

Public Document Pack
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich dewis iaith.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.



Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate
Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513
Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:
Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Thursday, 14 November 2024

Dear Councillor,

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Democratic Services Committee will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, 21 November 2024 at 10:00.**

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
- 2 Declarations of Interests
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by the Council from 1 September 2008.
- 3 Independent Remuneration Panel For Wales Draft Annual Report 2025/26 3 - 34
- 4 Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme 35 - 40
- 5 Member Development Programme Update 41 - 54
- 6 Research Support and Services For Councillors - Protocol

By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £1.36 in printing costs

7 Urgent Items

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Note: This will be a remote meeting via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you would like to view this meeting live, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

Councillors:

S Aspey

H T Bennett

P Ford

RM Granville

D T Harrison

M L Hughes

RM James

I M Spiller

T Thomas

G Walter

E D Winstanley

Agenda Item 3

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	21 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules in respect of this report.
Executive Summary:	<p>This report sets out the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) draft Annual Report for the municipal year 2025/26.</p> <p>The aim of the IRPW is to support local democracy and give communities their voice, through setting up an appropriate and fair remuneration framework, which encourages inclusion and participation. The IRPW make determinations on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. <p>For its Annual Report 2025/26 the main elements of change affecting the Local Authority include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic Salary for Elected Members of Principal Councils – Determination 1;• Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of Principal Councils – Determination 2;• Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JOSC) – Determination 3;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payments to Fire and Rescue Authorities – Determination 4; • Payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5; • Payments made to co-opted (lay) members of Corporate Joint Committees: Determination 6. <p>The report also refers to the transfer of the Panel’s functions to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru as of 1 April 2025 following the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act being passed in July 2024.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to note the report and provide any comments to be submitted to the IRPW and the Welsh Local Government Association by the deadline of 29 November 2024.</p>
--	--

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the draft Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Annual Report 2025/26 to the Committee for Members to provide views on its content as part of the consultation process.

2. Background

2.1 In accordance with the requirements of Section 147 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the IRPW has published its draft Annual Report setting out its determinations for the municipal year 2025/26.

2.2 The aim of the IRPW is to support local democracy and give communities their voice, through setting up an appropriate and fair remuneration framework, which encourages inclusion and participation.

2.3 The IRPW 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
- Corporate Joint Committees

2.4 The IRPW makes determinations on the following:

- 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

2.5 In 2023/24 the IRPW concluded that as much of the information published in each Annual Report replicated that of previous years, often without significant change, they would focus instead on the changes made as a result of the proposals. The majority of the content set out in previous reports was therefore removed and placed on the Panel's website, significantly reducing the size of the report and making it more manageable to navigate.

2.6 In order to meet the requirement of the Measure to publish its final report in Spring 2025 the IRPW has requested that any representations or comments about this report should be received no later than 29 November 2024. The IRPW has advised that representations or comments received after this date may not be considered.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The draft IRPW Report is attached at **Appendix A** and 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 for the Authority.

3.2 Basic Salary for Elected Members of Principal Councils – Determination 1

3.2.1 In 2009 the Panel decided the average work commitment of an elected councillor of a principal council was three working days and having reviewed this time commitment, this has not changed.

3.2.2 The Panel noted that, in previous electoral cycles, the remuneration of councillors fell far behind the key benchmark of Average Hourly Earnings in Wales (ASHE) published by the Office of National Statistics. This led to the Panel to reset the basic salary in 2021 to align with the 2020 ASHE and 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 with a significant uplift.

3.2.3 The Panel has determined to continue this link with ASHE and for the financial year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 the basic salary of Councillors will be aligned with three-fifths of the all-Wales 2022 ASHE, the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £19,771.

3.3 Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of Principal Councils – Determination 2

3.3.1 The number of senior salaries available to this Authority remains unchanged at 18 based on a review undertaken in 2021 of differentials and market comparators. Senior salaries will therefore be increased at the same rate as basic salaries.

3.3.2 The ASHE related uplift will also apply to the role element of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Executive Members, Committee Chairs (if paid), the Leader of the largest opposition group and the Leader of other political groups (if paid), (Bands 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5).

3.3.3 The senior salaries for 2025-26 are summarised in the table below:

Basic salary (payable to all elected members) £19,771			
	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	£74,141	£66,727	£63,020
Deputy Leader	£51,899	£46,709	£44,114
Band 2 Executive Members	£44,485	£40,036	£37,812
Band 3 Committee Chairs (if remunerated):		£29,657	
Band 4 Leader of Largest Opposition Group		£29,657	
Band 5 Leader of Other Political Groups		£23,726	

3.4 Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JOSC) – Determination 3

3.4.1 The 2022/23 IRPW report stated that, as there had been little use made of the arrangements for JOSCs, the Panel decided to delete the payment from the Framework. If a JOSC is formed by an individual council and it wishes to remunerate, it can apply using the arrangements contained in paragraphs 3.27 and 3.28 of the 2022/23 IRPW report. These paragraphs set out guidance for Local Authorities on the application of specific or additional senior salaries that do not fall within the framework. Current JOSCs in operation will continue without need for further confirmation.

3.4.2 There are no other changes relating to Joint Committees other than 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 £9,886. The salary of a vice-chair is set at 50% of the Chair and will be £4,943.

3.5 Payments to Fire and Rescue Authorities – Determination 4

3.5.1 The three Fire and Rescue Authorities (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.

3.5.2 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 FRAs is also increased in line with ASHE.

