

Public Document Pack

Penallta House,
Tredomen Park,
Ystrad Mynach,
Hengoed CF82 7PG

Ty Penallta,
Parc Tredomen,
Ystrad Mynach,
Hengoed CF82 7PG



www.caerphilly.gov.uk
www.caerffili.gov.uk

For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Sharon Hughes
(Tel: 01443 864281 Email: hughesj@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 7th March 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Democratic Services Committee** will be held in Penallta House and via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 13th March, 2024 at 5.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days.

This meeting will be live streamed and recorded and made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy', enclosed in a large, loopy oval shape.

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	

A greener place Man gwyrddach



2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To approve and sign the following minutes: -

- 3 Democratic Services Committee held on 22nd November 2023. 1 - 4

To receive and consider the following report(s): -

- 4 Supporting the Work of Members Electronic Access to Information and the Use of Broadband. 5 - 8
- 5 Independent Remuneration Panel For Wales Annual Report 2024 to 2025. 9 - 12

Circulation:

Councillors D.T. Davies, G. Ead, A. Farina-Childs, Mrs C. Forehead, A. Hussey, M.P. James (Chair), L. Jeremiah, C.P. Mann, A. McConnell, L. Phipps (Vice Chair), Mrs D. Price, J.A. Pritchard, J. Simmonds, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe and J. Winslade

And Appropriate Officers

HOW WE WILL USE YOUR INFORMATION

Those individuals that attend committee meetings to speak/give evidence will be named in the minutes of that meeting, sometimes this will include their place of employment or business and opinions expressed. Minutes of Meetings including details of speakers will be publicly available to all via the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk. except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items.

You have a number of rights in relation to your information, including the rights of access to information we hold about you and the right of complaint if you are unhappy with the way your information is being processed.

For further information on how we process your information and your rights please view the [Full Committee Meetings Privacy Notice](#) on our website or contact Legal Services by email griffd2@caerphilly.gov.uk or telephone 01443 863028.



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 2023 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor M.P. James – Chair

Councillors:

A. Farina-Childs, A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah, C. Mann, A. McConnell, J.A. Pritchard, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe and J. Winslade.

Together with:

L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded and would be made available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). Members were advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.T. Davies, G. Ead, C. Forehead, L. Phipps (Vice Chair), D. Price and J. Simmonds.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A personal interest was declared by all Members present in relation to [Agenda Item No. 4 – Draft Report of The Independent Remuneration Panel For Wales for 2024/2025](#), in that it related to Members own remuneration. As the interest was personal only this did not preclude Members from remaining in the meeting and participating in this item.

3. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Democratic Services Committee meeting held on 20th September 2023 be approved as a correct record. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 7 for, 0 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Democratic Services Committee meeting held on 20th September 2023 (minute nos. 1 – 6) be approved as a correct record.

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. DRAFT REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES FOR 2024/2025

Consideration was given to the report which sought the views of the Democratic Services Committee on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report for 2024/25, prior to the response deadline of 8th December 2023. It was noted that the Panel also provided an additional document raising some additional questions for consideration, set out in Appendix 2.

The Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer provided an overview of the report. Members were asked to note the summary of the new and updated determinations set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report, and that all other determinations set out in the Annual Report 2023-2024 remain valid and should be applied. It was highlighted that this year the Panel focused on 3 main issues; affordability, payments made to co-opted members and reporting requirements for Community and Town Councils. The determinations listed at paragraph 5.6 onwards of the report were specifically brought to Member's attention.

In response to a Member's query, clarification was provided in relation to salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that the Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of elected Members of Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees, but the decision to remunerate must be made by the Council to whom the Chair or Vice Chair is a member. It was highlighted that a Member can only receive one senior salary from the same authority.

