

Report To: Democratic Services Committee

Date of Meeting: 23 March 2018

Lead Member / Officer: Gary Williams, Head of Legal, HR & Democratic Services

Report Author: Steve Price, Democratic Services Manager

Title: Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2018 / 19

1 What is the report about?

The report is about the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' (the 'Panel') annual report for 2018 /19. The Panel visited Denbighshire in September 2017.

2 What is the reason for making this report?

To advise of the Panel's determinations for 2018 / 19 in respect of payments to members and co-opted members and to consider the Panel's recommendations specifically to the Democratic Services Committee.

3 What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 That Committee notes the determinations of the Panel for the 2018 /19 municipal year in respect of the payment of Basic Salaries, Senior and Civic Salaries and payments to co-opted members.
- 3.2 That the Committee considers the views of the Panel in relation to supporting the work of local authority elected members.

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 is able to stipulate the actual amount of payment an authority may make to a member and the duties and responsibilities which may qualify councillors to receive 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.
- 4.3 This year the Panel have decided to provide an increment of £200 a year to the basic salary for each councillor. There is no change to the senior or civic salary levels from last year. However, the Panel has removed the two-tier payment options for Cabinet members and committee chairs.
- 4.4 The Panel remains firmly of the view that maintaining the democratic values of local government is not cost free. Publicly funded remuneration is made available to

encourage a diversity of willing and able local people to undertake local government, through their elected, appointed or co-opted roles.

4.5 Joint Scrutiny Committees – Two or more authorities can establish joint scrutiny committees and decide whether or not the chairs of those committees (or a sub-committee of a joint scrutiny committee) will be paid. If they decide to make payments the following determinations apply:

- The Chair of a Joint Scrutiny Committee is eligible for a salary equivalent to that part of a lower level band 3 Senior Salary that remunerates a Committee Chair; namely £6,700
- In cases where the chair is already in receipt of a senior salary for a band 3, 4 or 5 role the payment will be £3,350
- The chair of a sub-committee of a joint scrutiny committee is eligible for a salary of £1,675.
- In cases where the chair of the sub-committee is already in receipt of a senior salary payment for a band 3, 4 or 5 role the payment will be £837.
- A vice chair of a joint scrutiny committee or sub-committee will not receive a payment
- Payments to a chair of a joint scrutiny committee or sub-committee are not counted as part of Denbighshire's maximum number of councillors (17) who may receive a senior salary payment although there is a statutory limit of no more than 50% of a council's membership being allowed to receive a senior salary payment.

4.6 Denbighshire and Conwy are currently considering whether to create a joint scrutiny committee to scrutinise the Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board.

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

4.8 In October 2017 the Democratic Services Committee reviewed the Panel's draft report and commented on telephony provision. The minutes of that discussion are attached as Appendix A.

4.9 City, Town and Community Councils – The Committee also commented on the Panel's proposals for town and community councils. The Panel has separated each council into one of three groups based on its income or expenditure in 2017 -18. These groups are:

Community and Town Council Group	Income or Expenditure in 2017-18 of:
A	£200,000 and above
B	£30,000 - £199,999
C	Below £30,000

4.10 The Panel is of the view that Community and Town Councillors are not volunteers because further to the democratic process they have accepted formal responsibilities and all face some degree of liability, in respect of the Council functions they are running. Also, the Panel wants any member who has personal support needs and / or caring responsibilities to be able to fulfil their role. To reflect this, the Panel is mandating payment of a contribution to costs and expenses for members of councils in Groups A and B; and authorising payment of a contribution to costs and expenses to be made available for members of councils in Group C as set out in determinations

44 and 45 of its report. The Panel is also mandating reimbursement of cost of care for all members of Community and Town Councils as set out in determination 51 of its report.

4.11 The 2018 / 19 annual report is attached as Appendix B.

5 How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

This report outlines the decisions taken by the Panel and does not in itself contribute to the corporate Priorities.

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

The Panel's annual report largely continues the payment levels of 2017 / 2018 which are contained within existing budgets.

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

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?

The Panel consults nationally on the draft contents of each annual report.

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

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.

10 Power to make the Decision

Section 111 Local Government Act 1972

Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee – 20.10.2017

The Democratic Service Manager (DSM) introduced the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual report 2018/19 (previously circulated).

The Panel was required to produce an annual report setting out the levels at which members were paid for various duties and responsibilities for the municipal year. The draft report was presented to the Committee for comments.

The Panel have decided to propose an increase the basic annual allowance for members to £13,600 for the 2018 / 2019 municipal year.

Members' views were sought on the Draft annual report and the committee response to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' consultation exercise.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Phone support- rural areas had difficulty receiving mobile signal so had to rely on landline telephones. Members noted that there was a variety of widely available packages for both mobile phones and landlines which enabled free calls or text messages sufficient for use by members on Council and constituency business at no additional costs to members. The Committee therefore felt that mobile phones supplied by Denbighshire County Council were not required.
- Increase to Town/City and Community councillors' allowance – Many small community councils had a small budget. Members felt that an increase to allowance would in some cases represent a large portion of some small councils' precepts and add pressure to local councils. However, the Committee acknowledged that this should be a matter for the town and community councils.
- Training provided to members- Members discussed training led by external and internal officers, benefits from receiving both types of training was observed. Training was seen as a vital element for County Councillors.
- Difference of opinion was observed from members with regard to the Panel's proposed increase in the basic salary for members.

In response to the committee's discussion, the DSM informed members that a reply to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' draft report and consultation would be formed to include the key points raised. Included in this would be the Committee's difference of opinion with the Panel regarding the provision of telephone support by the Council and the mixed views within the Committee with regard to the increase in the basic salaries. The final Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales report would be published in early 2018 with a report presented to Council.

RESOLVED that the Democratic Service Committee:

- (a) *Notes the draft determinations in the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' draft annual report for the 2018-2019 municipal year;*
- (b) *Informs the Panel as part of its consultation on the draft determinations of the Committee's views on the appropriate level of Council provided telephony provision for members as outlined in the minutes above; and*
- (c) *Informs the Panel of the views expressed by the Committee in relation to the proposed increase in the basic salary level.*