3.5.3 The remuneration for Chairs will remain linked to a Band 3 senior salary of principal councils, therefore, there will be a small increase to the role element of their pay. Deputy Chairs, Committee Chairs and other senior roles will remain linked to Band 5. Further details of this are provided below:

Fire and Rescue Authorities

Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,788
Chair	£12,674
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£6,743
Committee Chair or other senior post	£6,743

3.5.4 All current Determinations, including restrictions on receiving double allowances, will be published on the IRPW website.

3.6 Payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5

3.6.1 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.

3.6.2 Following the Covid pandemic and changes in the ways of working with more frequent use of online meetings and training courses as well as more regular committee meetings, the IRPW considered moving to an hourly rate instead. It was recognised however, that this may not always be appropriate, especially to cover in person meetings scheduled to last several hours.

3.6.3 The Panel therefore determined that 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.

3.6.4 The proposal for payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils and Fire and Rescue Authorities are set out in the table below:

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

3.7 Payments to co-opted (lay) members of Corporate Joint Committees: Determination 6

3.7.1 Co-opted lay members of a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) will be paid on the same basis as co-opted (lay) members with voting rights of other bodies within the local government family as indicated in the table below:

Role	Hourly rate payment	Up to 4 hours payment rate	4 hours and over payment rate
Lay chairs of committees	£33.50	£134	£268
Ordinary lay members with voting rights	£29.75	£119	£238

3.8 The IRPW report indicates no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2024 still stand and should be applied in 2024 and 2025, including those covering:

- Travel and subsistence;
- Care and Personal Assistance;
- Sickness Absence;
- Corporate Joint Committees,

- Assistants to the Executive,
- Additional salaries and Job sharing arrangements

3.9 Transfer of Functions to Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru

3.9.1 Following an independent ten-year review of the Panel in 2021, and as a result of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act being passed in July 2024, the Panel's functions will transfer over to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) on 1 April 2025. The Act expands the role and remit of the DBCC across aspects of a healthy Welsh democracy, including setting the remuneration for members of the following bodies across Wales:

- Principal Councils
- Town and Community Councils
- Corporate Joint Committees
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- National Park Authorities

3.9.2 As the Panel is required now, the DBCC will be expected to produce a draft Annual Report for consultation and take account of responses prior to publishing a final Report by 28 February each year. The Report will set out its determination about remuneration levels for the following financial year.

3.9.3 The Panel will be abolished via the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act on 31 March 2025.

4. **Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

4.1 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. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. **Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. **Climate Change Implications**

6.1 There are no Climate Change implications as a result of this report.

7. **Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 There are no Safeguarding or Corporate Parent implications as a result of this report.

8. **Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The proposed changes to the remuneration of Elected Members for the 2025-26 financial year will potentially increase the financial commitment required from this Authority.
- 8.2 A full assessment of the financial impact to the Council in respect of Elected Members' remuneration will be required. Any additional costs will be a pay pressure for the service in 2025-26 and will need to be considered when finalising the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and addressed as part of the budget setting process for that year.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) Note the content of the report;
 - b) Provide any response in respect of the IRPW Draft Annual Report 2025/26;
 - c) Approve that any response of the Committee be submitted to the IRPW and the WLGA by the deadline of 29 November 2024.

Background documents

None



Draft Annual Report 2025 to 2026

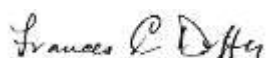
October 2024

Contents

Section		Page
1	Foreword	2
2	Introduction	3-5
3	Role and responsibilities of the Panel	6-7
4	Transfer of Functions to Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru	8
5	Methodology	9-10
6	Determinations for 2025 to 2026	11-20
7	Summary of Determinations 2025 to 2026	21-22
8	Contact Details	23

1. Foreword

- 1.1 Welcome to the draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales ("Panel), setting the decisions and determinations on pay, expenses, and benefits for elected members of Principal Councils, Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs), Community and Town Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2025. This is the final draft report before the Panel's functions transfer over to the Democracy Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) from 1 April 2025.
- 1.2 You can find out more about our Panel members on our [website](#).
- 1.3 This has been a busy year for the Panel, with the focus on compliance, engagement, fairness and research, whilst also preparing for the transfer of functions to the DBCC.
- 1.4 Since its inception, I believe that the Panel has had a significant and beneficial influence on the value of elected members of local government in Wales at all levels and in respect of all the all authorities that are within its remit. In particular, the Panel has sought to ensure that remuneration issues do not act as a barrier to participation in local democracy.
- 1.5 The Local Government Measure requires the Panel to take cognisance of the overall cost to the public purse. We have continued to do this, and maintained the principle that the remuneration of elected members of our Principal Councils is linked specifically to the average wages of people in Wales. I am satisfied that the balance between fairness and support to elected members and the overall impact on public finances has been achieved for 2025 to 2026.
- 1.6 I wish to give my appreciation and thanks to the Panel for their professionalism, engagement and judgement during the last few years. This has enabled the Panel's Determinations to be robust, sound and well supported by stakeholders. Also, my grateful thanks to the members of our Secretariat who have supported the Panel.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 The Consultation period ends on **29 November 2024** (you can either, write to us (see contact details), [email](#) us your comments or complete the [form](#) on our website) 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 2025.



