

## CONSTITUTION & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 8 November 2023
<b>Report Subject</b>	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) draft Annual Report 2024/2025
<b>Report Author</b>	Democratic Services Manager

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) determines the rates of payment which are to be made to elected and co-opted members of Welsh Local Authorities for the following year.

The IRPW issue a draft Annual Report in October/November each year. This year, it did so on the 13 October 2023, requesting comments on the report and accompanying consultation to be made by no later than the 8 December 2023.

The IRPW is then required to take into account any representations which it receives on the draft report before issuing its final version of the report in February.

In its annual report 2022/23, the IRPW reset the basic salary for elected members of principal councils to align with the 2020 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), based on a full-time equivalent of 3 days a week. They have retained the link between basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents, according to ASHE.

The IRPW has proposed the basic salary for elected members of principal Councils in 2024/25 shall be £18,666 with effect from 1st April 2024. Increases are also proposed for Cabinet Members, Council Leaders and their deputies, and Chairs of Committees where remunerated.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee considers and comments on the Determinations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in their draft Annual Report for 2024/25.
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2	That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make a response on behalf of the Council, reflecting the decision and comments made at the meeting, to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
3	That the Head of Democratic Services issue Question 4 of the consultation document to all elected Members and co-opted members for them to respond to individually.

## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>DETAILING THE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) 2024/25</b>																
1.01	Members will be aware that the IRPW produces a report on an annual basis, which sets out what it has decided (called Determinations) the rates of payment to Members and co-optees of Local Authorities in Wales for the following year should be.																
1.02	In their report (which is attached as appendix 1), the Panel states that in setting the levels of remuneration etc. they have focussed on <i>“affordability, payments made to co-opted members and reporting requirements for Community and Town Councils.”</i>																
1.03	<p>After reviewing the evidence and data that the Panel use when making their determinations, they have confirmed that they will continue to align levels of remuneration with the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office of National Statistics.</p> <p>The Panel continue to base the basic Members salary on the full-time equivalent of 3 days a week. Payments to Cabinet Members, including the Leader and any Deputy/ies are based on the full-time equivalent of 5 days a week.</p> <p>The table below shows the 2023 IRPW determined salary levels and the proposed levels for 2024.</p> <p>All salaries include the basic Member salary. (Determinations 1 and 2)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Position</th> <th>Current, 2023 IRPW Determination</th> <th>Proposed, 2024 IRPW Determination</th> <th>Amount of proposed increase</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Member of Council</td> <td>£17,600</td> <td>£18,666</td> <td>£1,066</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Committee Chair (where remunerated)</td> <td>£26,400</td> <td>£27,999</td> <td>£1,599</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leader of largest Opposition Party</td> <td>£26,400</td> <td>£27,999</td> <td>£1,599</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Position	Current, 2023 IRPW Determination	Proposed, 2024 IRPW Determination	Amount of proposed increase	Member of Council	£17,600	£18,666	£1,066	Committee Chair (where remunerated)	£26,400	£27,999	£1,599	Leader of largest Opposition Party	£26,400	£27,999	£1,599
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Member of Council	£17,600	£18,666	£1,066														
Committee Chair (where remunerated)	£26,400	£27,999	£1,599														
Leader of largest Opposition Party	£26,400	£27,999	£1,599														

Chair of Council	£26,400	£27,999	£1,599
Vice-Chair of Council	£21,340	£22,406	£1,066
Cabinet Member	£35,640	£37,799	£2,159
Deputy Leader	£41,580	£44,099	£2,519
Leader	£59,400	£62,998	£3,598
Presiding Member*	£26,400	£27,999	£1,599
Deputy Presiding Member*	£17,600	£18,666	£1,066

These increases will apply from 1st April 2024, and equate to an uplift of 6.05%.

\* - Flintshire County Council doesn't have either of these posts.

1.04 Determination 3 relates to Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees which do not currently apply to Flintshire.

1.05 Determination 4 relates to National Park Authorities and Fire & Rescue Authorities. National Park Authorities do not apply to Flintshire.

