

Agenda



Pwyllgor Gwasanaethau Democrataidd

Dyddiad: Dydd Llun, 18 Mawrth 2024

Amser: 11.00 am

Lleoliad: Ystafell Bwyllgora 4 – Canolfan Dinesig

At: Cyngorwyr: R Mogford (Cadeirydd), E Stowell-Corten, M Spencer, B Perkins, P Hourahine, K Thomas, T Harvey and A Sterry

Eitem

Wardiau Dan Sylw

- 1 Ymddiheuriadau
- 2 Datganiadau o Ddiddordeb
- 3 Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Blaenorol (*Tudalennau 3 - 8*)
- 4 Cynllun Dirprwyo ar gyfer Asedau (*Tudalennau 9 - 14*)
- 5 Gweithredu'r Cyfansoddiad Enghreifftiol
Cyflwyniad
- 6 Adolygiad o Reol Sefydlog, Cwestiynau i'r Arweinydd (Trafodaeth)
- 7 Hyfforddiant i Aelodau (*Tudalennau 15 - 22*)
- 8 Adroddiad Tâl Annibynnol Terfynol (IRP) (Diweddariad Gwybodaeth yn Unig) (*Tudalennau 23 - 46*)
- 9 Rhaglen Gwaith i'r Dyfodol
- 10 Dyddiad y Cyfarfod nesaf
Dyddiad y cyfarfod nesaf yw dydd Iau 6 Mehefin 2024 am 10am.
- 11 Gwe-ddarllediad y Pwyllgor
[Democratic Services Committee Live Event](#)

Person cyswllt: Simon Richards, Swyddog Llywodraethu
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Dyddiad cyhoeddi: Dydd Llun, 11 Mawrth 2024

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn

Minutes



Democratic Services Committee

Date: 20 November 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors R Mogford (Chair), M Spencer, B Perkins, P Hourahine, K Thomas, T Harvey and A Sterry

In Attendance: Leanne Rowlands (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), Elizabeth Bryant (Head of Law and Standards), Simon Richards (Governance Officer), Emily Mayger (Governance Officer)

1 Apologies

Cllr Stowell-Corten

2 Declarations of Interest

None

3 Minutes of Meeting held on 20 July 2023

- The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that Voter ID Certificates are valid for 10 years.

The Minutes of the Last Meeting held on the 20th July 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4 Amendment to Constitution: Budget Setting Process

The Head of Law and Standards presented the report. Following the Council budget setting meeting for 2023/24, the requirement for further clarification of procedures under the Council's Constitution was identified. The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer reviewed the position and presented a proposed draft update to the Council's Constitution which clarified the position and better aligned with the 'Welsh model' version.

The following was discussed:

- The Committee enquired when this was raised and who raised the matter. The Head of Law of Standards informed Committee that during the 2023/24 budget setting meeting of the full Council in February 2023, a number of councillors requested changes to the Cabinet's final budget proposals. This situation highlighted that the constitution required amendment to clarify the procedures for alternative budget proposals to be submitted in sufficient time for the budget setting process to be completed within the statutory deadline of early March.
- The Committee enquired whether Member training would take place so that the process can be fully explained as there are newer members following the last

election. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that financial matters already formed part of the training curriculum for members. The Head of Law and Standards informed Committee that, should it be agreed, this change will form part of the Constitution; any alternative budget proposals would be required to be put forward to the Monitoring Officer and 151 Officer a minimum of 5 working days prior to full Council. They informed Committee that there is a briefing note for Members that explains the budget setting process.

- The Head of Law and Standards informed Committee that the Constitution already defines the budget in line with the Welsh model and the proposal being considered today is to streamline the budget setting process itself and provide more clarity.
- The Committee queried whether the training that was mentioned could be for all members. The Head of Law and Standards highlighted to the Committee the importance for all members to understand the budget. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed the Committee that two separate sessions took place last year, and consideration could be made to accommodate further refresher training.
- The Committee highlighted that this has helped to clarify the situation as it is important to understand what options there are and the time limit within which they can be enacted.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed the recommended changes to go to full Council for review without any further amendments.

5 Democratic Services Committee: Annual Report 2023

The Democratic Services and Electoral Services Manager provided an overview of the report. This report proposed the content of the Democratic Services Committee's annual report 2022/23. Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the Democratic Services Committee is required to keep under review the provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available to the Head of Democratic Services, to ensure that adequate resources are provided for the responsibilities of the post. The attached annual report provides an outline of the resources made available in support of these functions, so that the Committee can fulfil its responsibilities under the Measure.

The following was discussed:

- The Committee were pleased to see that Ward Meetings had resumed.
- The Committee enquired whether the effectiveness of the change of policy regarding supplementary questions can be reviewed. The Head of Law and Standards informed Committee that it cannot be looked at again for 3 months and the Committee noted that it does need time to embed but would like it to be raised again in future.
- The Committee noted their concerns that not all Members complete statutory training. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that a session on the Members Code of Conduct is the only mandatory training required to be completed. Part of the Democratic Services Committee role is making sure that Elected Members have the resources available to be able to do their jobs which includes a full curriculum of training throughout the term served.
- The Committee highlighted that most training takes place around 4pm so Members may find it difficult to attend due to work commitments. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed the Committee that a survey was distributed to Members around training and the most suitable time for it to take place and noted that multiple sessions can take place to ensure that Members can attend. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that attendance for training has improved since being held virtually and the biggest challenge is fitting in the training sessions over the year.

- The Committee enquired how the effectiveness of training is measured. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed the Committee that a Member survey was conducted. The Committee stated that the concept of e-Learning meant that it could be done at any time and a window of when the training needed to be completed by could be provided. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that e-Learning has been used in the past and they are currently reviewing in terms of the Code of Conduct training.
- The Committee enquired whether it is policy for training materials to be provided as they did not receive the materials for a previous training session when requested. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that how training is conducted needs to be reviewed including how to provide attendees with the training material. They assured the Committee that they will send out a survey again to Members to better understand their needs and offer different options.
- The Committee enquired whether there are any penalties for not completing mandatory training. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that there are no penalties, but it could be brought before the Standards Committee so would then be in the public domain. The Committee stated that attendance at meetings is recorded so could this be applied to training. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that attendance is monitored but it is not shared publicly at present. The Head of Law and Standards informed Committee that it is shared at Standards Committee and this year attendance at Code of Conduct training was 100%. They informed Committee that having attendance for training made publicly available could be added to the Forward Work Programme for consideration.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to present the Annual Report to the Council in order to meet the requirements of the Local Government Measure.