Frances Duffy, Chair
Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Last year we published our first Strategic Plan, setting out the framework for our deliberations and wider context for our decisions from 2023 to 2025.
- 2.2 The strategy outlines an appropriate and fair remuneration framework, aimed at encouraging inclusion and participation in order to support local democracy, and giving communities their voice.
- 2.3 The Panel has a role to promote a wider understanding of the work of local and community council members, to encourage participation in local democracy and to improve diversity of councillors to better represent the diversity of local communities. The Panel has previously introduced reimbursement for cost of care (for all elected members) and a working from home and ICT allowance (community and town councillors) aimed at removing potential barriers relating to caring responsibilities and home working enabling elected members to participate in local democracy.
- 2.4 The Panel continues to monitor, where it can, the impact of its determinations on improving diversity within local democracy, and with the support of Welsh Government, sought views on the association between remuneration and diversity within local democracy. The Panel has written to Welsh Government to ask for support in providing a better baseline of evidence to monitor and track changes in the demographics of our elected officials.
- 2.5 With a strengthened Panel, we continue to focus on building our research and evidence plan to support our discussions on our remuneration framework. We publish our Research and Evidence paper each year along with the Final Report in line with our aim to be open and transparent in all our decision making.
- 2.6 The Panel believes fair and reasonable levels of remuneration are crucial to local democracy. We therefore again agreed to continue to align levels of remuneration for elected members of Principal Councils, Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs), 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.
- 2.7 The [Local Government \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#) states that “the Panel must take into account what it considers will be the likely financial impact on relevant authorities” of its decisions. We considered evidence on public sector finances and the impact on Principal Authorities’ budgets before determining remuneration levels across the local government family.
- 2.8 Whilst the total cost of remuneration for elected members is relatively low in terms of overall budgets, the Panel are aware of the continuing 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.

- 2.9 In line with our commitment to simplifying reporting and compliance requirements, the Panel this year looked at the reporting for Community and Town Councils (CTCs). We provided clerks of CTCs with a new template report and will continue to monitor the level of payments made. These annual returns form an important part of the evidence that the Panel considers in determining the impact and effectiveness of our decisions.
- 2.10 We addressed queries from CTCs 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 updated our guidance on this issue, and this has helped reduce the number of queries. We are mindful of the help that One Voice Wales continues to give to local clerks and councillors on remuneration issues and will again this year hold an online seminar for all community councillors during the consultation period.
- 2.11 We are also mindful of a continuing, albeit reducing, number of CTC councillors who decide to forego all or part of their entitlement. We strongly believe that councillors should be reimbursed for expenses they necessarily incur whilst carrying out their duties.
- 2.12 We introduced a total sum reporting for all mandatory payments to members of CTCs for working from home, the flat rate consumables allowance and travel and subsistence claims. This is in line with the reporting of costs of care and personal assistance claims. The Panel feels 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.
- 2.13 Also, last year, the Panel introduced the option for coopted members of Principal Councils, National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities, to be paid an hourly rather than daily rate where thought appropriate. We will be looking at the annual payment returns for this year to monitor the take up of this.
- 2.14 We have reviewed and updated our [Guidance](#) (previously called the Regulations) to better support relevant authorities to be able to comply with our determinations about members' remuneration, including payments, reporting and publication requirements as set out in this draft annual report.
- 2.15 A key issue that the Panel considered in depth this year was the development of the new Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs). After research into the progress being made and taking evidence and feedback from CJCs and Welsh Government policy colleagues, the Panel issued a Draft Supplementary Report covering the remuneration of lay members of CJCs on 27 June 2024.
- 2.16 The Panel considered it important that payments and allowances to elected and appointed members of all relevant authorities within the local government family are fair and consistent. It was the Panel's view that the situation regarding remuneration of lay members of CJCs was anomalous with remuneration of

coopted members with other local government authorities.

- 2.17 As a result, the Panel consulted with stakeholders about aligning the approach taken to remunerating lay members of CJsCs with the remuneration of coopted members across the relevant authorities within the local government family, asking if lay members of a CJC should be paid in the same way as coopted members of other relevant authorities.
- 2.18 The Panel expresses its appreciation to those who took the time to send their views and comments. The responses were almost all supportive of the approach set out in the report.
- 2.19 The Panel issued a [Final Supplementary Report](#) on 31 July 2024.
- 2.20 The final area that the Panel is considering actioning this year is to undertake a review of Framework and Methodology for Remuneration of Senior Roles in Principal Councils, Community and Town Councils (CTCs), and CJsCs. This is a considerable piece of work requiring full examination and subsequent research, and the Panel therefore intends to develop a more detailed scope of the nature of the research and methodology required over the coming months in order for the new Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) to take this work forward.
- 2.21 Additionally, the Panel has become aware of some concerns over the workload and demands on senior roles in National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel therefore proposes incorporating research questions that would support a review into these areas also within the scope of the research framework described above.
- 2.22 As we come to the end of the year, and the winding up of the Panel and the transfer of its functions to the DBCC, the Panel will be preparing a Legacy Report which we intend to act as a summary of the main issues we have researched and made decisions on over the past 10 or so years and form an evidence base for the DBCC to take forward.

3. Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Our Role:

3.1 The Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of elected and coopted members of the following organisations:

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

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

3.3 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

Panel Membership

Frances Duffy, Chair
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 website: [Panel website](#)

4. Transfer of Functions to Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru

- 4.1 Following an independent ten-year review of the Panel in 2021, the Panel's functions will transfer over to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru on 1 April 2025. This is as a result of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act being passed in July 2024. Having received Royal Assent in the Autumn, the Act expands the role and remit of the DBCC across aspects of a healthy Welsh democracy, including setting the remuneration for members of the following bodies across Wales:
- Principal Councils
 - Town and Community Councils
 - Corporate Joint Committees
 - Fire and Rescue Authorities
 - National Park Authorities
- 4.2 As the DBCC draws on the same evidence base and stakeholders to undertake its own work and its purpose is also rooted in promoting effective local democracy, there is already a strong connection between the work of the two organisations. Both agendas rely on having a real understanding and appreciation of the needs of the population of Wales, the way in which elected members and councils operate and an understanding of members' workloads.
- 4.3 As the Panel is required now, the DBCC will be expected to produce a draft Annual Report for consultation and take account of responses prior to publishing a final Report by 28 February each year. The Report will set out its determination about remuneration levels for the following financial year.
- 4.4 The Panel will be abolished via the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act on 31 March 2025.
- 4.5 We are working closely with the DBCC to ensure a seamless transfer of the Panel's functions on 1 April 2025. We have set up a transition workstream to capture requirements such as development of a legacy report which will provide details on the Panel's history as well areas which might be considered by the DBCC in the future.

