra costs of working from home**

All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home.

#### **Set payment for consumables**

Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

It is a matter for each council to make and record a policy decision in respect of when and how the payments are made and whether they are paid monthly, yearly or otherwise. The policy should also state whether and how to recover any payments made to a member who leaves or changes their role during the financial year.

## Compensation for financial loss: Determination 7

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment. The amount for financial loss was not increased last year.

Previously, the Panel determined that an appropriate level of payment should be set at the daily rate of ASHE.

To maintain this link, the figures for 2024 are now proposed as £119.62 for a full day and £59.81 for a half day.

## Reporting requirements: Determination 8

Community and Town Councils are required to submit an annual statement of payments to the Panel by the 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 and 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.



## Payments to community and town councils

Type of payment	Group	Requirement
Reimbursement for time spent on CTC matters (previously known as Basic Payment)	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	£156 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home
Reimbursement for office consumables whilst working from home	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	£52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week) towards the cost of office consumables whilst working home
Senior role payment	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory for 1 member; optional for up to 7
Mayor or Chair of Council	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair of Council	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	1 (Electorate over	Optional

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14,000)

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Financial loss 1 Optional  
(Electorate  
over  
14,000)

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Travel and  
subsistence 1 Optional  
(Electorate  
over  
14,000)

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Costs of care 1 Mandatory  
(Electorate  
over  
14,000)

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Reimbursement for  
time spent on CTC  
matters (previously  
known as Basic  
Payment) 2 £156 mandatory for all members. All councils must  
(Electorate pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a  
over week) towards the extra household expenses  
10,000 to (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of  
13,999) working from home

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Reimbursement for  
office consumables  
whilst working from  
home 2 £52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay  
(Electorate their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week)  
over towards the cost of office consumables whilst working  
10,000 to home  
13,999)

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Senior role payment 2 Mandatory for 1 member: optional up to 5  
(Electorate  
over  
10,000 to  
13,999)

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Mayor or chair of Council	2	Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500
	(Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	

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Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair of Council	2	Optional: up to a maximum of £500
	(Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	

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Attendance allowance	2	Optional
	(Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	

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Financial loss	2	Optional
	(Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	

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Travel and subsistence	2	Optional
	(Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	

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Costs of care	2	Mandatory
	(Electorate over 10,000 to	

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13,999)

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Reimbursement for time spent on CTC matters (previously known as Basic Payment) 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) £156 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home

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Reimbursement for office consumables whilst working from home 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) £52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week) towards the cost of office consumables whilst working home

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Senior role payment 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) Optional up to 3 members

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Mayor or Chair of Council 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500

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Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair of Council 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) Optional: up to a maximum of £500

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Attendance allowance 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999) Optional

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Financial loss 3 Optional  
(Electorate  
over 5,000  
to 9,999)

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Travel and subsistence 3 Optional  
(Electorate  
over 5,000  
to 9,999)

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Costs of care 3 Mandatory  
(Electorate  
over 5,000  
to 9,999)

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Reimbursement for time spent on CTC matters (previously known as Basic Payment) 4 £156 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home  
(Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)

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Reimbursement for office consumables whilst working from home 4 £52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week) towards the cost of office consumables whilst working home  
(Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)

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Senior role payment 4 Optional up to 3 members  
(Electorate  
over 1,000  
to 4,999)

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Mayor or Chair of Council 4 Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500  
(Electorate  
over 1,000)

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to 4,999)

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Deputy Mayor or  
Deputy Chair of  
Council

4 Optional: up to a maximum of £500  
(Electorate  
over 1,000  
to 4,999)

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Attendance  
allowance

4 Optional  
(Electorate  
over 1,000  
to 4,999)

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Financial loss

4 Optional  
(Electorate  
over 1,000  
to 4,999)

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Travel and  
subsistence

4 Optional  
(Electorate  
over 1,000  
to 4,999)

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Cost of care

4 Mandatory  
(Electorate  
over 1,000  
to 4,999)

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Reimbursement for  
time spent on CTC  
matters (previously  
known as Basic  
Payment)

5 £156 mandatory for all members. All councils must  
(Electorate pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a  
less than week) towards the extra household expenses  
1,000) (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of  
working from home

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Reimbursement for office consumables whilst working from home	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	£52 mandatory for all members. All councils must pay their members £52 a year (equivalent to £1 a week) towards the cost of office consumables whilst working home
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Senior role payment	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional: up to 3 members
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Mayor or Chair of Council	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500
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Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair of Council	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £500
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Attendance allowance	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional
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Financial loss	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional
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Travel and subsistence	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional
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Cost of care	5 Mandatory (Electorate less than 1,000)
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There have been no changes made to payments for undertaking senior roles; allowances for travel and subsistence; care and personal assistance or attendance allowance.