6 **Head of Democratic Services Annual Report 2023**

The Democratic Services and Electoral Services manager presented the report. Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the Democratic Services Committee is required to keep under review the provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available to the Head of Democratic Services, to ensure that adequate resources are provided for the responsibilities of the post.

The following was discussed:

- The Committee enquired about the challenges and benefits of working from home. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that the team returned to the office in 2022 and are able to facilitate hybrid meetings. All members of the team are in at least twice per week which is useful for new members of staff and is a positive change for Members as the office is occupied every day. They informed Committee that the biggest challenge is the pace of change in legislation for both Democratic Services and Electoral Registration.

Resolved:

- The Committee agreed to consider and comment upon the Annual Report.
- The Committee endorsed the view of the Head of Law and Standards and Democratic and Electoral Services Manager that the provision of staff, accommodation and other resources by the Council is adequate to discharge the

statutory requirements in relation to decision making, democratic administration and scrutiny; and

- The Committee agreed to ask the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager to keep under review the provision of staff, accommodation and other resources made available to members to ensure that statutory requirements and any changing needs of elected members are met, and to present a report to this Committee should any review be required.

7 Draft Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) Report and Consultation

The Democratic Services and Electoral Services Manager presented the report.

The following was discussed:

- The Committee enquired how the different salary groups are determined. The Head of Law and Standards informed Committee that it is based on population size. The Committee stated that some areas have lower average earnings but that may not be reflected in the remuneration settlement so are the panel mindful of this. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed the Committee that the panel only considers the average pay in Wales.
- The Committee queried what the next steps are in respect of the report. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed the Committee that consultation is due to end on the 8th December 2023 and asked whether the Committee would prefer to answer as a Committee or individually. The Committee stated that it is more complicated now and more information is needed to answer the questions, previously was a rigid formula. The Head of Law and Standards informed Committee that the reason for the change was because the level of remuneration was lagging behind inflation and the Panel felt the link to average earnings was more appropriate. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager highlighted to the Committee that the methodology used has been included within the report.
- The Committee highlighted the importance of encouraging people to take up democratic opportunities. The Head of Law and Standards stated that this is why it has now been linked to average earnings. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed the Committee that the final report will come back to the Committee in February 2024 but that will be for information only and no changes can be made at that point.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to consider and comment upon the report on an individual basis using the online link.

8 Forward Work Programme

The Committee recommended that the implementation timeline for the Model Constitution be brought back to the next meeting.

The Final Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel would also be brought the Committee as an Information Only update.

The Committee also wished to receive an update on training for members and to consider the impact of the recommendations made to Council concerning Supplementary Questions to the Leader

9 **Date of next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting is Monday 18th March 2024 at 11am.

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Report

Democratic Services Committee

Part 1

Date: 18th March 2024

Subject Amendment to Constitution - Scheme of Delegation for Assets

Purpose To agree an updated and revised Officer Scheme of Delegation for decisions relating to Assets and to recommend to Council that it be adopted within the Constitution.

Author Head of People, Policy & Transformation

Ward N/A

Summary To review the officer Scheme of Delegation for Assets as set out in the Council's constitution updating the schedule for delegated property transactions to ensure that the Council's governance for asset transactions supports effective decision making and better aligns with other delegated decisions contained within the constitution.

Proposal That the committee reviews and proposes the recommendations in this report for a decision by full Council in April 2024

Action by Head of People, Policy and Transformation – prepare report, as appropriate, to full Council taking account of any comments from this committee.

Timetable Full Council – April 2024

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Strategic Director – Corporate and Transformation
- Head of People, Policy & Transformation
- Head of Asset Management and Valuation, Newport Norse
- Head of Legal / Monitoring Officer
- Cabinet Member – Infrastructure and Assets
- Head of Housing and Communities

Signed

Background

In accordance with the Council's approved scheme of delegation, set out in Part 3, Appendix 10.9 of the Council's Constitution, a number of statutory functions are delegated to Heads of Service who are authorised to discharge these duties on behalf of the Council. The values of certain asset transactions have been in place for some time, are no longer aligned with current assets values, and are out of step with other delegated decisions contained within the constitution.

The developing transformation programme has a number of strategic projects which will place increasing demands on the Councils asset property portfolio and asset transactions and we are currently redeveloping the Strategic Asset Management Plan. To ensure there is effective and efficient decision making when considering assets, there is a need to ensure that decisions are made and recorded at the correct level, by amending the current scheme of delegation for minor property transactions, and diverting the focus, resource and time on major property transactions.

An analysis of a range of other local authorities in Wales has been undertaken and concludes we are currently out of step with other Councils where the focus is on major property transactions, setting financial limits ranging from £100,000 to £1,000,000 as examples. These ranges are more reflective of property values, and more closely aligned to other delegations such as those governed by the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSO).

Changing the focus as recommended would enable property decisions to be streamlined, with the full democratic process being used more appropriately for major decisions. All assets decisions will align with the Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan.

All decisions, whether Cabinet Member or Head of Service are subject to appropriate reports, recording and relevant legal and financial advice and controls. Officer decisions are also subject to Strategic Asset Management Group review, and Capital Assurance requirements, and the principles set out in the Strategic Asset Management Plan (being redrafted Quarter 4 2023/24) and its supporting policies. The Council's Risk Management Policy also outlines the controls required to protect the Council's finances and assets, and the requirement to deliver best value.

Decisions relating to assets are also subject to internal officer controls, financial and capital monitoring requirements, where appropriate project management oversight, and legal /property services advice as well as the wider constitution and legislative requirements.

Proposal

The current scheme of delegation requires Cabinet and Ward Members to be consulted on a wide range of minor transactions, and formal Cabinet Member reports for a variety of decisions, which can create operational challenges as well as unnecessary delays. The values outlined in the scheme have diminished over time, applying to increasingly minor transactions.

Formal Cabinet Member reports and decisions are currently required for any disposals or acquisitions exceeding 100 square metres, and granting or acquiring interests exceeding £1,000 per annum as well as any lease over 7 years.