5. Methodology

- 5.1 As set out in our strategic objectives the Panel has committed to making evidence-based decisions.
- 5.2 This year we again 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 2025-2026 financial year. This included:
- Data on average UK and Wales weekly earnings, including ASHE – the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
 - Public and private sector pay trends
 - 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)
 - Data collected on the take up of remuneration and benefits packages by councillors
 - Democratic Health of Community and Town Councils
 - Data on local authority finances
- 5.3 The full set of evidence and research considered will be published on our [website](#).
- 5.4 The Panel engaged directly with key stakeholder representative groups including the Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales, Society for Local Council Clerks, North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils. We also received evidence from the Chair of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Chair of National Parks Wales (who is also Chair of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and the Chair of South West Wales CJC (who is also the Leader of Swansea City Council).
- 5.5 In March, the Panel attended the One Voice Wales conference. This enabled the Panel to meet delegates and discuss issues relating to the Panel's deliberations. The Panel will be attending this year's conference and look forward to meeting CTC clerks and councillors.
- 5.6 The Panel also met with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Scottish Government and the Convener of Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC) to discuss SLARC's independent review of councillor remuneration and particular methodology for setting councillor remuneration. The Panel found the conversation interesting and informative on how the Scottish remuneration methodology compares with Wales.
- 5.7 The Panel looks forward to engaging with Heads of Democratic Services and Leaders of Principal Councils, during the consultation period. 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.

- 5.8 The Panel would like to thank all those that contributed to our deliberations either directly or through feedback and questions on our last report.

6. Determinations for 2025 to 2026

Principal Councils

Basic salary for elected members of principal councils:

Determination 1

- 6.1 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 three days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment, and no changes are proposed for 2025 to 2026.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 The Panel has therefore determined that for the financial year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 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 £19,771.**

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

Determination 2

- 6.5 The limit on the number of senior salaries payable (“the cap”) will remain in place.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 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, 4 and 5.
- 6.8 The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £74,141.
- 6.9 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	£19,771
Band 1 leader	£74,141
Band 1 deputy leader	£51,899
Band 2 executive members	£44,485
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£29,657
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£29,657
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£23,726
Civic Head (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£23,726
Presiding member (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£19,771

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	£19,771
Band 1 leader	£66,727
Band 1 deputy leader	£46,709
Band 2 executive members	£40,036
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£29,657
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£29,657
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£23,726
Civic Head (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£23,726
Presiding member (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£19,771

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	£19,771
Band 1 leader	£63,020
Band 1 deputy leader	£44,114
Band 2 executive members	£37,812
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£29,657
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£29,657
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£23,726
Civic Head (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£23,726
Presiding member (if paid)	£29,657
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£19,771

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

6.11 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

6.12 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 £9,886.

6.13 The salary of a vice-chair is set at 50% of the Chair and will be £4,943.

6.14 There are no other changes.

Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities:

Determination 4

6.15 The three 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.

6.16 The three 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.

6.17 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.

6.18 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. 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	£5,576
Chair	£15,462
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£9,531
Committee Chair or other senior post	£9,531

Table 2 – Payments to Fire and Rescue Authorities

Fire and Rescue Authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,788
Chair	£12,674
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£6,743
Committee Chair or other senior post	£6,743

6.19 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

6.20 The current Determination (made in the 2022 to 2023 Annual Report) states that coopted 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.

6.21 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.

6.22 The Panel therefore determined 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 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

Payments to co-opted (lay) members of Corporate Joint Committees:

Determination 6

6.23 Co-opted lay members of a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) will be paid on the same basis as co-opted (lay) members with voting rights of other bodies within the local government family.

6.24 The amounts are set out below:

Table 4: Payments made to co-opted (lay) members of Corporate Joint Committees

Role	Hourly rate payment	Up to 4 hours payment rate	4 hours and over payment rate
Lay chairs of committees	£33.50	£134	£268
Ordinary lay members with voting rights	£29.75	£119	£238

6.25 This determination is valid from 31 July 2024.

Community and Town Councils

6.26 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 7

Payment for extra costs of working from home

6.27 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

6.28 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.

6.29 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 8

6.30 Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment.

6.31 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 2025 to 2026 are now proposed as:

£126.74 for a full day and £63.37 for a half day.

Reporting Requirements:

Determination 9

6.32 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.

6.33 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.

6.34 The Panel proposed 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.

6.35 This brings these in line with the reporting of the costs of care and personal assistance allowances.

Table 5: Payments to Community and Town Councils

Type of Payment	Group	Requirement
Extra costs payment	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory for all members
Senior role	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory £500 for 1 member; optional for up to 7
Mayor or chair	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or deputy chair	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional: up to a maximum of £500
Attendance allowance	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional
Financial loss	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional
Travel and subsistence	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Optional
Costs of care or personal assistance	1 (Electorate over 14,000)	Mandatory
Extra costs payment	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Mandatory for all members
Senior role	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Mandatory for 1 member; optional up to 5
Mayor or chair	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional: up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or deputy chair	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional: up to a maximum of £500
Attendance allowance	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional
Financial loss	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional
Travel and subsistence	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Optional

Type of Payment	Group	Requirement
Costs of care or personal assistance	2 (Electorate over 10,000 to 13,999)	Mandatory
Extra costs payment	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Mandatory for all members
Senior role	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or chair	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy mayor or deputy chair	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance allowance	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional
Financial loss	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional
Travel and subsistence	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Optional
Costs of care or personal assistance	3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)	Mandatory
Extra Costs Payment	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional
Financial Loss	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Optional
Costs of Care or Personal Assistance	4 (Electorate over 1,000 to 4,999)	Mandatory
Extra Costs Payment	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional
Financial Loss	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Optional

Type of Payment	Group	Requirement
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	5 (Electorate less than 1,000)	Mandatory

6.36 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](#).