All current Determinations will be published on our website.

## Summary of Determinations 2024 to 2025

### Determination 1

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils will set at £18,666.

### Determination 2

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £69,998. All other payments have been decided in reference to this. All payments are set out in Table 1.

### Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £9,333.



The salary of vice-chair will be £4,667.

## **Determination 4**

The basic pay of members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue authorities has been increased. All payments are set out in Table 2.

All current Determinations, including restrictions on receiving double allowances, will be published on our website. Other than the above increases, there are no changes proposed this year.

## **Determination 5**

For co-opted member payments, the Panel proposes there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings.

The full and half day rates remain unchanged from 2023 to 2024. The only change is the stipulation of hourly rates, as set out in Table 3.

## **Determination 6**

Members of Community and Town Councils will be paid £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home. And Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

## Determination 7

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment. The amount for financial loss was not increased last year.

Previously, the Panel determined that an appropriate level of payment should be set at the daily rate of ASHE.

To maintain this link, the figures for 2024 are now proposed as £119.62 for a full day and £59.81 for a half day.

## Determination 8

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 and 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.

All other Determinations set out in the 2023 to 2024 [Annual Report](#) of the Panel remain valid and should be applied.

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## Ymgynghoriad ar Adroddiad Drafft 2024 i 2025

Rydym yn croesawu adborth ar yr Adroddiad drafft hwn ac rydym wedi cynnwys rhai cwestiynau ychwanegol lle y byddem yn gwerthfawrogi clywed eich barn. Daw'r cyfnod ymgynghori i ben ar **8 Rhagfyr 2023** a gallwch naill ai anfon eich sylwadau dros e-bost neu gwblhau'r ffurflen ar ein [gwefan](#).

Mae croeso hefyd ichi gyflwyno sylwadau ysgrifenedig i'r cyfeiriad isod.

I ofyn am fersiynau printiedig o'r Adroddiad, anfonwch e-bost atom neu ysgrifennwch at:

Mae croeso hefyd ichi anfon sylwadau ysgrifenedig i'r cyfeiriad isod.

I ofyn am fersiynau printiedig o'r Adroddiad, gallwch anfon [e-bost](#) atom neu ysgrifennu at:

Panel Annibynnol Cymru ar Gydabyddiaeth Ariannol  
Trydydd Llawr - Dwyrain  
Adeiladau'r Goron  
Parc Cathays  
Caerdydd  
CF10 3NQ

### **Cwestiwn 1 - Cynyddu cydnabyddiaeth ariannol drwy ddefnyddio'r Arolwg Blynyddol o Oriau ac Enillion (ASHE)**

Mae'r Panel yn gwbl ymwybodol o'r cyfyngiadau presennol ar gyllid cyhoeddus ac effaith ei benderfyniadau ar gyllidebau Prif Awdurdodau. Mae'r Panel hefyd yn ystyriol o'n Nodau a'n Hamcanion i gynnig pecyn cydnabyddiaeth ariannol teg a rhesymol i gefnogi aelodau etholedig ac annog amrywiaeth mewn cynrychioliaeth. Felly, rydym yn cynnig y dylid cynyddu eu cydnabyddiaeth ariannol yn seiliedig ar enillion cyfartalog eu hetholwyr.

**A ydych chi'n credu bod y Panel wedi taro'r cydbwysedd cywir rhwng fforddiadwyedd a chydabyddiaeth ariannol ddigonol i gynrychiolwyr? Os nad ydych yn cytuno, a oes gennych unrhyw awgrymiadau eraill?**

Ydw  
Nac ydw  
Dim barn


Unrhyw sylwadau ychwanegol

--

## Cwestiwn 2 – Hyblygrwydd lleol ar gyfer taliadau i unigolion cyfetholedig

Mae'r Panel wedi cael tystiolaeth y byddai'n fwy costeffeithiol ac yn decach i roi hyblygrwydd o ran talu'r rhai sy'n aelodau cyfetholedig o bwyllgorau Prif Gyngorau, Awdurdodau Parciau Cenedlaethol ac Awdurdodau Tân ac Achub.