Due to the increased property and asset transactions that will arise from key strategic transformation projects, including Asset Rationalisation; changes in Housing requirements and in Childrens Services such as the Eliminate agenda; it is proposed that the scheme of delegation is amended.

Proposed changes to delegated powers

Current officer delegation	Proposed delegation
i. To dispose of and acquire freehold interests or grant and acquire leasehold interests on parcels of land not exceeding 100 square metres in extent	To acquire, purchase and dispose of freehold interests in land and property where the consideration for the transaction does not exceed £100,000. Where the transaction relates to the portfolio of any Cabinet Member(s), the decision shall be taken in consultation with that (those) Cabinet Member(s).
ii. To grant/acquire interests in property with an annual value not exceeding £1,000	To enter into, amend or surrender leases of land and property with an aggregate annual sum payable by the tenant (including rent, insurance rent, service charge/s and all other sums payable pursuant to the lease) not exceeding £100,000. To grant and obtain any consents sought or required in relation to any lease to which the Council is a party.
iii. To grant/acquire easements for services	To enter into, grant, amend or surrender licences, permissions, wayleaves, easements and other legal interests in land or property.
iv. To grant licenses to graze animals and/or mow grass for haymaking	Delete clause (included above).
v. To grant/acquire licenses to use property	Delete clause.
vi. To grant/acquire leases for a period of less than 7 years	Delete clause.
vii. To grant the release or discharge of covenants relating to Council land and property.	No change proposed.
The relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Ward Member(s) shall be consulted before any decisions are taken in relation to minor property transactions that relate to their portfolios or wards	In addition to any other requirement above to consult with Cabinet Members, the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Ward Member(s) shall be consulted where there is a direct or <u>wider impact</u> on the community or residents within a ward arising from any proposed transaction.

Ward members will continue to be consulted where there is a wider impact or direct interest on the community or residents within a ward.

Decisions regarding dwellings provided to meet the council's statutory homelessness duties are dealt with through the Head of Housing and Communities delegated powers, following the relevant assessment.

All decisions, whether Cabinet Member or Head of Service are subject to appropriate reports, recording and relevant legal and financial advice and controls. Officer decisions are also subject to Strategic Asset Management Group review, financial and budgetary controls, Capital Assurance requirements, and the principles set out in the Strategic Asset Management Plan (being redrafted Quarter 4 2023/24).

Heads of Service to make arrangements for relevant record keeping and sign off within the management structure and property service arrangements based on the values established in contract standing orders and financial regulations.

The Cabinet Member will continue to receive regular reports on progress relating to property matters through portfolio briefings.

Therefore, the **amended scheme of delegation** would be:

Decisions delegated:

- To **acquire, purchase and dispose** of freehold interests in land and property where the consideration for the transaction does not exceed £100,000. Where the transaction relates to the portfolio of any Cabinet Member(s), the decision shall be taken in consultation with that (those) Cabinet Member(s).
- To enter into, amend or surrender **leases** of land and property with an aggregate annual sum payable by the tenant (including rent, insurance rent, service charge/s and all other sums payable pursuant to the lease) not exceeding £100,000.

To grant and obtain any consents sought or required in relation to any lease to which the Council is a party.

- To enter into, grant, amend or surrender licences, permissions, wayleaves, easements and other **legal interests** in land or property.
- To grant the release or/ discharge of **covenants** relating to Council land and property

In addition to any other requirement above to consult with Cabinet Members, the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Ward Member(s) shall be consulted where there is a direct or wider impact on the community or residents within a ward arising from any proposed transaction.

All decisions must be within agreed council policies, Strategic Asset Management policies and within budgets allocation for the service areas affected.

Following the relevant assessment, dwellings provided to meet the council's statutory homelessness duties are dealt with by the Head of Housing and Communities.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

There are no financial impacts arising from the proposal which is in line with other matters relating to levels of delegation as set out in contract standing orders.

Risks

It is important to identify and manage any project or scheme's exposure to risk and have in place controls to deal with those risks.

Risk Title / Description	Risk Impact score of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Risk Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Risk Mitigation Action(s) What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect?	Risk Owner Officer(s) responsible for dealing with the risk?
That decisions are not effectively scrutinised.	M	L	As set out in the report, proposal to scrutinise at an appropriate level, subject to existing governance arrangements.	Head of People Policy and Transformation.

That decisions are not taken in a timely manner to support Council priorities.	M	M	Currently an increasing number of decisions are taken at Cabinet Member level resulting in delays. This report proposes a more effective way of working. Redevelopment of the Strategic Asset Management plan and policies. Actions as outlined in this report, to clarify roles and processes.	Head of People, Policy and Transformation. Head of Law and Standards.
That opportunities are not maximised, creating, or sustaining budget pressures, for example homelessness	L	M	Actions outlined in this report to ensure that decisions regarding dwellings are taken in a timely manner following appropriate assessment.	Head of Housing and Communities.

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The effective management of property transactions underpins all of the Council's policies and priorities and the recommended changes in this report ensure that there is effective governance at the appropriate level of transaction.

Options Available and considered

- (i) Agree the recommended changes to go to full Council for review and approval.
- (ii) Not agree the changes and keep the current working practices/policy and Constitution in place.
- (iii) Propose alternative amendments to the scheme of delegation for consideration by full Council.

Preferred Option and Why

Option 1(i) - The amendments recommended are in line with the other parts of the scheme of delegation.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

Whilst individual property decisions will continue to have financial consequence, this report is specifically about improving the responsiveness and timeliness of operational decision making.

There will still be a need to ensure that any acquisitions, on a case by case basis, are affordable and the necessary authority sought and agreed to add such commitments to the capital programme. Similarly, any disposal over £10,000 continues to be regarded as a capital receipt, to be used/held corporately to support capital expenditure.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

In common with other local authorities, the Council has a scheme of delegation which allows certain decisions to be taken by cabinet members or officers. As set out in the report, the Council's current Scheme of Delegation allows Heads of Service to make decisions regarding minor property transactions, however, this is not consistent with the norm across other authorities, many of which delegate decisions which are of a considerably higher value than is currently the case at this Council. Allowing senior officers to take decisions with regard to property acquisition and disposal within defined parameters and in accordance with Council policy will enable more efficient decision-making and enable members to focus on key, higher value transactions. It is noted, however, that the amended scheme of delegation includes a requirement for consultation with Cabinet members and ward members in certain circumstances which will ensure that members are made aware of transactions which may affect their portfolio or ward.