7. Summary of Determinations 2025 to 2026

Determination 1

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils is set at £19,771.

Determination 2

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £74,141. 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 £9,886.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,943.

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 2024 to 2025. The only change is the stipulation of hourly rates, as set out in Table 3.

Determination 6

Co opted lay members of a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) will be paid on the same basis as co opted (lay) members with voting rights of other bodies within the local government family, as set out in Table 4.

Determination 7

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 8

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment.

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 2025 are now proposed as:

£126.74 for a full day and £63.37 for a half day.

Determination 9

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 2024 to 2025 [Annual Report](#) of the Panel remain valid and should be applied.

8. Contact details

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

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

Telephone: 03000 616095
Email: irpmailbox@gov.wales

8.2 This Annual Report and other information about the Panel and its work are available on our [website](#).

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	21 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework or Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, requires local authorities to appoint a Democratic Services Committee to oversee the Democratic Services functions of the Council, ensure that the work is adequately resourced and report to full Council accordingly. • This report sets out the Committee’s remit and proposes items for its Forward Work Programme for the year. • The forward work programme is flexible and could be subject to change at each Committee meeting.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Members with a proposed Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the Democratic Services Committee for consideration and further development.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 1, Chapter 2, requires local authorities to appoint a Democratic Services Committee to oversee the Democratic Services functions of the Council, ensure that the work is adequately resourced and report to full Council accordingly.
- 2.2 As stated in the Council’s Constitution, the Democratic Services Committee have the following functions:

1. To review the adequacy of provision of staff, accommodation, and other resources to discharge democratic services functions, and
2. To make reports and recommendations to Council, at least annually, in relation to such provision.
3. At the request of the Council, review any matter relevant to the support and advice available to members of the Council, and the terms and conditions of office of those members.
4. To make reports and recommendations to the Council following a review.

2.3 In addition to this, as a member of the Democratic Services Committee, the role includes, (but is not exclusive to):

- a) developing the Authority's member support and development strategy;
- b) ensuring that members have access to a reasonable level of training and development as described in the member development strategy and the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development;
- c) ensuring that the budget for member development is sufficient;
- d) ensuring that members have access to personal development planning and annual personal development reviews.
- e) promoting and supporting good governance by the Council.
- f) understanding the respective roles of members, officers and external parties operating within the Democratic Services Committee's area of responsibility.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Attached at **Appendix A** is a draft FWP for the Democratic Services Committee for 2024-25.
- 3.2 Reports such as the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report and the Democratic Services Committee Annual Report will be regular items for the Committee to consider each year, as will Member Development updates.
- 3.3 It is for Members to consider whether there are any other items they wish to add to their FWP considering the role and remit of the Committee. This can then be revisited at each meeting so that Members have the opportunity to amend or add to the FWP throughout the year.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 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. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Members are requested to consider the proposed draft Forward Work Programme for the Democratic Services Committee attached at **Appendix A** and provide any comment or suggestions for further items for the Committee to consider at its future meetings.

Background documents

None

This page is intentionally left blank

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
2024/25**

Date of meeting	Item	Invitees/Further Detail
26 June 2025	Member Research Protocol	Proposed Final Research Protocol for Members
	Member Portal Working Group Update	
	Democratic Services Committee Annual Report	
	Member Development Programme Update (including update and outcomes from the Member Development and Support Survey)	

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	21 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the role of the Democratic Services Committee to develop a Member support and development strategy and ensure Members have access to a reasonable level of training and development and sufficient budget to do so. • This report provides an update on the Member Development Programme since June 2024 and sets out the process for informing and planning the future programme including Member Performance and Development Reviews. • Members are also asked to put forward suggestions for inclusion in the programme and prioritise accordingly.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Provide the Committee with an update on the delivery of the Council's Member Training and Development Programme and related activities;
- b) Request the Committee to identify any further topics for inclusion in the Member Development Programme.

2. Background

2.1 Following the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, local authorities were directed to place more emphasis on Member Development. Members are

encouraged to identify their own development needs and participate fully in learning and development activities.

2.2 Under the Council's Constitution part of the role description of a Member on the Democratic Services Committee is:

- developing the Authority's member support and development strategy;
- ensuring that members have access to a reasonable level of training and development as described in the member development strategy and the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development;
- ensuring that the budget for member development is sufficient;
- ensuring that members have access to personal development planning and annual personal development reviews.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 **Appendix A** details the training and development sessions that have taken place as part of the Member Development Programme since last reported to the Democratic Services Committee on 13 June 2024.

3.2 Training requests continue to be regularly forthcoming from both Members and Officers which has been extremely welcomed and encouraged as it enables the programme to be specifically targeted to needs. Examples of this include 'Complaints Procedure' training and the 'Department of Work and Pensions Briefing', both of which have been requested by Members as well as the 'New ESTYN Framework' training and 'All Member Budget Briefing', which have been requested by Corporate Directors.

