

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2020

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD
REMOTELY VIA SKYPE FOR BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 10:00**

Present

Councillor E Venables – Chairperson

DG Howells
G Thomas

RM James
MC Voisey

B Sedgebeer

SG Smith

Apologies for Absence

RM Granville and A Williams

Officers:

Michael Pitman
Andrew Rees

Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Democratic Services Manager

184. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members declared a personal interest in agenda Item 4 - Draft Report Of The Independent Remuneration Panel For Wales 2021/2022 – as they were all in receipt of remuneration.

185. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 12/03/2020 be approved as a true and accurate record.

186. DRAFT REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES 2021/2022

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report which advised the Democratic Services Committee of the draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for Wales in respect of the level and range of remuneration the Authority must make available to its Members for the 2021/2022 municipal year.

He asked that the Committee also provide any comments and recommendations to Council in respect of the Draft Annual Report 2021/2022.

The Democratic Services Manager advised that the 2021/2022 was the thirteenth Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (the Panel), and the tenth published under the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (attached as Appendix 1). The Measure extended the responsibilities of the Panel and its powers under Section 142 to decide (prescribe) payments to members of relevant authorities.

He added that representatives of the Panel have held consultation meetings remotely on their proposals, which was attended by the Chairperson of the Democratic Services Committee and the Head of Democratic Services.

The determinations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2021 were shown at Appendix 2 of the report.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2020

The Democratic Services Manager explained that while financial constraints on the public sector remain, the Panel considered that an increase in the basic salary was justified and had proposed an increase of £150 per annum (1.06%) to the basic salary for members of principal councils effective from 1 April 2021. The proposed increase applied to the basic salary for members of principal councils is in recognition of the basic duties expected of all Elected Members. The basic salary in 2021/2022 for Elected Members of principal councils shall be £14,368, this was shown at Determination 1.

Similarly, the Panel has determined that senior salaries was to be increased at the same rate as basic salaries which was 1.06%, which was shown at Determination 2. He added that no additional increases were to be paid to senior salary holders in 2021/2022. The Panel considered that Leaders and members of the executive carry the greatest individual accountability. The Panel proposed to increase the salaries of the Executive, Committee Chairs and the Group Leader to the following levels:

Senior salaries (inclusive of basic salary)	
Leader	£49,974
Deputy leader	£35,320
Executive members	£30,773
Committee chairs (if remunerated):	£23,161
Leader of largest opposition group ³	£23,161
Leader of other political groups	£18,108

The Panel also determined which was at Determination 3 that where paid, civic salaries be paid as follows:

Civic salaries (inclusive of basic salary)	
Mayor	£23,161
Lord Mayor	£18,108

A Member asked in relation to page 34, section 3.22 of the report whereby it states Members should already have use of electronic email services and the ability to access information electronically, what Members thoughts were on this. He added that during the Covid-19 Pandemic, Members had needed to work from home. Was it expected of Members to have the internet facilities in place, or did Members feel they needed to establish this as a result of Covid-19.

The Committee discussed this point and concluded that appropriate internet facilities were something that Members would have already had prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and believed that they did not need reimbursement for costs related to broadband.

A Member raised the issue that the Chairperson of Democratic Services Committee was not a paid position, but believed that it shared similar responsibilities as other Chairpersons and therefore should be remunerated accordingly. Members asked that this be raised at Council so that it could be looked in to further.

A Member raised that there was availability of tax relief in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic that was not widely known about. He proposed that information be made available on the Councils website to signpost Members to the HMRC website for more information

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee commented on the Draft Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2020

2021/2022 and provided the following recommendations to Council:

- The potential remuneration of the Chairperson of Democratic Services Committee be discussed and looked into;
- Information be made available on the Council's website to signpost Members to the HMRC website for more information relating to tax relief.

187. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report which its purpose was to provide an update on the delivery of the Councils Member Development Training and Development Programme and related activities. He added that the purpose was to also request any topics for inclusion on the programme.

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Member Training and Development Sessions, Pre Council Briefing Sessions and Development Control Committee Training Sessions that had been held since the last Democratic Services Committee on 17th October 2019. These were listed in the table at 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of the report.

The Democratic Services Manager explained the future scheduled pre council briefings which were as follows:

- 18 November 2020: Budget Consultation
- 16 December 2020: Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations
- TBC: Changes to the New Curriculum

The Democratic Services Manager explained the future scheduled Development Control Committee Training Sessions which had been scheduled as follows:

- 10 December 2020: Update on Wales/Regional Planning Matters and Resourcing of the Planning Service

The Democratic Services Manager explained the future Proposed Member Training and Development sessions which were scheduled as follows:

- 5 November 2020 – Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Training
- 25 November 2020 - Scrutiny Charing Skills
- 30 November 2020 - Scrutiny Questioning Skills
- Using Bridgemaps – TBC
- Safeguarding – TBC
- Education Outcomes – TBC

He explained that since the start of the current term, a number of E-learning courses had been provided. The following E-learning had been completed by members:

- Corporate Induction (**11 Members**)
- General Data Protection Regulations (**4**)
- Display Screen Equipment (**3**)
- Fire Safety Awareness (**4**)
- ICT Code of Conduct (**9**)
- Safeguarding Children and Adults (**14**)

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2020

- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence **(4)**

The Democratic Services Manager previously eluded to Members the E learning module that was to be rolled out on an all Wales basis. He confirmed that the draft version of the training module had been completed and had been piloted by the Chairperson of this committee. The Chairperson had undertaken the training and had suggested a number of changes which were due to be made before the final version of the training module be rolled out. He asked if Members of this committee were interested in undertaking this training module, he would link in with the Learning and Development Team.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) as well as Academi Wales had provided some useful guidelines on a range of topics, links to these were included at section 4.7.6 of the report.

A Member asked if a presentation on Mental Health could be included as a Pre Council Briefing.

The Democratic Services Manager added that if Members had any further topics to add, to email himself or the team at any time with suggestions.

RESOLVED: That the Democratic Services Committee:

- noted the contents of the report; and
- Provided additional topics for Pre council briefings, Member Development Sessions and E Learning Modules.

188. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 10:58