As the report sets out, officer decisions to acquire, dispose of or otherwise deal with interests in land must be recorded and that record must set out the details of the property and the transaction, the name of the officer taking the decision and the delegated authority under which the decision was taken. It is proposed that a centralised register for such decisions will be set up.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

This report seeks the agreement of the Democratic Services Committee on the recommended changes and amendments to the Officer Scheme of Delegation for Assets for full review and approval by Council.

The principles of open and transparent governance are consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27 supporting Objective 4 (An inclusive, fair and sustainable council – Newport City Council is an inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core). The principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and its five ways of working were supported when forming the proposal through working in collaboration and involving officers both across the Council and partners.

There are no direct HR implications arising from the proposed change.

Scrutiny Committees

None.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

An FEIA is not required at this stage, however, this proposal is considerate of the 5 ways of working within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

- Long Term – Ensures that property decisions will be streamlined, with the full democratic process used more appropriately for major decisions over the long term, while ensuring short-term needs are not adversely impacted.
- Prevention – Ensures that the focus for Cabinet and ward members will be on decisions where there is a wider impact or direct interest on the communities they serve. This will ensure there is effective and efficient decision making when considering assets preventing potential delay issues.
- Integration – Supports the Council's Well-being Objectives, the seven Well-being Goals, and will re-align our focus in comparison with other local authorities in Wales.
- Collaboration & Involvement – In forming the proposal officers across the Council have worked in collaboration and involved other partners (e.g. Newport Norse) in its development.

Consultation

Discussion with officers across the Council, Newport Norse and also Cabinet Member for Assets has formed the proposal.

Background Papers

Constitution – scheme of delegation [Officer Scheme of Delegation \(p26\)](#)

Schemes of delegations for other Councils

Dated: 4th March 2024

Report



Democratic Services Committee

Information only

Date: 18th March 2024

Subject **Update on Member Training**

Purpose To inform the committee concerning the curriculum of training provided to Members, and levels of attendance at training since May 2022.
To note the development of the schedule of training for 2023/24.

Author Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

Ward City wide

Summary Under the Council's Constitution, the Democratic Services Committee is required to ensure that members have access to a reasonable level of training and development.

The draft Induction Curriculum set by the WLGA to support Members following the May 2022 local elections was considered by the Committee in 2021: a final draft for members at Newport City Council was shared in February 2022.

Initial training and support was designed to support Councillors to meet the challenges of the role, particularly for those beginning their first term as an elected member. Following completion of the essential training, sessions were provided on legislation, services and duties, to increase knowledge and support members to fulfil their duties effectively.

Whilst there are a number of sessions planned for the final quarter of 2023/24, Committee Members are also asked to note training and development planned for elected members in 2024/25.

Proposal **To note the report summarising training delivered in 2023/24 and consider the planned approach to Member training for 2024/25.**

Action by Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

Timetable Training is ongoing throughout the 5-year term to ensure that members are provided with support to fulfil their duties.

Background

Legislative requirements for members are set out in the Local Government (Wales) measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. These include legislative requirements for corporate governance and member support and development.

The initial curriculum considered the topics recommended by the WLGA outlined a suggested curriculum for the induction of members in Wales, and set this framework as a guide for what should be considered when developing local programmes.

This was considered as part of a draft curriculum for Newport, and plans were shared outlining the Members Induction Training for the review and comment of the Democratic Services Committee before a final version was produced.

The key principles that underpin the schedule of training re;

- **Less is more** – Although there is a lot of information to convey, learning activities should focus on the minimum amount of information at each stage, so that members do not become overloaded.
- **Member centred** – All development activities should be designed with the member role in mind and concentrate on what members really need to know at that time. At induction level this includes the role of the member, what is important to the community and what information is required to take early decisions. Local and national policy and strategy can be introduced later, as and when necessary.
- **Engaging and interactive** – Any development sessions for members should be interactive, with plenty of opportunities for discussions and scenarios.
- **As and when** – Wherever possible members should be provided with learning opportunities at their convenience, at a time when it is needed and relevant and in a medium that is appropriate for the topic and activity.
- **Expertise** – Whenever possible, learning activities should be provided by service providers with relevant knowledge and expertise.

The agreed framework is flexible, allowing for changes as and when required to meet changing requirements.

The first year of training focussed on core training and induction and preparing Members for their relevant committees, so that members were supported to commence their roles and duties.

There were sessions on key legislation and policy supporting their decision making, such as the Equalities Act, Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Safeguarding. In order to further enhance the awareness and understanding of Members on equality and diversity issues, further in-depth sessions were offered that focussed on other equality topics. These included sessions on fairness, violence against women and anti-racism. The sessions aimed to provide Members with practical guidance on how to promote equality and inclusion in their roles, and to challenge stereotypes and discrimination. The feedback from the sessions was very positive, and Members expressed interest in attending more sessions on similar topics in the future.

One of the key aspects of a councillor's role is to deal with the issues and concerns of their constituents. To help councillors manage their casework effectively, training on the functions and operations of the Council, was offered, supported by Heads of Service. The Heads of Service introduced their services and key policies in areas such as Environment, Public Protection, and Housing.

In preparation for the budget setting process, a session on Finance and Treasury Management was arranged for December.

Throughout the year, Councillors were offered the opportunity to complete a qualification on carbon literacy facilitated by an external provider, which aimed to equip councillors with the knowledge and skills to tackle climate change and reduce their carbon footprint. The qualification consisted of two half-day sessions and a short assessment, and covered topics such as the science of climate change, the impact of carbon emissions, and the actions that can be taken at individual and organisational levels.

Data protection and information management are essential skills for councillors, who handle personal and sensitive data on a regular basis. To ensure that councillors are aware of their obligations and responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), three opportunities to attend training were arranged in the second year of term. The training covered the principles and rights of data protection, the lawful bases for processing data, the role of the Information Commissioner's Office, and the best practices for managing and storing data securely. The training also included case studies and scenarios relevant to councillors' casework and communications. Councillors who attended appreciated the clarity and relevance of the information provided.

Councillors received training on the introduction of the 20mph speed limit in residential and urban areas, ahead of the new legislation coming into effect in Wales in September 2023. The training was delivered by the Council's Environment and Sustainability team, who provided updates on the progress and plans for the rollout of the 20mph zones across the city to support councillors in engaging with their communities on this topic.