3.3 There have also been a series of sessions for Members on the new Mod.Gov App to train Members in its use. It is hoped that this App will assist with a new online voting system for Committee meetings. Over 60% of Members have attended one of these sessions so far and the Democratic Services team will be looking to arrange additional sessions before Christmas with the aim to go live with the new system early in 2025.

Development Control Committee Training Sessions

3.4 The following Development Control Committee training sessions have been provided since the last update to the Committee:

- 26th June 2024 - Building Conservation and Design training
- 18th September 2024 – Presentation by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (Chief Planning Inspector for Wales)

Council Briefings

3.5 The following Local Authority partners have also attended Full Council meetings to provide update briefings to all Members on the services they deliver:

- 24th July 2024 – Presentation by Welsh Water Dwr Cymru
- 23rd October 2024- Presentation by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

Future Member Development

- 3.6 Attached at **Appendix B** is a schedule for continued training over the next few months and includes some external training as a result of recommendations from the Scrutiny Review undertaken earlier this year. It also includes a training/briefing session on the new South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee which could be a combined session with other Local Authorities involved in the CJC. Member Briefings have also been requested by Scrutiny Members as well as the Corporate Management Board and there are ongoing sessions related to Member Personal Safety.

E-Learning

- 3.7 In addition to Member Development sessions Members are also asked to undertake several e-learning modules via the online Learning and Development website. These e-learning courses have been devised by the Council for all staff and Members to support their learning and development needs and gives Members the opportunity to undertake this learning remotely at a convenient time at their own pace.
- 3.8 The following mandatory courses below have been previously provided:
- Corporate Induction
 - UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
 - Display Screen Equipment
 - Fire Safety Awareness
 - ICT Code of Conduct
 - Safeguarding Children and Adults
 - Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
 - New - Introduction to Equality and Diversity; and
 - New - Welsh Language Awareness.
- 3.9 At the time of drafting this report, 39 Members have accessed the Learning and Development site and commenced their e-learning modules but only 21 Members have completed all nine mandatory modules.
- 3.10 It is worth noting that following an internal Elected Members Audit, undertaken in 2022/23, one of the recommendations from the report which was subsequently reported to the Governance and Audit Committee stated:
- ‘All elected Members are encouraged and reminded to complete their Code of conduct and mandatory e-learning modules training.’***
- 3.11 Members are therefore encouraged to re-visit the e-learning website and undertake these additional modules if not yet completed.

Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Training

- 3.12 The WLGA have run a series of 'Progressive Community Leadership Training for Councillors' programmes throughout 2023 and 2024 aimed at exploring the barriers to successfully leading communities and offering strategies for overcoming them. It includes practical methods and techniques for public engagement, participation, and empowerment with a step-by-step framework to build sustainable and resilient communities. These places have been generally limited to 2 places per Local Authority for each set of sessions with extra spare places sometimes offered. So far 8 Bridgend Councillors have signed up and completed this training over 2023-24 and 2 more Members are signed up for February 2025.
- 3.13 Some Members have also attended the WLGA Leadership Programme which is the flagship leadership development support for Councillors in Wales. It also provides the WLGA with intelligence on the key issues facing local government. Recently feedback from participants has focused on the need to build resilience within the local government leadership and the need to succession plan for developing new leaders. As a result of this, and the restricted places per Local Authority, for 2024 the WLGA has tried to encourage a focus on Executive Members or potential future Executive Members. 6 of our current Members have attended this training and 2 more are booked in for the upcoming Programme in 2025.

Learning and Development Website

- 3.14 All Members have been provided with the link to the Learning and Development website with instructions on how to access the e-learning training. The review of the Member Learning and Development site by the Democratic Services team is unfortunately on hold and whilst it is hoped that this can be developed in the near future, this will depend on resources available.

Member Development and Support Survey

- 3.15 Following the local government elections in May 2022, a survey was undertaken to determine the timings of Member Development activities. This year we have repeated this, however we have expanded the survey to ask for more detail from Members on their views on past and future training as well as the support they receive. The survey went out to Members on 13 September 2024 asking for responses by 25 October 2024 and covered areas such as:
- The frequency of training sessions;
 - Preferred methods and format for training;
 - Quality of training information provided;
 - Satisfaction over topic choices;
 - Suggested topics for future training
 - Support provided by Democratic Services;
 - Digital Support provided to Members.
- 3.16 23 responses were received and these will now be analysed and used to inform the future Member Development Programme as well as identify any additional support required for Members. An updated report detailing the findings will be provided to the next Democratic Services Committee meeting.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Elected Member learning and development is resourced from the allocated Member Development budget. Reasonable allocation will be made as part of the annual budget round and applied with regard to the corporate needs of the Authority. The Head of Democratic Services will monitor appropriate spend on the budget. In-house training will be provided by Directorates if the topic relates to their service areas. The costs for this type of event will be met from within Directorate budgets and not from the Member Development budget.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the report and appendices;
- b) Identify any additional Member development topics or briefings for inclusion in the Member Development Programme and prioritise them accordingly.