The changes to payments to Fire & Rescue Authorities are shown in the table below:

Position	Current, 2023 IRPW Determination	Proposed, 2024 IRPW Determination	Amount of proposed increase
Member	£2,482	£2,632	£150
Chair	£11,282	£11,965	£683
Vice-Chair	£6,222	£6,372	£150
Committee Chair	£6,222	£6,372	£150

Flintshire nominates 6 members of the North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

1.06 Determination 5 details payments to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Currently co-opted members receive either a half-day or full-day payment for work they undertake for the committees they sit on. The Panel are proposing that in addition to these payments, an hourly rate payment for co-opted members is to be introduced from April 2024. Which rate to use is to be determined by the 'local relevant officer'.

Payments to co-opted members are shown in the table below:

	Role	Hourly rate payment	Up to 4 hours payment rate	4 hours and over payment rate
	Chairs of standards, and audit committees	£33.50	£134	£268
	Ordinary Members of Standards Committees who also chair Standards Committees for Community and Town Councils	£29.75	£119	£238
	Ordinary Members of Standards Committees; Education Scrutiny Committee; Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee	£26.25	£105	£210
	Community and Town Councillors sitting on Principal Council Standards Committees	£26.25	£105	£210
1.07	Determinations 6 to 8 relate to Community and Town Councils.			
1.08	<p>All of the other determinations made for 2023-24 will remain the same and therefore be applied to 2024-25. These cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;</li> <li>• Reimbursement of Travel and subsistence costs;</li> <li>• Compensation for financial loss; and,</li> <li>• Restrictions on receiving double remuneration where a member holds more than one post.</li> </ul>			
1.09	As with each draft Annual Report, the Panel are seeking feedback on the content of the report. A copy of the consultation questions is included as Appendix 2. For ease of reference, the questions are listed in paragraph 1.10 below.			

1.10	<p>Q1 – 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?</p> <p>Q2 – Do you agree with the Panels proposal in relation to co-opted members of committees? If not, do you have any suggested alternatives?</p> <p>Q3 – 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?</p> <p>Q4 – This question is seeking individual Member responses. See paragraph 1.11.</p> <p>Q5 – This question relates specifically to Community and Town Councils so does not apply.</p> <p>Q6 – Do you agree that figures for travel and subsistence expenses of members of principal councils should be published as a global total rather than individually?</p>
1.11	<p>Question 4 of the consultation is seeking to establish whether individual Members are aware of the payments they are entitled to.</p> <p>It would not therefore be appropriate for this Committee to provide an answer on behalf of all elected Members and co-opted members of committees.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Democratic Services Manager issues this question to all elected Members and the co-opted members. This could take the form of an anonymous survey, or they could be asked to provide an individual response direct to the IRPW.</p>
1.12	<p>The Committee is therefore invited to consider, and comment on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report and its Determinations for 2024, and to provide comments for inclusion in the response to the consultation. The consultation period ends on 8 December 2023.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>Any member or co-opted member may by notice in writing to the proper officer of the authority elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to a payment under the determination of the Panel for that particular year (as relating to the authority).</p> <p>If all of the increases are accepted as per the IRPW report, there will be a budget increase of £88,921 for 2024-25.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	The IRPW are consulting about their proposals and Members have the opportunity to feedback their views.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	The decision to increase Member Salaries is made by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, not Flintshire County Council.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – Draft Annual Report 2024 Appendix 2 - Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – Draft Annual Report 2024 – consultation questions

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	The background paper to this report is the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales draft report, attached as an appendix.  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Steven Goodrum, Democratic Services Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702320 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Steven.Goodrum@flintshire.gov.uk">Steven.Goodrum@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW)</b> – body established by the Welsh Government to determine the level of Local Authority payments to Members.</li> <li>• <b>Determinations</b> - the decisions which the IRPW makes.</li> <li>• <b>Basic Salary</b> – the salary or allowance which the IRPW determines should be paid to each Member of the Council which for 2024/25 is £18,666.</li> <li>• <b>Senior Salary</b> – a senior salary is payable to a Councillor with special responsibility such as the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and the leader of the largest opposition group (a Group B Council such as Flintshire may pay up to 18 senior salaries).</li> <li>• <b>Civic Salaries</b> – these are the payments made to the Chair and Vice Chair of Council of paid.</li> <li>• <b>Co-opted member</b> – a person chosen by the Council to serve on one of its Member Bodies</li> </ul>