Another important topic that councillors received training on was the Llais arrangement between health and social services, which is a partnership agreement between the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and the five local authorities in Gwent. The training covered the vision and principles of the Llais arrangement.

Another key area of training for councillors was on scrutiny, including the purpose, principles, and methods of effective scrutiny, as well as the roles and responsibilities of chairs, councillors and officers involved in scrutiny committees. The training also included practical tips and examples of how to ask constructive and probing questions, how to analyse complex information, and how to make evidence-based recommendations. The interactive and engaging sessions were facilitated by the WLGA and gave councillors the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges with scrutiny.

One of the most relevant and timely training sessions for councillors was regarding education, specifically on attendance, inclusion, poverty and wellbeing topics. The session was delivered by the Council's Education service, who explained the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the learning and wellbeing of pupils in Newport, as well as the strategies and interventions that have been implemented to support them. The session also covered the statutory duties and responsibilities of the Council and schools regarding attendance and inclusion, and the challenges and opportunities of addressing poverty and inequality in education. Councillors had the chance to ask questions and discuss the issues with the Education officers and learn more about the best practices and innovations in this sector.

Another topic that councillors received more detailed training on was housing, specifically on the housing register, bidding and allocation procedures. The session was delivered by the Council's Housing service, who explained the criteria and process for applying for social housing in Newport, as well as the challenges and opportunities in meeting the demand and providing quality homes for residents. Councillors had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the issues with the Housing officers and learn more about the policies and practices in this sector.

Towards the end of 2023, elected members were provided with an update on South Wales Fire and Rescue Budgets and Service Priorities for 2024/25, and the opportunity to attend a refresher session on Treasury, Capital, Revenue and Budget Monitoring ahead of the budget setting process.

A session on the strategic economic partnerships the Council has with Cardiff Capital Region and the Western Gateway highlighted the priorities for both partnerships and forthcoming changes to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal as the arrangement transitioned to the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

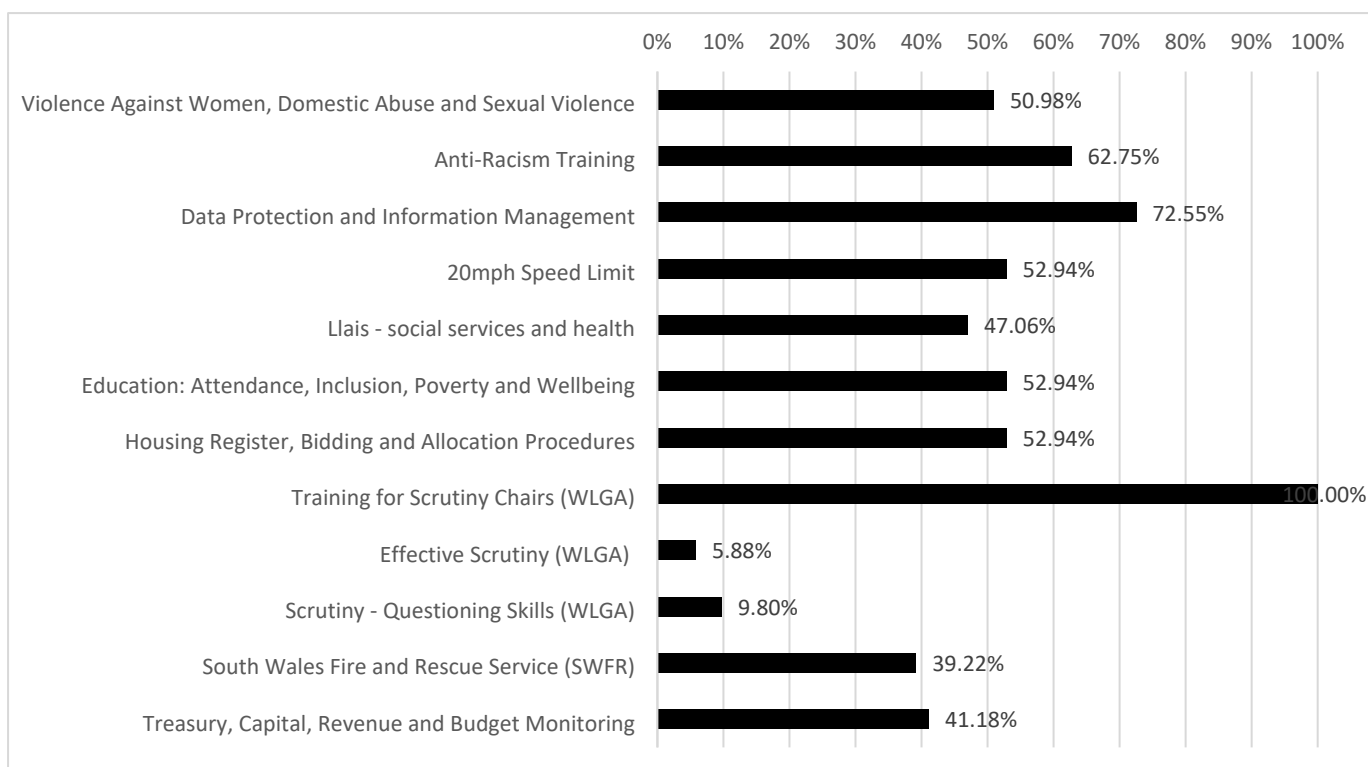
The Council arranged a training session on personal safety matters delivered jointly by the Council's Civil Contingencies team and the police outlining the practical steps and precautions that councillors can take to protect themselves and others from harm. The session covered topics such as lone working, online safety, risk assessments, and incident reporting. Councillors had the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the resources and support available to them.