Background documents

None

This page is intentionally left blank

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEMBER INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2024/25

Date and Time	Delivery	Facilitator	Development Session
13/06/2024 14:00-15:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	DWP Cllr briefing
09/07/2024 13:30-14:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Safeguarding Training
11/07/2024		BCBC Officers	Individual Member Training - Appeals Panel
17/07/2024 14:00-16:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Delegated Powers Training for Leader & Cabinet
22/07/2024 10:30-11:45	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	All Member Budget Briefing
22/07/2024 2pm-4pm 24/07/24 10am-12noon)	In Person	BCBC Officers	E-Learning Drop in Sessions

26/07/2024 13:00-14:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Complaints procedure
2/8/24 14:00 – 15:30	TBC	BCBC Officers	Individual Member Training for Development Control Committee
15/08/2024 10:00-12:00	Committee Room 3	BCBC Officers	Delegated Powers Training for Leader & Cabinet
05/09/2024	In Person	WLGA	Media Training – Leader & Cabinet
5/09/24	TBC	Licensing Officers	Individual Member Training for Licensing
18/09/2024 14:00-15:00	Remote	Chief Planning Inspector for Wales BCBC Officers	Presentation by PEDW – Chief Planning Inspector for Wales

19/09/24 13:00 – 14:00 And 30/10/2024 10:00 – 11.30	In person	BCBC Officers	Mod.Gov App Training - Cabinet
26/09/2024 13:30-15:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	New ESTYN Framework
7/10/2024 14:30 – 16:30 And 14/10/2024 10:00 – 12:00 And 18/10/2024 10:00 – 12:00 And 21/10/2024 14:00 – 16:00	In person	BCBC Officers	Mod.Gov App Training
09/10/2024	Virtual	LGA	Personal Safety for Councillors
14/10/24 15:00 – 16:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Introduction on the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the role of The Public Services Board
31/10/2024	Virtual	LGA	Handling Online Abuse and Intimidation for Cllrs

6/11/24 15:00 – 16:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	All Member Budget Briefing
--	--------	----------------------	-----------------------------------

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEMBER INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2024/25

Date and Time	Delivery	Facilitator	Development Session
04/12/2024 10:00-12:00	Hybrid	WLGA	Workshop session with WLGA Chief Executive
5/12/2024 15:00 – 17:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Elimination of Profit for Social Care – All Members
07/01/2025 15:00 – 17:00	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – All Members (that requires local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation with their relevant partners and others, in relation to adults with needs for care and support, carers and children)
10/01/2025	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Day Opportunities Review & Accommodation Based Service Review - All Members
15/01/2025 14:00 – 15:30	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Declaration of Interest training – All members

10/02/2024 All day	Hybrid	APSE	Carbon Literacy Training – Leader Cabinet, Scrutiny Chairs, Group Leaders, Chairs of Development Control and Licensing Committees
TBC	In Person	BCBC Officers	Mod.Gov App Training – All Members
TBC	TBC	WLGA/External	Critical Analysis and Questioning Skills – Scrutiny – Scrutiny Members
TBC	TBC	WLGA/External	Member Roles & Responsibilities – All Members
TBC	TBC	WLGA/External	Chairperson Training – All Chairs (and any Member with potential interest in becoming a Chair)
TBC	TBC	CJC Officers	South East Wales Corporate Joint Committees/ Regional Responsibilities – All Members
TBC	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Bridgemaps – All members

TBC	Hybrid	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Governing Body Support and Funding – All Members
TBC	TBC	BCBC Officers	ESTYN Framework - Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 Members
TBC	TBC	BCBC Officers	Social Media Training – All Members
TBC	TBC	Barod Cymru	Personal Safety – Substance use and how to refer people to services – All Members
TBC	TBC	E-Learning	Equalities & Unconscious Bias Training – All Members
TBC	TBC	WLGA	Anti Racism Training – All Members
TBC	TBC	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Porthcawl Regeneration Update – All Members

TBC	TBC	BCBC Officers	Member Briefing - Highways Infrastructure Delivery – All Members
------------	-----	----------------------	---

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	21 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	RESEARCH SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR COUNCILLORS – PROTOCOL
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules in respect of this report.
Executive Summary:	<p>This report details the requirements for a Member Research Protocol following the new statutory guidance issued under section 8(1A) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.</p> <p>It provides an initial assessment of what is currently available to Members within the Authority and seeks Members comments as a basis for a Research Support and Services Protocol.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Democratic Services Committee on the existing research support available to Elected Members and to seek direction for the development of a Research Support and Services Protocol for Elected Members.

2. Background

- 2.1 The new Statutory Guidance issued under section 8(1A) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 states that “all elected members should be able to access a range of information and support” in order to undertake their roles effectively.
- 2.2 It is clear that Councils across Wales are already undertaking a range of research support activity to assist Councillors in fulfilling their duties, and it is anticipated this will mainly focus on signposting individual members to existing sources of information or available training, for example, brief prepared for scrutiny committee meetings or how to use research, statistical or legislative websites. It may also

include targeted support for groups of members for example, leading a task and finish group investigation or support for individual members related to their role on the council, for example as chair of a committee.

- 2.3 The Statutory Guidance provides an opportunity for Councils to review this support and establish a clear commitment or protocol for research support and services, identifying areas for potential improvements within the resource constraints faced nationwide.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The new guidance states that, as a minimum, it is recommended that Councils undertake an internal review / audit of the existing research support provided to Councillors and evaluate against the examples given within guidance. It is recommended that this is undertaken through the Democratic Services Committee.

- 3.2 In undertaking such a review, the following questions are proposed in the guidance for Members to consider:

- Are background papers available to help all Councillors understand key decisions?
- Are all Councillors provided with regular performance management information, or is it readily available to them?
- Is demographic information readily available to all Councillors, including information on local services and their usage?
- Are Councillors signposted to useful sources of information?
- Are Councillors able to request specific research requests, and are the parameters clearly set out?
- Is there regular circulation of local and nation events which Councillors may be interested in?

- 3.3 The guidance also states that the service should not be solely reactive, the proactive provision of timely briefings on new policies, changes in the law or other matters that could impact on the work of members should form part of the service.