The basic level of salary for elected Members was noted. A Member suggested that all Councillors should have an annual appraisal to ensure they are working to the required standard. The Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the salaries are determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, which is an independent body. It was explained that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales look at all factors surrounding payment with the aim of encouraging participation in local democracy. The Senior Committee Services Officer clarified that the Cabinet undertake annual personal development reviews with the Leader and that there is an opportunity for group Leaders, if they wish, to conduct personal development reviews with individual Members. It was further clarified that there is also the opportunity for Scrutiny Chairs to have personal development reviews with individual Cabinet Members, with responsibility for the relevant portfolio. It was highlighted that a personal development review has always been voluntary for Members to take up and should the Democratic Services Committee feel that it is warranted, the Senior Committee Services Officer would contact group Leaders and Cabinet to ask if there is any interest from Members to undertake an annual development review. During the course of discussion a number of Members commented that, in terms of appraisal, they feel that Councillors are appraised by the people in their community, particularly those who have elected them.

A Member asked if there was an opportunity for the Vice Chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be remunerated accordingly should the Chair be absent for long periods of time. The Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer agreed to provide members with clarification following the meeting.

A Member raised concerns regarding job security for elected Members and referred to the previous consideration of parachute payments which would alleviate hardship from a sudden loss of income and to encourage involvement in the democratic process. In response, the Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that enquiries would be made regarding the current situation, which would be reported back to the Democratic Services Committee.

RESOLVED that: -

- a) The comments of the Democratic Services Committee on the Panel's draft Annual Report for 2024/25 be submitted to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales by the Head of Democratic Services, by 9th December 2023.
- b) The consultation feedback from Co-opted Members and Officers be noted and fed back to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

5. INSTALLATION OF OUTLOOK AND TEAMS ON MOBILE PHONES (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Democratic Services Committee received an update on the installation of Outlook and Teams on mobile phones.

The Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that an e-mail had been sent to all Councillors with instructions on how to install the new app on their phone, or alternatively had been given the opportunity to attend Penallta House for technical support from IT colleagues on how to install and use the app. Members were further advised that the e-mail would be re-circulated following the meeting. The need for Councillors to install the new app on their personal phones, should they wish to do so, was emphasised as the MaaS360 will soon be obsolete. Once this process has been completed a review will be undertaken and reported to the Democratic Services Committee.

The Democratic Services Committee noted the update.

The meeting closed at 5.40 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 13th March 2024.

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 13TH MARCH 2024

**SUBJECT: SUPPORTING THE WORK OF MEMBERS ELECTRONIC
ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND THE USE OF BROADBAND**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CORPORATE
SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider whether a proposal for all elected Members to be remunerated for costs associated with the use of home broadband should be considered by Council.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The reports seeks the views of the Committee as to whether a contribution should be offered to members for the cost of home broadband to facilitate their council work.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The committee is asked to consider the options set out in paragraph 5.7 of the report and whether to make a recommendation to Council that members are offered the option of receiving a monthly allowance towards their home broadband provision.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure the Council's elected Members continue to be provided with the appropriate support and resources to effectively fulfil their duties.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 By way of background, particularly for those new members elected since May 2022, at its meeting on 28th September 2018 the Democratic Services Committee received a presentation in relation to IT Support for Councillors. The presentation included a questionnaire on IT support which was circulated to all members at that time.
- 5.2 Mobile device usage was discussed and Members took part in a Bring Your Own

Device (BYOD) trial which was very successful. Options were presented to members which included the use of a tablet and for members to go “paper free.” Broadband options were discussed and the use of a security key, rather than an additional home broadband line was referenced. It was also noted that a SIM card could also be installed in personal laptops allowing access to the Caerphilly network.

Members noted the provisions of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) included a determination that Members should be provided with adequate access to IT support and the Committee’s opinion was sought on the provision at that time.

- 5.3 Members felt that the BYOD if rolled out to all Members would be invaluable and would eliminate the need for a second device. However some Members had expressed the preference to have Council matters on a separate device to their personal one. Members who had taken part in the BYOD trial expressed their willingness to speak to other Councillors on the merits of the facility.

The outcome of the Member IT questionnaire was presented to the subsequent Democratic Services Committee, on 26th November 2018 and it was agreed that proposals would be developed to allow the use of personal mobile phones to access council emails. In addition, the cost implications of providing mobile devices to encourage paperless committee papers would be considered.

- 5.4 However the landscape changed significantly in March 2020 due to the pandemic and as a result all members were provided with a Council laptop and ancillary items to allow them to continue to work effectively for their constituents and to attend Council meetings remotely. The specific issue of broadband usage was not addressed at that time and where members did not have a council router they utilised their own broadband provision at their own cost.