Summary of Training by Quarter

	2022/23			
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Quarter 1	Code of Conduct Training (3 x sessions throughout the year)	Wellbeing of Future Generations Act	Taking Fairness Seriously - with Newport Fairness Commission	Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
	Introduction to the Role	Resident Enquiries and Requests - Environment, Public Protection and City Services	Carbon Literacy (3 x cohorts)	Anti-Racism Training
	General Meeting Participation	Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting	Supporting Councillors with Abuse and Intimidation – LGA Webinar	
	Licensing Training	Equality and Diversity. Welsh Language Duties	Housing Services	
	Scrutiny Training		Finance and Treasury Management	

			Councillor Personal Safety – LGA Webinar	
	2023/24			
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
	Data Protection and Information Management (3 x sessions throughout the year)	Llais - social services and health	Effective Scrutiny (WLGA) (Scrutiny Members)	Partnerships - CCR and Western Gateway, SEW CJC
	20mph Speed Limit	Education: Attendance, Inclusion, Poverty and Wellbeing	Scrutiny - Questioning Skills (WLGA) (Scrutiny Members)	Mi Hub and Corporate Risk Register (Governance and Audit Committee Members)
		Housing Register, Bidding and Allocation Procedures	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFR)	
		Training for Scrutiny Chairs (WLGA) (Scrutiny Chairs)	Treasury, Capital, Revenue and Budget Monitoring	
			Personal Safety	

Attendance at Training – 2023



Attendance at each session provided by the Council is recorded, and records of attendance are uploaded to central personal development records held for each Member.

Attendance at the Scrutiny Chairs training was attended by all four chairs. However, there were low attendance levels at the wider scrutiny sessions for all committee members.

The attendance over the three sessions concerning information management was high at 72.55%.

Training planned for 2023/24

There are a number of sessions included in the original curriculum for the first year of training and support that are planned for delivery in the new year. Topics remaining are;

- Elections Act 2022 – Changes to voting
- Admissions and Transport (Education)
- Attainment, Curriculum for Wales and Estyn (Education)
- Code of Conduct (refresher)
- Planning
- Welsh Language Awareness
- Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty
- Complaints Handling
- Performance Management

Member Survey

The Democratic Services Committee recommended that a survey was developed to engage all members and request feedback from as wide a group as possible.

The survey results are presented in Appendix A. There was a low response rate, with 9 members (17%) completing the survey.

The survey sought feedback on engagement with previous training sessions and how useful members felt they were in supporting them to carry out their duties.

The survey also sought feedback on the method of delivery for the training and suggestions for topics for future seminars.

The feedback collated from the survey will be incorporated into the programme of training for 2024/25. Priorities include;

- Refresher training on sessions that provide guidance on the key roles, responsibilities and duties of members, for example;
 - Code of Conduct
 - Planning
 - Governance and decision-making
- Services and support provided to residents
- Making provision to include e-learning options for training
- Trialling different times and methods of delivery to support higher levels of engagement

Appendices

Appendix A



Survey Results
Training for elected m

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn



Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Annual Report

February 2024

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Foreword

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, setting the decisions and determinations on pay, expenses, and benefits for elected members of Principal Councils, Community and Town Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2024.

This has been a year of change for the Panel, with one longstanding member leaving us and the appointment of two new members. I would like to thank Helen Wilkinson for her contribution over the years to the Panel and wish her well for the future.

Earlier last year we were able to appoint two new members to bring our current complement up to five. I welcome Dianne Bevan and Kate Watkins to the Panel and thank Saz Willey, Vice Chair, and Bev Smith for their continued contribution throughout the year. You can find out more about our Panel members on our [website](#).

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 8 (The Measure), which gives the statutory authority for the Panel's work, allows the appointment of a minimum of 3 and up to 7 members.



Frances Duffy
Chair

Detailed information about the members, our Strategic Plan, our deliberations and supporting research and evidence can be found on the [Panel's website](#).

Executive Summary

Last year we published our first Strategic Plan. This covers the period from 2023 until 2025 and sets the framework for our deliberations and wider context for our decisions. The key elements are set out below under Roles and Responsibilities of the Panel.

With a strengthened Panel, we were able to focus on building our research and evidence plan to support our discussions on our remuneration framework. Our evidence plan is available on our [website](#) in line with our aim to be open and transparent in all our decision making.

Our goal continues to be to ensure that levels of remuneration are fair and reasonable. We agreed to continue to align levels of remuneration for elected members of Principal Councils, 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.

The Measure states that “the Panel must take into account what it considers will be the likely financial impact on relevant authorities” of its decisions. The Panel considered evidence on public sector finances and the impact on Principal Authorities’ budgets. Whilst the total cost of remuneration for elected members is relatively low in terms of overall budgets, the Panel were mindful of the heightened economic and fiscal strain on Principal Councils.

In reaching our decision to continue the link between the remuneration of elected members of Principal Councils, National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities and the average earnings of their constituents (ASHE), 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. This was widely supported in both our engagement meetings and the consultation feedback.

In line with our commitment to simplifying reporting and compliance, the Panel this year looked at the reporting requirements for Community and Town Councils. Currently each Community and Town Council must report annually to the Panel, and publish on its website, the details, and names of each councillor in receipt of any expenses. In previous years we agreed that in respect of costs of care and personal assistance allowances, it would be inappropriate to name individual councillors, and that it would be sufficient to simply list the total amounts paid and the total number of recipients.

The Panel feels that it would be appropriate to extend this to the mandatory payment for working from home, the flat rate consumables allowance and travel and subsistence claims. 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. This was positively received during our consultation and engagement.

We will provide a new template report for use from September 2024 and will continue to monitor the level of payments made.

We continue to receive queries 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 are updating our guidance on this issue which should help give clarity to local clerks.

We are also mindful of a continuing, albeit reducing, number of Community and Town 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 or receive a contribution to help defray these costs. We reiterate that the basic payments are mandatory and should be made available to all councillors who are entitled to receive them. Any decision to forego these payments must be a personal and individual choice.

The final area that the Panel considered, was the method of calculating payments made to co opted members of Principal Councils, National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Following feedback on last year's Annual Report and queries raised through the year by some co opted members and by several Heads of Democratic Services, the Panel took evidence from the correspondents on the impact of both the increase in numbers of co opted members and the changing nature of working patterns. This showed that the current arrangement of either a half day rate for anything up to 4 hours and a full day rate for anything over, was insufficiently flexible to reflect the patterns of working now more normally in place, mainly due to more online or hybrid working.

In our draft Report, the Panel proposed that the relevant local officer should have the flexibility to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate and when to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings. There was quite a wide range of views on this during our engagement meetings, but the overall feedback is that this change would be supported. **Therefore, the Panel agreed that this flexibility should be given and that decisions on whether an hourly or daily rate might be appropriate are to be made locally.**

Finally, the Panel is aware of feedback that our website can be difficult to navigate and that finding the right Determination to deal with a specific issue is not always straightforward, especially for newly elected members or officials. We have therefore updated the links on our website and created a new link to a page setting out all the current Determinations that should be applied. It will be updated every year when the Final Annual Report is issued, and we hope this will be easier to navigate than having to refer to every year's Report.