Accessing information

- 3.4 In terms of support in accessing information, the guidance states that Councils should:

- Frame councillor access to information procedure rules expansively – with a presumption in favour of the release of information to councillors unless a clear public policy reason exists not to;
- Proactively provide councillors with management information and other data to ensure that they are kept informed about the business of the authority. Councils

could produce an information bulletin or digest for councillors on a regular basis – subject to resources as suggested above;

- Engage with members to better understand how and where their roles will require that they access certain information sources, and support them to gain that access. This may include negotiation with partners, and others who may hold information relevant to councillors' roles;
- Ensure mechanisms are in place to protect personal data in line with appropriate legislation.

Confidential Information

- 3.5 As far as possible Councils should specify publicly why a matter is exempt from publication or from discussion in a public forum – ideally providing more information than just the description given in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 3.6 Equally, Councillors should be made aware that Councils are frequently under legal obligations to others with regard to maintaining the confidentiality of certain information (in particular commercial information and personal information) and such releases could open up the Council to challenge.

Going Forward

- 3.7 To assist Members, an initial assessment has been undertaken of the proposed aspects the guidance asks it to consider when undertaking a review of existing support and arrangements. This is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 3.8 In addition to this Scrutiny also have their own process for research support and scoping out potential scrutiny items for their Forward Work Programmes, that focuses on impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception and considers a set criteria that looks at:
- Public Interest - the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;
 - Ability to Change - priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and add value to;
 - Performance - priority should be given to the areas in which the Council is not performing well;
 - Extent - priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough, or a large number of the Authority's service users or its population;
 - Replication - work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.
- 3.9 More in depth processes are required for Research and Evaluation Panels when undertaken by any of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

3.10 Some local authorities have dedicated Research Officers who can undertake detailed external research. Unfortunately, we do not have these roles in Bridgend and therefore the capacity for additional research is limited.

3.11 Taking the above into consideration, there is a need for Members and Officers to recognise what already exists across the Authority, as identified in the attached assessment, and be realistic about what can be achieved in our own Research Protocol for Members, and to manage expectations carefully.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no Safeguarding or Corporate Parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Note the content of this report as the basis for developing a Research Support and Services Protocol for Elected Members including the initial assessment attached at **Appendix A**;
- b) Provide any suggestions or further comments on how information could be made more accessible to Members, for consideration and inclusion in the Protocol.

Background documents
None

This page is intentionally left blank

RESEARCH SUPPORT AND SERVICES PROTOCOL

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

<p>Are background papers available to help all Councillors understand key decisions?</p>	<p>The Council's report template provides a section on background papers to allow Members access to any additional information.</p> <p>Reports also often refer to where and when the item has previously been considered.</p> <p>Officers could be encouraged to provide direct links when referring to previous reports and consideration at Committees, for ease of reference.</p>
<p>Are all Councillors provided with regular performance management information, or is it readily available to them?</p>	<p>Yes, quarterly performance updates (backward looking) are provided to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) for detailed monitoring and scrutiny of progress against the corporate plan and this is also shared for information with all Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees. These are also then reported to Cabinet.</p> <p>All papers are available publicly on the Council's website.</p> <p>Self-assessment is reported annually to GAC (approach), COSC and GAC (pre-decision scrutiny) and finally to Cabinet and Full Council for sign-off.</p> <p>The development of the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan (forward looking) is reported to COSC at the start of the process, again for sign-off and then finally to agree targets.</p> <p>Less regular performance events (updates on the performance management improvement plan, new Corporate Plans and updates to the performance framework) are also led by COSC and reported to Cabinet and council for sign-off.</p>

<p>Is demographic information readily available to all Councillors, including information on local services and their usage?</p>	<p>There are links within the Councillor Portal to various information such as planning applications, roadworks, street crime statistics, Data Cymru's ward profile and Dewis Cymru (local organisations and services).</p> <p>The Communications team research and produce specialist briefings for members who are preparing to be interviewed for broadcast news.</p>
<p>Are Councillors signposted to useful sources of information?</p>	<p>Any relevant information received from WLGA, Data Cymru, Welsh Government Consultations, sent to the HDS, are shared with all Councillors.</p> <p>Regular briefings and training provided to all Members on relevant changes in policy or introduction of new legislation.</p> <p>Changes to performance requirements and the development of approaches to meet them (e.g. self-assessment and Panel Performance Assessment) are reported to COSC.</p> <p>The Councillor Portal provides links to Data Cymru's ward profile, Welsh Government's consultations as well as the aspects mentioned above.</p> <p>Useful sources of information across a range of different topics are also generally included as part of announcements from the Mayor, Leader and Chief Executive to meetings of full Council.</p> <p>In the event of a significant issue which warrants a wider update for members e.g. preparations for the arrival of severe weather, a briefing note will be issued via email to all members to ensure they are aware and are supported in responding to enquiries from constituents.</p>

	<p>Briefing notes for Cabinet Members e.g. serious case reviews, media interviews, background briefings on high profile issues are produced when required.</p> <p>Weekly briefing meetings with Leader and Cabinet Members including news grid (media and social media) and campaign information is also provided eg Budget Awareness Campaign.</p> <p>Weekly bulletin for Elected Members to include latest news releases, marked days/dates/events.</p>
<p>Are Councillors able to request specific research requests, and are the parameters clearly set out?</p>	<p>Process and clear criteria need to be established as part of Elected Member Research Protocol.</p> <p>Until recently, there has been capacity in the policy and performance team to assist with research requests (4 graduates), but this will cease from November 2024.</p>
<p>Is there regular circulation of local and national events which Councillors may be interested in?</p>	<p>Weekly bulletin for Elected Members which includes latest news release, marked days/dates/events.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank