

Report to:	Democratic Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	20 October 2017
Lead Officer:	Gary Williams (Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services)
Report Author:	Steve Price (Democratic Services Manager)
Title:	Consultation on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Draft Annual Report for 2018 - 2019

1. What is the report about?

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) publishes an annual report on the level of payments and support to members each year. The draft version of the annual report is now available and outlined in this report.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) determine the level of payments and support available to members. These determinations are published in an annual report which is preceded by a draft version for consultation. The draft annual report has been received for the Committee's comments.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee reviews the IRPW's draft annual report and considers a response to the IRPW's consultation exercise.

4. Report details

- 4.1 Last month the IRPW visited Denbighshire and all the other unitary authorities to discuss payments and support issues with a cross section of members and officers. The IRPW has now issued a draft annual report on the payments and support available to members for the municipal year starting in May 2018. The IRPW welcome comments on the draft proposals and their consultation closes on the 29 November 2017.
- 4.2 The final annual report is expected to be published in February 2018.
- 4.3 The draft annual report's determinations follow the structure set out in previous annual reports, though there are some areas of change. The IRPW highlight that affordability is an issue for both councils and the tax payer and this restricts them to only modest increases in the payments to members. Despite this, the IRPW wish to prevent further erosion of the link originally used for members' payments with the average Welsh earnings.

4.4 The IRPW report that during their visits to councils many members commented that when the basic salary is compared with a traditional paid employment – ‘a job’, the salary is too low to attract younger people and to encourage diversity. Members also pointed out the significant differences between remuneration and support available to elected members in other levels of government in Wales and proposed that the level of the basic salary should therefore be raised significantly in recognition of the importance of the role of an elected member of a principal council. However, the IRPW recognised that elected members of principal councils are not employees and are not paid as such and that there was an unpaid public service contribution in undertaking the role of an elected member.

4.5 Determination 6 in the draft annual report says:

‘The Panel has determined that each authority, through its Democratic Services Committee, must ensure that all its members are given as much support as is necessary to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively. All elected members should be provided with adequate telephone, email and internet facilities giving electronic access to appropriate information.’

4.6 The IRPW are proposing to increase the basic salary for all members by £200 and have removed the lower payment band option for Cabinet members and committee chairs. They have retained the population based groups that determine the exact payments available for senior salary post holders in Denbighshire.

4.7 The IRPW also draws attention to their proposed changes for payments to members of city, town and community councils, from page 40 of the draft annual report.

4.8 Appendix 1 is a letter from the Chair of the IRPW and Appendix 2 contains a copy of the draft annual report. The following link can be used to view the documents online and for details of the consultation process:

<http://gov.wales/irpwsub/home/publication-reports/financial-year-2018-19/?skip=1&lang=en>

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

No direct contribution.

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

There are no costs associated with this consultation exercise. Any increases in payments or support costs for members as a result of the IRPW’s final determinations will have to be met from the Council’s budgets from May 2018.

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

An impact assessment is not required for this report.

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

Responding to the consultation by the IRPW is a function of the Democratic Services Committee. All members will receive notification of this item and will be able to attend the Committee's meeting. A report on the final determinations will be taken to full Council early next year.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not required.

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

The IRPW has authority to set the level of payments for members and make determinations regarding certain support issues. There are no risks identified with the matters raised in this report.

11. Power to make the Decision

Section 111 Local Government Act 1972

Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011