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| Report to | Democratic Services Committee |
| Date of meeting | 24 March 2023 |
| Lead Member | Councillor Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities |
| Head of Service | Lisa Jones, Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services |
| Report author | Steve Price, Democratic Services Manager |
| Title | Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2023 - 2024 |

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. The report is about the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' (the 'Panel') annual report for 2023 - 2024.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To advise of the Panel's decisions (termed 'determinations') for 2023 - 2024 in respect of payments to elected and co-opted members.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Committee notes the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for 2023 – 2024 in respect of the payment of salaries to elected members and payments to co-opted members.

4. Report details

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

- 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 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. The 2023 - 2024 annual report is attached as appendix 1.

The Annual Report

- 4.3. The Panel has considered the structure of their annual reports and how they can be made more accessible. It concluded that much of the information normally published in the annual reports replicated information from previous years, often without significant change. For this year's report the Panel decided to focus on the changes made and the majority of the content set out in previous reports has been removed and placed on the Panel's website.
- 4.4. The Panel retains 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 people to participate in local government, through their elected or co-opted member roles

Basic Salary for Elected Members

- 4.5. The Panel has determined that for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 a link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents will be retained. The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of the all Wales 2021 earnings, the latest Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings (ASHE) figure available to the Panel. The basic salary will therefore be set at £17,600 and represents an £800 or 4.76% increase in the basic salary for all elected members.

Senior and Civic Salaries

- 4.6. The figures for senior and civic salaries shown in the annual report include the basic salary payment element.

- 4.7. The payments for senior and civic salary roles are banded; with Band 1 being the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, with the remaining Cabinet members in Band 2. The Cabinet bands are further grouped into council sizes with corresponding salary levels. Denbighshire County Council is a Group C council (please see table 1 of the annual report).
- 4.8. The senior salaries for the Cabinet have received the full 4.76% increase i.e. both the basic salary and the senior (Cabinet duties) role element of the total have been increased by 4.76%. The role element for committee chairs and the Chair of Council (Band 3) has been increased by 3.15%, though as mentioned above, the basic salary element has been raised by 4.76%. The civic salary for the Vice Chair of Council receives only the increase to the basic salary.

Lay and Co-opted Members

- 4.9 The attendance allowances for co-opted or lay-members has not changed. Local authorities must pay co-opted members with voting rights a set daily or half daily fee according to the time commitment involved. Meetings eligible for the payment of a fee include committees, working groups, pre-meetings with officers, training, and attendance at conferences and any formal meeting at which co-opted members are requested to attend.
- 4.10 The Panel allows reasonable preparation time for meetings and travelling time to and from meetings to be included in claims by co-opted members. Local authorities can decide on the maximum number of days for which co-opted members may be paid in any one year.
- 4.11 The Panel's rules allow each council an element of local discretion in respect of how co-opted members are remunerated. Denbighshire has not set a cap on the amount of days that can be claimed for payment, but it does use a single 'full day' rate to be the maximum that can be claimed for a single meeting or event attended. This will include any preparation and travel time. The half daily fee is paid for any eligible time commitment of up to 4 hours.
- 4.12 Each authority, through its Democratic Services Committee, must ensure that all voting co-opted or lay members are given as much support as is necessary to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively. Such support should be without cost to the

individual member. The provision of appropriate training opportunities for co-opted members has been identified as an important element of this support.

City, Town and Community Councils

- 4.13 The Panel's annual report sets the payment structure for city, town and community councils and the Panel has made some changes, including reimbursing members for the cost of office consumables. Table 2 of the annual report details the payments required.
- 4.14 A copy of the Panel's annual report has been sent to the city, town and community council clerks.

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

- 5.1 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?

- 6.1. The Panel's annual report largely continues the previous payment structure. The Panel's increase in the basic, senior and civic salaries equates to an increase of £46,294 or 4.47% for 2023 - 2024. The costs associated with the work of the voting co-opted members will 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 The Panel consults nationally on the draft contents of each annual report.

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.