This is supported in our newly updated [Guidance](#) (previously called the Regulations).

Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Our Role:

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
- Joint Overview Scrutiny Committees
- Corporate Joint Committees.

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

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

The Panel:

Frances Duffy (Chair)
Saz Willey (Vice Chair)
Dianne Bevan (Member)
Bev Smith (Member)
Kate Watkins (Member)

Further information on Panel members can be found on the [Panel's website](#).

Methodology

Deliberations and Determinations for 2024 to 2025

As set out in our strategic objectives the Panel has committed to making evidence based decisions.

This year we prepared an evidence and research paper to pull together the various sources of information that the Panel considered in making its 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 2024 to 2025 financial year. This included:

- Data on average UK and Wales weekly earnings, including ASHE (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings)
- Annual Consumer Price Index Housing (CPIH) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rates Benchmarks, including councillor remuneration in Scotland
- Research on councillor workload, views and attitudes to remuneration and diversity (Welsh Government)
- Findings of Senedd Cymru Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee (2019)
- Data collected on the take up of remuneration and benefits packages by councillors
- Data on local authority finances

The full set of evidence and research considered, is available on our [website](#).

In line with our updated Communications and Engagement Strategy, the Panel held a number of discussions with key stakeholders which provided 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.

The Panel engaged directly with key stakeholder representative groups including the Welsh Local Government Association, Principal Council Leaders Group, Heads of Democratic Services committee, One Voice Wales, Society for Local Council Clerks and North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils. The Panel also held an online seminar in November for Community and Town councillors and local Clerks. This was well attended, and we received good feedback on our work. In particular, the Panel noted the question of remuneration for Youth Representatives and agreed to review this in the future.

This year the Panel focused on three main issues – affordability, payments made to co opted members and reporting requirements for Community and Town Councils. The Panel would like to thank all those that contributed to our deliberations either directly or through feedback and Responses to the consultation on our Draft Report.

Consultation: Summary of responses

The Panel produced and issued a draft report on Friday 13 October 2023 for an eight week consultation, which closed on Friday 8th December 2023. The consultation period was extended to Wednesday 20 December 2023, to allow more time for all respondents to submit feedback.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer six questions using an online survey or by return email. A total of 44 responses were received online, whilst 12 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox. The Panel engaged in a number of stakeholder meetings during the consultation period to gather important feedback. The Panel would like to thank everyone who contributed to the consultation. A summary of responses is included in the report below.

The website link and Pdf version of the draft report was sent to:

- One Voice Wales
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Society for Local Council Clerks
- Principal Councils
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- National Parks Authorities and
- Community and Town Councils

Determination 1: Basic salary for elected members of principal councils

Determination 2: Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils

Determination 3: Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Determination 4: Payments to national parks authorities and fire and rescue authorities

Determination 7: Compensation for financial loss

No comments/responses were received directly, in respect of the above Determinations. However, during our engagement sessions, the Panel heard concerns about lack of payments to Youth Representatives on Community and Town Councils and disappointment that the Panel had not raised the remuneration levels for co opted members on National Parks Authorities. These are issues that the Panel may consider in future Reports.

Determination 5: Payments made to co opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

There were only a small number of responses regarding this proposal; One response agreed with the proposal in respect of changing working practices and supporting the introduction of an hourly rate and another recommended that guidance issued in respect of the hourly payment is clear as to when it should be applied.

Another strongly supported the principle of authorities being able to be flexible to suit their own requirements.

Determination 6: Community and Town Councils Mandatory payments

Payment for extra costs of working from home and Set payment for consumables

Two Community Councils requested that the proposal to make the £156 payment to Councillors mandatory be changed to allow Councillors to opt out of the payment as in previous years.

Two Community councils fully supports inclusivity and appreciates that the payment may assist elected members but feels very strongly that it should not be mandatory.

The Panel reaffirms individuals are able to opt out of receiving mandatory payments. Any opt outs should be declared in writing.

Determination 8: Reporting requirements

It was agreed that the reporting of the mandatory payment for working from home, the flat rate consumables allowance and travel and subsistence claims as global sums, rather than individual listings, gives the right balance between public accountability and individual privacy.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer six questions via an online survey or by return email. A total of 44 responses were received online, whilst 12 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox. The Panel attended stakeholder engagement meetings during the consultation process to gather and receive feedback.

Summary of responses to online questionnaire

Question 1

Uplift of remuneration using the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

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. We therefore propose to uplift their remuneration based on the average earnings of their constituents.

Do you think that the Panel has struck the right balance between affordability and adequate remuneration for representatives? If not, do you have other suggestions?

Responses

55% of those who answered this question agreed that the Panel have struck the right balance between affordability and adequate remuneration for representatives. 21% did not agree whilst 19% had no opinion on this question.

Some respondents highlighted that it was important to attract a diverse range of candidates to stand for election and that more needed to be done to increase diversity.

Another proposed that the report showed the recommended increase as a percentage uplift, similar to pay awards, so that the public understood in terms of transparency.

Question 2

Local flexibility for payments to co opted individuals

The Panel has received evidence that it would be more cost effective and fairer to provide for flexibility in paying those who are co opted to serve on committees of principle councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The Panel has therefore proposed there should be flexibility for the relevant local officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a few short meetings.

Do you agree with this proposal? If not, do you have any suggested alternatives?

Responses

64% of those who answered this question agreed. 11% did not agree whilst 19% had no opinion. An hourly rate was thought to be more cost effective and would provide flexibility to attend shorter meetings with officers when needed. The principle of authorities being able to be flexible to suit their own requirements was strongly supported by one individual.

Question 3

Encouraging sustainable travel

The Panel would like to ensure that we support environmental sustainability in our decisions about remuneration. We are aware that there are schemes in many bodies in Wales which encourage sustainable travel and we have advised that, if possible, elected members should be encouraged to participate in these schemes.

Do you have any examples of good practice or other ideas of ways in which we might use our powers to encourage more sustainable travel among members?

