

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## INFORMATION REPORT TO COUNCIL

29 NOVEMBER 2017

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

#### RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES 2018/19

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT.

- 1.1 To inform Council of the response to the draft 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 Members for the 2018/19 municipal year.

#### 2. CONNECTION TO CORPORATE PLAN / 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 all the following Corporate Priorities.

1. **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
2. **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

#### 3. BACKGROUND.

- 3.1 The Local Authorities (Allowances for Members) (Wales) Regulations 2007 provided for the establishment of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 3.2 This is the tenth draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (the Panel), and the ninth published under the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. The Measure extended the responsibilities of the Panel and its powers under Section 142 to decide (prescribe) payments to members of relevant authorities.
- 3.3 The draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

has been circulated for consultation to all Councils in Wales. Comments on the draft proposals have been requested to be returned to the Panel by 29 November 2017. This will provide an opportunity to review the feedback and finalise their determinations in the report to be published in February 2018.

- 3.4 The Draft Annual Report has been circulated by the Democratic Services Team to all Group Leaders and Independent Members. They have been advised that they were able to submit their comments for consideration by the Democratic Services Committee.

#### **4. CURRENT SITUATION / PROPOSAL.**

- 4.1 The Democratic Services Committee considered the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report 2018/19 at its meeting held on 2 November 2017. They were provided with an explanation of the 52 proposed determinations and requested to provide any appropriate feedback on behalf of the Council.

- 4.2 A copy of the response from the Democratic Services Committee is attached at **Appendix A**. The content of this letter was confirmed by the Chairperson of the Democratic Services Committee before being shared with all Group Leaders and Independent Members on 13 November 2017.

- 4.3 The Group Leaders and Independent Members were invited to confirm that they had no objections to the draft response by 17 November 2017. No additional comments were received.

- 4.4 The agreed response was sent to the IRPW before the deadline of 29 November 2017.

#### **5. EFFECT UPON POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PROCEDURE RULES.**

- 5.1 This report accords with the relevant Procedure Rules.

#### **6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT.**

- 6.1 This report is supportive of the equalities implications for Elected Members by including care, family and other allowances.

#### **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS.**

- 7.1 The current budget set for 2017/18 for the remuneration of elected members is £1,104,140.

- 7.2 Should these proposals be introduced the cost of remuneration of members is likely to increase by £200 per Elected Member which equates to a total of £10,800. Some of this cost may be negated by the some of the Elected Members electing to forgo some or all of their salaries.

- 7.3 It is uncertain at this stage if the proposals in the draft Annual Report will be implemented. Some savings which are currently being made due to the 3 senior salary posts which are not being remunerated may be negated by the

implementation of other proposals in the report therefore an assessment of the future budget costs cannot be made at this stage.

7.4 Following the publication of the Annual Report for the Independent Remuneration Panel in February 2018, an assessment will be undertaken of the cost implications prescribed by the Panel and submitted to Council for consideration.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION.**

8.1 Council is recommended to note the content of this report.

**P A Jolley**

**Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services & Monitoring Officer**  
**17 November 2017**

**Contact Officer:** GP Jones  
Head of Democratic Services

**Telephone:** (01656) 643385

**Email:** [Gary.Jones@Bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:Gary.Jones@Bridgend.gov.uk)

**Postal address:** Legal & Democratic Services  
Operational & Partnership Services Directorate  
Level 4 Civic Offices  
Angel Street  
Bridgend  
CF31 4WB

### **Background documents:**

- [Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report February 2018/19.](#)
- [Bridgend County Bough Council - Schedule of Remuneration 2017-18](#)

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen y Bont ar Ogwr  
Swyddfeydd Dinesig  
Stryd yr Angel  
PEN Y BONT AR OGWR  
CF31 4WB

Ffôn: 01656 643225  
Deialu Uniongyrchol: 01656 643225

**Cynghorydd RM James**

Pwyllgor Gwasanaethau Democritaidd (Cadeirydd)  
Ebost: memberbcbc@bridgend.gov.uk



Bridgend County Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Angel Street  
BRIDGEND  
CF31 4WB

Telephone: 01656 643225  
Direct Line: 01656 643225

**Councillor RM James**

Democratic Services Committee (Chairpperson)  
Email: membersbcbc@bridgend.gov.uk

Our Ref / Ein cyf: DSC/IRPW

Your Ref / Ein cyf: GJ/DSC/0001

Date / Dyddiad: 27 November 2017

Mr John Bader,  
Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales  
Room N.03  
First Floor  
Crown Buildings  
Cathay's Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Dear Mr Bader,

The Democratic Services Committee of Bridgend County Borough Council would like to thank you and the panel members for providing the opportunity to express their views in respect of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (Draft) Annual Report dated February 2018/19.

