

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

15 MARCH 2023

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of the level and range of remuneration the Authority must make available to its elected members for the 2023/24 municipal year.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has acknowledged the need to ensure that financial barriers do not stand in the way of attracting more people to serve in local government. The active participation of all members contributes to the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

Supporting a successful sustainable economy – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.

Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

Smarter use of resources – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Local Authorities (Allowances for Members) (Wales) Regulations 2007 provided for the establishment of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales ("the Panel").
- 3.2 The Panel issued its draft Annual Report for consultation on 6 October 2022 for an eight-week period and held engagement events to support the consultation process. This year, the Panel had the opportunity to engage with a wider group of stakeholders at the three Welsh Government "Diversity in Democracy" events and

workshops. The draft Annual Report was also considered by the Democratic Services Committee on 20 October 2022. Overall, the consultation responses supported the Panel's determinations and therefore no changes have been made in the final Determinations.

- 3.3 The Panel's Determinations for 2023/24 are shown at page 19 of the Annual Report (attached as **Appendix 1**). Section 153 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 empowers the Panel to require a relevant authority to comply with the requirements imposed on it by the Annual Report.
- 3.4 In making its determinations the Panel considered a range of benchmarks, including past, current and projected indices and actual figures and the known and forecast extent and impact of multiple economic and social factors. These included post Brexit and COVID-19 work environments and the cost of living, energy and climate crises.
- 3.5 Members are requested to note that the Panel has significantly reduced the size of their Report and made it more manageable to navigate. This approach is in line with the Panel's efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The Panel's Annual Report 2023/24 proposes some changes to the current remuneration prescribed for elected members at Principal (County Borough) and Town and Community Council levels. The following paragraphs summarise the key elements of the Report applicable to principal councils.

4.2 The Basic Salary

- 4.2.1 Last year the Panel reset the basic salary to align with the 2020 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office of National Statistics. This reduced the imbalance that had arisen between the basic salary of members of principal councils and the average salaries of their constituents. The change took effect from the May 2022 local elections. Building on from this, the Panel has determined that for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2023 it is right to retain a link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of the all Wales 2021 ASHE, the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £17,600 and represents an increase of 4.76% in the basic salary.

Determination 1

Basic salary in 2023/24 for elected members of principal councils shall be £17,600.

4.3 Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils

- 4.3.1 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. The framework was revised last year and no changes to banding are proposed this year. Early next year the Panel will gather evidence from principal

councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed.

- 4.3.2 The limit on the number of senior salaries payable (“the cap”) will remain in place. The maximum number of senior salaries payable within each council remains as set out in the 2022 to 2023 Report: <https://www.gov.wales/independent-remuneration-panel-wales-annual-report-2022-2023.html>.

Determination 2:
The Panel has determined that senior salary levels in 2023/24 for members of principal councils shall be as outlined below.

Basic salary (payable to all elected members) £17,600			
	Group A Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea	Group B Bridgend, Caerphilly, Carmarthenshire, Conwy, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Newport, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Vale of Glamorgan, Wrexham	Group C Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Isle of Anglesey
Senior salaries (inclusive of basic salary)			
Band 1 Leader	£66,000	£59,400	£56,100
Deputy Leader	£46,200	£41,580	£39,270
Band 2 Executive Members	£39,600	£35,640	£33,660
Band 3 Committee Chairs (if remunerated)		£26,400	
Band 4 Leader of Largest Opposition Group		£26,400	
Band 5 Leader of Other Political Groups		£21,340	

- 4.3.3 There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations as set out in the 2022 to 2023 Report still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Travel and subsistence
- Care and personal assistance
- Sickness absence
- Assistants to the Executive
- Additional salaries and Job sharing arrangements
- Co-opted members.

4.4 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees

- 4.4.1 The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800 and £4,400 for a vice-chair. There are no other changes.

Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800 and £4,400 for a vice-Chair.

4.5 Compliance with Panel Requirements

- 4.5.1 The Authority must implement the Panel's determinations in this report from the date specified within the Annual Report (April 2023).

- 4.5.2 The Panel will monitor the compliance with the determinations in its Annual Report by relevant authorities against the following requirements:

- (i) The Authority must maintain an annual Schedule of Member Remuneration;
- (ii) The Authority must make arrangements for the Schedule's publication within the Authority area and send the Schedule to the Panel as soon as practicable and not later than 31 July in the year to which it applies;
- (iii) Any amendments to the Schedule made during the year must be conveyed to the Panel as soon as possible after the amendment is made;
- (iv) The Authority must make arrangements for publication within the Authority area of the total sum paid by it to each member and co-opted member in respect of salary (basic, senior and civic), allowances, fees and reimbursements in a Statement of Payments as soon as practicable and no later than 30 September following the close of the year to which it relates. It must be submitted to the Panel no later than that date.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules in respect of this report.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the

preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. No Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as the Panel has the power under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to set members allowances. This report is supportive of the equalities implications for elected members by including care, family and other allowances. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The Annual Report contributes to the well-being goals identified in the Act. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act to encourage more diverse representation among Councillors and Co-opted Members. A more representative group should be better able to take into account the well-being goals when reviewing services and policies and consider the positive and negative impacts upon future generations, long term community resilience and economic, environmental and social capital.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The changes to the remuneration of Elected Members for the 2023-24 financial year will increase the financial commitment required from this Authority. Some of the cost may be negated by members electing to forgo some or all of their salaries or choosing not to opt into the Local Government Pension Scheme. Only an individual member may communicate in writing to the Monitoring Officer if, as an individual, they wish to decline all or part of the payment to which they are entitled. The additional costs will be met from the centrally held provision for pay and price increases during the 2023-24 financial year.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that Council note the Annual Report for 2023/24 and approve:

- 9.1 The adoption of the relevant Determinations of the Panel contained within the Annual Report (attached as **Appendix 1**);
- 9.2 Those posts (shown in the revised Members' Schedule of Remuneration at Schedule 1 of **Appendix 2**) who will receive a senior / civic salary;
- 9.3 The revised Members' Schedule of Remuneration (**Appendix 2**) and for it to become effective from 1 April 2023;
- 9.4 That the Members' Schedule of Remuneration be updated with any changes to senior / civic salary positions subsequently made by Council during the 2023/24 municipal year.

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1 March 2023

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Background documents: None