Felly, mae'r Panel yn cynnig y dylai fod hyblygrwydd lleol i'r swyddog perthnasol benderfynu pryd y bydd yn briodol cymhwyso cyfradd diwrnod neu hanner diwrnod neu ddefnyddio cyfradd yr awr lle mae'n gwneud synnwyr cyfuno nifer o gyfarfodydd byr.

**A ydych yn cytuno â'r cynnig hwn? Os nad ydych yn cytuno, a oes gennych unrhyw awgrymiadau eraill?**

Ydw  
Nac ydw  
Dim barn


Unrhyw sylwadau ychwanegol

--

### Cwestiwn 3 – Annog teithio cynaliadwy

Hoffai'r Panel sicrhau ein bod yn cefnogi cynaliadwyedd amgylcheddol yn ein penderfyniadau ynglŷn â chydabyddiaeth ariannol. Rydym yn ymwybodol bod cynlluniau mewn llawer o gyrff yng Nghymru sy'n annog teithio cynaliadwy ac rydym wedi cyngori y dylai aelodau etholedig, os oes modd, gael eu hannog i gymryd rhan yn y cynlluniau hyn.

**A oes gennych unrhyw enghreifftiau da o arferion da neu syniadau eraill ynglŷn â sut y gallem ddefnyddio ein pwerau i annog mwy o deithio cynaliadwy ymhlith aelodau?**

Oes

Nac oes

Dim barn


Unrhyw sylwadau ychwanegol

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#### Cwestiwn 4 – Ymwybyddiaeth o hawliau cynrychiolwyr

Mae'r Panel wedi gweld tystiolaeth o ddiffyg ymwybyddiaeth ymhlith aelodau etholedig lleol o'r taliadau y maent yn gallu eu hawlio. Hoffem glywed a yw hyn yn broblem sylweddol, ac os felly, byddwn yn anelu at godi ymwybyddiaeth ymhellach, drwy dargedu meysydd lle y gall hyn fod yn broblem.

**Nodwch pa fath o gorff rydych yn ei wasanaethu (dewiswch bob un sy'n gymwys):**

Prif Gyngor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cyngor Cymuned neu Gymuned Tref	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awdurdod Tân ac Achub	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awdurdod Parc Cenedlaethol	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Beth yw eich statws?**

Aelod	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aelod Cyfetholedig	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arall	<input type="checkbox"/>

**A ydych chi'n gwybod bod gennych hawl i rai neu bob un o'r canlynol?**

- Cydnabyddiaeth ariannol am eich rôl

Ydw	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nac ydw	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Pensiwn (prif gynghorau yn unig)

Ydw	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nac ydw	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Ad-daliad am dreuliau

Ydw	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nac ydw	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Ad-daliad am gyfrifoldebau gofalu

Ydw

Nac ydw


- Taliadau absenoldeb teuluol (Prif Gynghorau yn unig)

Ydw

Nac ydw


**Pa gamau y mae eich cyngor neu'ch awdurdod yn eu cymryd i sicrhau bod ei aelodau etholedig a'i aelodau cyfetholedig yn ymwybodol o'r symiau y mae ganddynt hawl iddynt?**

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## Cwestiwn 5 – Cyhoeddi symiau wedi'u cyfuno ar gyfer Cyngorau Cymuned a Thref

Mae'n ofynnol i Gyngorau Cymuned a Thref gyflwyno datganiad blynyddol o daliadau i'r Panel erbyn 30 Medi bob blwyddyn, a chyhoeddi hyn ar eu gwefan hefyd. Mae'r Panel wedi darparu templed o ffurflen i glercod ei defnyddio. Mae'r Panel wedi trafod ac ystyried newid y gofynion ar gyfer Cyngorau Cymuned a Thref wrth gyflwyno eu ffurflen datgan taliadau. Nod y Panel yw symleiddio gweinyddiaeth ac annog Cyngorau i sicrhau bod yr holl daliadau gorfodol yn cael eu gwneud i aelodau unigol.