Officers circulated the Draft Annual Report to all group leaders and independent members of this Council. They were advised that if they had any views or comments on the report that they could be submitted to the Democratic Services for collation and consideration. On 02 November 2017 the Democratic Services Committee met to consider the report and any views that had been provided. A summary of the views of the Council is shown below. A full record of the comments received by the Committee is shown at Appendix 1.

1. General

The Labour and Plaid Cymru groups along with some of the independent members accepted the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

2. Visit from the Panel

This Council considers that the Panel's visit to each Local Authority provided an invaluable opportunity for a variety of individual Elected Members to discuss some of their issues relating to the remuneration directly with Panel Members. It was considered beneficial that this practice continue at least once in term of office.

3. Basic Salary

The committee expressed its concerns that the increase in Basic Salary was in excess of the one percent public sector pay cap and treated Elected Members differently from Local Authority employees. It was understood that Elected Members could elect to forgo some of their salary in order to align their pay increase to the public sector pay cap but it was considered that the difference in salary increase sent the wrong message as the public

sector were not in a position to receive a higher increase in salary and then subsequently choose to forgo some of their salary.

4. Job Sharing

The Committee considered that although job sharing may be beneficial to some individuals, the job sharing arrangements could create difficulties in terms of governance and accountability. If job sharing arrangements were shared during a week i.e. 2.5 days as a cabinet member and 2.5 days as a ward member, this would create confusion as to who was making the decisions and when. It was suggested that further details be provided to clarify which roles would be considered suitable for job sharing and how the job sharers would maintain effective governance and accountability.

5. Reimbursement of Care costs

The changes to the Reimbursement of Care costs were welcomed and the Committee considered that these changes were likely to encourage greater use of this facility. Committee Members also considered that any specialist care needs usually required a long term commitment from the elected Member to the care provider which would not allow a great deal of flexibility. This would usually prevent any specific care needs being able to be provided at short notice resulting in the elected member being unable to fulfil their role effectively.

6. Supporting the work of Local Authority Elected Members

The committee raised a variety of options which could be explored to extend the existing support provided to Elected Members. The Committee determined that the Elected Members ICT Forum be re-established to review the support currently provided to all Elected Members and to review the effectiveness of ICT provision. It was anticipated that the review would be included as part the of budget consultation process which was currently taking place. It was hoped that any outcomes from the review would be implemented at the start of the next financial year.

It is hoped that this clarifies the position of this Council and that the comments summarised above and included in Appendix 1 provide additional information on which to finalise your Annual Report 2018/19

Yours sincerely

Councilor RM James  
Chairperson Democratic Services Committee

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg. Rhowch wybod i ni os yw eich dewis iaith yw'r Gymraeg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.*

**COMMENTS RECEIVED BY THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE IN  
RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ANNUAL  
REPORT 2018/19**

General

- What is the cost of this Annual Report and the remuneration of the Panel.
- Reduce the number of Borough Councillors.
- Fewer senior salaries. 18 out of 54 Councillors is too many.
- Fewer Cabinet members?
- I have read the report of the IRP for Wales and have no comment to make other than I accept its recommendations.
- The Labour Group accepted the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

Basic Salary

- Members who have no income other than their councillor salary (especially younger members) – as with students attending University perhaps means testing should be considered.
- I can see that Councillors should be paid as it is certainly far more demanding a role than I ever imagined. However, I hope that most Councillors are not doing it just for the money.
- As there is a 5 year limit on this “job “until a further election, I believe very few would give up their “day job “ to become a Councillor for just over £13,000 a year. So regretfully, it does not attract bright, young, dynamic people into the role as it should do. Those that do become Councillors have to juggle jobs and time management becomes an issue.

Senior Salary

- Too big a financial hike from Basic salary to Senior salary.

Supporting the work of Local Authority Elected Members

- Some members may not have access to the internet &/or an ability to print at home so the costs have to be found from their “pay” thereby decreasing the affordability of attending council meetings/carrying out councillor duties.

Reimbursement of Travel and Subsistence Costs when on Official Business

- If a member hasn't got use of their own transport it leads to the need to use public transport. If they live where there are no bus routes or indeed no buses then there is a need to travel by taxi.
- Reduce travel costs with more use made of conference calling and Skype/Facetime

Local Government Pension Scheme

- Pension scheme far too generous

Payments to Members of Community and Town Councils

- The £500 to Town Councillors (we as a Town Council have all opted to forego this payment) as for the £150 suggested for telephone and sundries. Hopefully no Town Councillor is taking advantage of this far too generous payment.