Responses

Of those who responded to this question, 34% provided examples of good practice to encourage more sustainable travel. Holding online meetings would be useful in achieving environmental sustainability, however it was also proposed to hold meetings in person as well as online.

Other suggestions included the provision of public service timetables in council buildings can help in terms of encouraging alternatives to private car use and encouraging vehicle sharing between members who are attending the same meeting. An example provided was an authority having an area map that showed where each NPA member was located, to encourage car sharing.

Question 4

Awareness of the entitlements of representatives

The Panel has seen evidence of a lack of awareness amongst local elected members of the payments to which they are entitled. We would like to find out if this is a significant issue, and if so, we will aim to raise awareness further, targeted at areas where this may be a problem.

What steps does your council or authority take to make its members and co optees aware of their entitlements?

Responses

The comments stated that members are informed of their entitlements by email from the Clerk on appointment, included in a briefing pack that newly elected members receive and discussed at the time of budget preparation and at the annual general meeting.

However, we also received examples of there being a culture of members not claiming entitlements and some members being pressured into completing an opt out form. An individual may decline to receive part, or all, of the payments if they so wish. This must be done in writing and is an individual matter. A community or town council member wishing to decline payments must themselves write to their proper officer to do so. Each community and town council principal authority must ensure that it does not create a climate which prevents persons accessing any monies to which they are entitled that may support them to participate in local democracy.

Question 5

Publication of consolidated sums

Community and Town Councils are required to submit an annual statement of payments to the Panel by 30 September each year, and also publish this on their website. The Panel have provided a template return for clerks to use. 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.

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, 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.

*Do you agree that these figures may be published as a global total rather than individually?
What are the reasons for your view?*

Responses

There was overwhelming agreement to the proposal of the statement of payments being published as a global sum. 11% did not agree and 2% had no opinion on the question. Respondents agreed that publishing a global sum would be administratively easier and provides confidentiality of members. It also reducing any embarrassment should a member wish to claim. However, it was highlighted that Councillors should be seen to have received the payments, so that residents can see where the money has been spent.

Question 6

In future reports, we are thinking of allowing consolidation of the travel and subsistence expenses of members of principal councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities and would be interested in your views.

*Do you agree that these figures may be published as a global total rather than individually?
What are the reasons for your view?*

Responses

Just under half of the respondents agreed that the payments for travel and subsistence should be published as a global sum. 13% did not agree and 28% had no opinion on the question. This proposal would help to avoid individual identification and or potential prejudice for those who need to claim. However, those who disagreed stated that a breakdown of all expenses allows transparency into councillor activity and allows resident scrutiny and transparency that all activities are justified.

Panel's determinations for 2024 to 2025

Following consideration of the views received in response to its consultation the Panel now makes its final determinations.

Basic salary for elected members of principal councils: Determination 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 2024 to 2025.

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.

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.

The Panel has therefore determined that for the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 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. This will be £18,666 as set out on Table 1.**

Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils: Determination 2

The limit on the number of senior salaries payable ("the cap") will remain in place.

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.

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 and 4. Where a Band 5 is paid, there is no increase to the role element as this remains temporarily frozen. The increase in the basic salary will apply.

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £69,998. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out on 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	£18,666
Band 1 leader	£69,998
Band 1 deputy leader	£48,999
Band 2 executive members	£41,999
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£27,999
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£27,999
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£22,406
Civic Head (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£22,406
Presiding member (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£18,666

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	Remuneration
Basic salary	£18,666
Band 1 leader	£62,998
Band 1 deputy leader	£44,099
Band 2 executive members	£37,799
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£27,999
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£27,999

Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£22,406
Civic Head (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£22,406
Presiding member (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£18,666

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	Remuneration
Basic salary	£18,666
Band 1 leader	£59,498
Band 1 deputy leader	£41,649
Band 2 executive members	£35,699
Band 3 committee chairs (if paid)	£27,999
Band 4 Leader of the largest opposition group	£27,999
Band 5 Leader of other political groups (if paid) and deputy civic head	£22,406
Civic Head (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (if paid)	£22,406
Presiding member (if paid)	£27,999
Deputy Presiding Member (basic only)	£18,666

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

Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Determination 3

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 £9,333.

The salary of a vice chair is set at 50% of the Chair and will be £4,667.

There are no other changes.

Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 4

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. 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.

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 reorganisation in 1996. FRAs comprise elected members who are nominated by the Principal Councils within each fire and rescue service area.

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. 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. This means the role element of their pay will continue to be temporarily frozen. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of NPAs and FRAs is set out on Table 2.

Table 2 – Payments to National Parks Authorities

National Parks Authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£5,265
Chair	£14,598
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£9,005
Committee Chair or other senior post	£9,005

Table 2 – Payments to Fire and Rescue Authorities

Fire and rescue authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,632
Chair	£11,965
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£6,372
Committee Chair or other senior post	£6,372

All current Determinations, including restrictions on receiving double allowances, are available 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

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.

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.

The Panel considered moving to an hourly rate instead. This would better reflect new ways of working and hours actually worked. However, the Panel recognised that this may not always be appropriate, especially to cover in person meetings scheduled to last several hours.

The Panel therefore determines 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 Panel will also provide guidance of good practice examples. The amounts are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

	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 Councils

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 6

Payment for extra costs of working from home

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

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.

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 7

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment. The amount for financial loss was not increased last year. 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 2024 are now set at £119.62 for a full day and £59.81 for a half day.

Reporting Requirements; Determination 8

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.

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.

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.

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

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 are published on our website.

Summary of Determinations for 2024 to 2025

Determination 1:

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils will be set at £18,666.

Determination 2:

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £69,998. All other payments have been decided in reference to this.

Determination 3:

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £9,333.

The salary of vice chair will be £4,667.

Determination 4:

The basic pay of members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities has been increased.

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 members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities, 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 2023 to 2024. The only change is the stipulation of hourly rates.

Determination 6:

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. Therefore, there is no change from last year.

Determination 7

Compensation for financial loss is an optional payment. The amount for financial loss was not increased last year. The Panel determined that this payment should continue to be linked to the daily rate of ASHE. To maintain this link, the figures for 2024 are now set at £119.62 for a full day and £59.81 for a half day.

Determination 8:

The Panel has determined that from September 2024, the returns due from all Community and Town Council 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 on our [website](#) remain valid and should be applied.

Contact details

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