Mae'r Panel yn cynnig, o fis Medi 2024, bod angen i'r ffurflenni ddangos cyfanswm y symiau a dalwyd mewn perthynas â'r taliadau gorfodol a grybwyllwyd uchod. Dyna'r cyfraniad o £156 at gostau gweithio gartref, y lwfans traul cyfradd sefydlog o £52 a'r costau teithio a chynhaliadaeth a dalwyd.

Mae hyn yn dod â'r rhain yn unol ag adrodd costau gofal a lwfansau cymorth personol.

A ydych chi'n cytuno y gall y ffigurau hyn gael eu cyhoeddi fel cyfanswm i'r holl aelodau yn hytrach nag yn unigol?

Ydw

Nac ydw

Dim barn

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Beth yw'r rhesymau dros eich barn?

### **Cwestiwn 6 – Cyhoeddi symiau wedi'u cyfuno ar gyfer cyrff eraill**

Mewn adroddiadau yn y dyfodol, rydym yn ystyried caniatáu cyfuno costau teithio a chynhaliadau aelodau prif gynghorau, Awdurdodau Parciau Cenedlaethol ac Awdurdodau Tân ac Achub, a byddai gennym ddiddordeb yn eich barn.

**A ydych chi'n cytuno y gall y ffigurau hyn gael eu cyhoeddi fel cyfanswm i'r holl aelodau yn hytrach nag yn unigol?**

Ydw

Nac ydw

Dim barn

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Beth yw'r rhesymau dros eich barn?

## Consultation on Draft Report 2024 to 2025

We welcome feedback on this draft Report and have included some additional questions where we would appreciate your views. The consultation period will end on the **8 December 2023**, and you can either [email us](#) your comments or complete the form on our [website](#).

You are also welcome to submit comments in writing to the address below.

To request a printed versions of the Report please [email us](#) or write to:

Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales  
Third Floor East  
Crown Buildings  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

**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


Any additional comments

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**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

No

No Opinion

Any additional comments

### 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

No

No Opinion

Any additional comments

#### 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.

**Please identify which type of body you serve (select all that apply):**

Principal Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community or Town Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire and Rescue Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Park Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is your status?

Member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Co-opted Member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

- Remuneration for your role

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

- Pension (Principal Councils only)

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

- Reimbursement of expenses

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





### **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 View

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

What are the reasons for your view?

**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

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

What are the reasons for your view?

<b>Report to</b>	Democratic Services Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	27 November 2023
<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities
<b>Head of Service</b>	Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Service: People
<b>Report author</b>	Steve Price, Democratic Services Manager
<b>Title</b>	Single Transferable Vote

## 1. What is the report about?

1.1 On 6 May 2022, the provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (the 2021 Act) relating to the single transferable vote system at the election of councillors to a principal council (a county or county borough council) in Wales came into force. These provisions allow those councils to decide to conduct elections using the single transferable vote system instead of the simple majority system, often referred to as first past the post.

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Single Transferable Vote) (Wales) Rules 2023 have now been formally agreed by the Senedd and have come in to force. These are the new Rules that set out the process for an election carried out using the Single Transferable Vote from 2027.

2.2. A decision on whether to change this Council's voting system is not required. The new provisions are powers not duties. However, there is a deadline set in November 2024 for concluding the consultation and decision-making processes should the Council want to consider changing the voting system.

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1 That the Democratic Services Committee considers the options available for principal council elections and recommends accordingly.

### **4. Report details**

- 4.1. The existing voting system for local government elections is the First Past the Post system. This system is also used for UK Parliamentary and from 2024 for Police and Crime Commissioner elections. Senedd elections use the first past the post system for the constituency element of Senedd elections together with party candidate lists for regional Senedd members under a proportional representation system called the Additional Member System.
- 4.2. The Single Transferable Vote (STV) system is a form of proportional representation with the Wales STV provisions having multi-member wards each with between 3 and 6 councillors representing the ward. The STV system is designed to allow voters more choice than exists in single member wards, and to avoid votes being 'wasted'. Under the first past the post system, it is argued that votes for minority parties or candidates can be 'wasted' as they do not contribute to the election of any candidates and the results therefore may not be proportionally representative of the electorate as a whole.
- 4.3. Principal councils can now choose which voting system they wish to use, either the existing simple majority system (first past the post) or the single transferable vote system. Each council continues to use the first past the post system unless it decides to change to the single transferable vote system. This would require a resolution supported by a two-thirds majority of the full council, at a meeting specially convened for the purpose, with written notice given at least 21 days before the meeting.
- 4.4. A resolution to change the voting system would need to be passed before the 15<sup>th</sup> November in the year three years before the next ordinary election is due. To change the system for the next local government elections in 2027, this would be before the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Before it can exercise its power to change the voting system, Denbighshire would have to consult locally. This would include local government electors, each community council in the area and any other people it considers appropriate.

