

Meeting of:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	20 NOVEMBER 2025
Report Title:	DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU (DBCC) DRAFT ANNUAL REMUNERATION REPORT 2026/27
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	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 Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) Draft Annual Report for the municipal year 2026/27.</p> <p>The DBCC have taken on the responsibility of setting the determinations on pay, expenses and benefits for members of principal councils, community and town councils, fire and rescue authorities and national park authorities from 1 April 2026.</p> <p>For its Draft Annual Report for 2026/27 the main elements of change affecting the 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; • Payments to Fire and Rescue Authorities – Determination 4; • Payments made to Co-opted members of principal councils, Fire and Rescue Authorities and lay members of Corporate Joint Committees - Determination 5

	<p>The report also refers to areas that are being reviewed by the Commission for future consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resettlement payments for councillors who are unsuccessful when seeking re-election; • The remuneration framework for senior roles in principal councils and corporate joint committees; • The methodology for annual uprating, including considering whether the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings remains the most appropriate measure; <p>The Committee is asked to note the report (Appendix A) and provide any comments to be submitted to the DBCC for consideration in their final report for February 2026.</p>
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) Draft Annual Remuneration Report 2026/27 to the Committee (**Appendix A**), for Members to provide views on its content as part of the consultation process.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following an independent ten-year review of the Independent Remuneration Panel Wales in 2021, and as a result of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024 being passed in July 2024, the Panel's functions transferred over to the DBCC on 1 April 2025.
- 2.2 As the Panel was required, and in accordance with the requirements of Section 147 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the DBCC is 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 sets out the proposed determinations on pay, expenses and benefits for members of principal councils, community and town councils, fire and rescue authorities and national park authorities from 1 April 2026.
- 2.3 The report highlights that substantive changes to the remuneration framework will only be made once in each electoral cycle, prior to each local government election, with those in between focusing on annual uprating. Consequently, this draft report for 2026-27 considers uprating amounts where appropriate but leaves the framework unchanged. The next report, for 2027-28, which is required to be published by the end of February 2027, will update the framework for those members who will be elected at the May 2027 local elections.
- 2.4 In order to meet the requirement of the Measure to publish its final report in Spring 2026 the DBCC has requested that any representations or comments about this report should be received no later than 18 November 2025. However, allowance has been provided to extend this deadline slightly to enable this Committee to meet to discuss the report and still submit any comments to be taken into consideration.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The draft DBCC 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 The Commission has reviewed the time commitment for Councillors in relation to their responsibility of community representation and participation in the scrutiny, regulatory and related functions of local governance. No changes are proposed for 2026-27 with the Commission agreeing the average work commitment of an elected councillor of a principal council as a full time equivalent of three working days a week.

3.2.2 The Commission has determined that for the financial year 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 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 the all-Wales 2024 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the latest figure available at the time of writing. The basic salary will be £21,044, an increase of 6.4% on 2025-26.

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. No changes to the banding have been proposed. The 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 2026-27 are summarised in Table 1 of **Appendix A**.

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

3.4.1 The salary of a chair of a JOSC will continue to be aligned to Band 3 and will be set at £10,522, with the salary of a vice-chair being set at 50% of the Chair and will be £5,261. There are no other changes in this area.

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	£2,968
Chair	£13,490
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£7,177
Committee Chair or other senior post	£7,177

3.6 Co-opted members of principal councils, Fire and Rescue Authorities and lay members of Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) - Determination 5

- 3.6.1 The Commission state that Principal council and FRAs must pay their co-opted members who have voting rights fees at the rates as outlined in Table 4 of the report. It also states that these payments equally apply to CJC lay members with voting rights from 31 July 2024.
- 3.6.2 The appropriate officer within the authority must set in advance whether a meeting is programmed for a full or half day. When the meeting is set for a full day, the fee will be paid on this basis even if the meeting finishes within 4 hours. The Commission has determined there should be local flexibility for the appropriate 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.
- 3.6.3 The Commission report states that all other determinations from previous years are unchanged and are incorporated into the report for completeness. These include:
- The limit (known as the cap) for the number of salaries payable to senior, civic and presiding members of Principal Councils
 - Restrictions on senior post remuneration
 - Restrictions on payment for posts outside the principal council
 - Support to elected members of principal councils
 - Specific or additional senior salaries and assistants to the executive
 - Local Government Pension Scheme
 - Family absence provisions for elected members of principal councils
 - Sickness absence payments for senior salary holders of principal councils
 - Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) travel and subsistence
 - Payments to Fire and Rescue Authorities – restrictions
 - Co-opted members of principal councils, Fire and Rescue Authorities and lay members of Corporate Joint Committees - Travel and subsistence, support, meeting preparation time, care and personal assistance.
 - Travel and subsistence expenses
 - Costs of Care and Personal Assistance Payments

3.7 Further to the above, the report also highlights further areas that are being reviewed for future consideration:

- Resettlement payments for councillors who are unsuccessful when seeking re-election;
- The remuneration framework for senior roles in principal councils and corporate joint committees;
- The methodology for annual uprating, including considering whether the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings remains the most appropriate measure.

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 and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no Climate Change or Nature 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 2026-27 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 Democratic Services in 2026-27 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 DBCC Draft Annual Remuneration Report 2026/27;
- c) Approve that any response of the Committee be submitted to the DBCC in order to inform its final report for February 2026.

Background documents

None