- 5.5 The issue has now been brought to the forefront as the current council router provision has become outdated and will be obsolete shortly. This has led to officers reviewing the broadband provision generally, concluding that due to the disparity in the provision being offered to members, it would be inequitable to continue to provide broadband to some members and not others. Almost all members use their own broadband network at their own cost.

- 5.6 Of the 69 Elected Members, 64 currently make use of their personal broadband connections without any contribution being paid by the Council. The 5 remaining Members currently access Caerphilly networks via a Council provided router and connection which is becoming obsolete.

- 5.7 In order to continue to meet members needs going forward the committee is asked to consider the following options:-

- (a) Members recommend to full Council that all Elected members make use of their personal broadband connections to access e-mails, papers and meetings, as is the case for 64 members currently.
- (b) Members recommend to full Council that all Elected members are offered a payment of £25 per month (before tax and national insurance deductions) as a contribution towards the cost of home broadband. Under HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rules, the proposed allowance shall be subject to Tax and National Insurance deductions.

5.8 The amount of £25 has been assessed via a desk top review of average costs of broadband which ranges between £20 and £35 per month. The £25 takes into account the additional tax and NI which may need to be deducted. If this proposal is endorsed the payment can be made by the Payroll team at the same time as the salary payments.

5.9 **Conclusion**

The IRP recommend that councils through the Democratic Services Committee, must ensure that all its elected members are given as much support as is necessary to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively. All elected members should be provided with adequate telephone, email and internet facilities giving electronic access to appropriate information. Such support should be without cost to the individual member. Deductions must not be made from members' salaries by the respective authority as a contribution towards the cost of support which the authority has decided necessary for the effectiveness and or efficiency of members. As such the Committee is asked to consider the details contained in this report and make a recommendation.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 The proposed contribution to the cost of broadband is based on the average cost identified as part of a desktop exercise.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 The proposal set out within the report is based on the principle of all elected Members being treated equally and consistently. As a result, no Equality Impact Assessment is deemed required for the purposes of this report.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There will be no cost to the Council if the option set out in 5.7a is approved.

8.2 The estimated financial implications if the contribution set out in 5.7b is approved will be £20,700 per year as well as some sundry costs in terms of processing payment.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There will be some personnel implications arising from the report in that the payments will incur administrative duties within the Payroll team to process the payments.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 The report has been circulated to the consultees below and the responses have been included within the report.

10.2 Subject to the Democratic Services Committee determining a proposed way forward,

this will be reported to full Council for the consideration of all elected Members.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Local Government Act 2000, Local Government Wales Measure 2011, Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013.

Author: Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Consultees: Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Ed Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services
Jonathan James, Digital Infrastructure Manager
Jonathan Evans, Programme Manager
Cllr Martyn James, Chair Democratic Services Committee
Cllr Sean Morgan, Leader of Council
Cllr Lindsay Whittle, Leader of Plaid Cymru Group
Cllr Nigel Dix, Leader of the Independent Group



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 13TH MARCH 2024

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2024 TO 2025

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide Members with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2024 to 2025 for information purposes only.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 To provide members with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2024 to 2025.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that Members

3.1 (a) acknowledge and note the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Annual Report 2024 to 2025 which is set out in the following link. **[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales's Annual Report, 2024 to 2025.](#)**

3.1(b) Note that all other determinations set out in 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024 remain valid and should be applied as set out in the following link. **[Determinations set out in 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024.](#)**

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To ensure that members are aware of the contents of the annual report.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Members will note that the Annual Report for 2024 to 2025 sets out a summary of the updated Determinations as follows:-

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. In terms of Caerphilly Council the salaries will be as follows

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) £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

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 the IRPW's 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 their website remain valid and should be applied.

5.2 Conclusion

Members are asked to note the content of the Annual Report.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The content of the report is based upon the Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel of Wales and therefore no assumptions have been made.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 As the report is for information only there is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The financial implications in respect of the salaries will be met from existing budgets.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 As the report is for information only no consultation has been undertaken.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Wales Measure 2011

Author: Lisa Lane Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Consultee: Robert Tranter Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

This page is intentionally left blank