- 4.5. Any council opting to change its voting system would be required to use the new system for the next two rounds of ordinary elections, so for a period of 10 years. In the case of a by-election for a casual vacancy after the Council had changed to STV but before the first round of ordinary elections using STV had been held, the voting method at the previous ordinary election would be used. After those two rounds, the council could decide to return to the previous voting system.
- 4.6. If a council exercises its power to change the voting system, the council must notify the Welsh Ministers and the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales of the change. After receiving a notification, the Welsh Ministers may direct the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales to conduct an initial review of the area of the council. The provisions for these initial reviews include requiring that the number of councillors for each electoral ward would be no less than three, but no more than six.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

- 5.1. This report does not directly contribute to the Corporate Plan.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

- 6.1. The Council would need to undertake stakeholder engagement and communications prior to an election using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.
- 6.2. Experiences in other areas of the UK where manual counting for STV has been used indicates that it is a complex and lengthy process that takes place in stages and can take several days to complete. Staff and venue costs for the period required to complete a STV count would be significantly increased when compared to the First Past the Post counting system.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

- 7.1. A well-being impact assessment is not required for this report.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

8.1. This purpose of this report is to consult with the Democratic Services Committee on single transferable voting.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1. Not required for this report.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1. The new legislative powers would, if taken forward, be supported by a public consultation exercise and a boundary review of the county. Communication and engagement with voters, political parties and potential candidates would be necessary to address the risk of confusion.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

<b>Report to</b>	Democratic Services Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	27 November 2023
<b>Head of Service</b>	Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Service: People
<b>Report author</b>	Steve Price, Democratic Services Manager
<b>Title</b>	Forward Work Programme

## 1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report is intended to facilitate discussion and feedback on the areas within the remit of the committee, and to confirm agenda items for future meetings.

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. It is appropriate for the committee to review its forward work programme at each meeting. Items that may be appropriate include the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Member training and development
- Support arrangements for members to fulfil their roles
- Support for the Scrutiny function of the Council
- Reviewing resources available to members (for example accommodation and technology)
- Welsh Government initiatives, legislation and consultations on local democracy issues including diversity, equality and participation
- Members' Remuneration

## 3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That the Committee considers the information within this report and confirms the forward work programme for future meetings.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1 A report on 'Mandatory Training Policy for Councillors' had been included in the forward work programme for today's meeting but the preparation for this report is not yet completed. The report has been re-scheduled for the committee's next meeting in March.
- 4.2 A verbal update of the latest position can be given during consideration of this forward work programme report.
- 4.3 The March 2024 report on 'Single Transferable Vote' has been brought forward to today's meeting for the committee's consideration.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

- 5.1. This report does not directly contribute to the Corporate Plan.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

- 6.1. There are no cost implications from consideration of the forward work programme and the updates included in the report.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

- 7.1. A well-being impact is not required for this report.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

- 8.1. N/A.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

- 9.1. A Chief Finance Officer Statement is not required for this report.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

- 10.1 No specific risks have been identified from consideration of this report. Reviewing the forward work programme and associated information is an important feature of the Democratic Services Committee's role.



## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

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## Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting		Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Author	Date Entered
22 March 2024	1	Mandatory Training Policy for Councillors	To review the results of the survey of councillors and make recommendations to Council.	Steve Price	Sept 2023
	2	The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act	To receive information on the implications of the Act.	TBC	Sept 2022
	3	Regional Scrutiny Arrangements	To consider how local authority Scrutiny arrangements apply to regional public service delivery.	Karen Evans / Rhian Evans / Steve Price	March 2023
	4	An Archive for Webcasts	A review of the arrangements for archiving the Council's webcasts	Steve Price	Feb 2023
		INFORMATION REPORT: Voter ID at Elections	To consider the implications of voter ID and associated changes for the conduct of elections.	Steve Price	May 2023
20 September 2024					

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