



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2020 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Cushing - Chair
Councillor G. Kirby - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

C. Andrews, P.J. Bevan, W. David, D.T. Davies, A. Farina-Childs, Mrs C. Forehead, A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah, Mrs M.E. Sargent, C. Thomas and A Whitcombe.

Together with:

L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C.P. Mann, Mrs G.D. Oliver and W. Williams.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Clarification was sought on whether Members were required to declare an interest in respect of Agenda Item 4 (Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: Draft Annual Report 2021/2022 and the Supplementary Report on the Principles in Respect of the Reimbursement of Costs of Care). The Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that it was a matter for Members; however, their interest was personal only, as by virtue of paragraph 12(2)(b)(iv) of the Code of Conduct, Members did not have a prejudicial interest when considering their own allowances. As the interest was personal only this would not preclude them from remaining in the meeting and participating in this item.

There were no declarations of interest received at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 20TH NOVEMBER 2019

Subject to it being noted that Councillor M.E. Sargent had tendered apologies at the last meeting, and Councillors T Davies, D Cushing A Whitcombe and A Farina Childs abstained from the vote as they were not present at the meeting, it was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th November 2019 be approved as a correct record. By a show of hands this was agreed.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

4. **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES: DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022 AND THE SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON THE PRINCIPLES IN RESPECT OF THE REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS OF CARE**

Members noted that the purpose of the report was twofold. The report sought the views of the Committee on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' (the Panel's) draft report for 2021/22 which would be communicated to the Panel prior to the response deadline of 23rd November 2020. The Panel's final determinations for 2021/22 will be published in February 2021 and members were advised that they would be fully appraised of the final report following its publication.

The report also informed members of the publication of a Supplementary Report by the Panel entitled the Principles in respect of the Reimbursement of Costs of Care which was attached at Appendix 2 and to ask the Committee to actively support the principles within the report to promote and encourage the take up by members of the financial support in respect of the costs of care. Members were advised that a report would also be presented to Council with a recommendation that the principles set out in the Supplementary Report are formally implemented as a minimum requirement.

In relation to the draft Annual Report for 2021/2022 attached at Appendix 1 Members noted the summary of all the new and updated determinations set out in Annex 5 of the draft report, which included determinations for Principal Councils, National Park Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities and Community and Town Councils.

The report highlighted the updated determinations specifically relating to Principal Councils and the updated determination on the contribution to the reimbursement of the costs of care applicable to all relevant authorities, together with the proposed increase in the allowance payable to Co-opted members.

In the case of the updated determinations for Principal Council's, members noted the following:

Determination 1 Basic Salary.

The basic salary proposed for 2021/2022 for elected members of Principal Councils shall be £14,368 with effect from 1 April 2021.

Determination 2 Senior Salary levels.

Senior salary levels in 2021/2022 for members of principal councils shall be as set out in Table 3 with effect from 1 April 2021.

Determination 3 Civic Salaries.

Where a paid civic head must be paid a Band 3 salary of £23,161 and where paid a deputy civic head must be paid a Band 5 salary of £18,108 with effect from 1 April 2021.

Determination 4 Presiding Member salary.

Where appointed and if remunerated a presiding member must be paid a Band 3 senior salary of £23,161 from 1 April 2021. This does not apply to Caerphilly.

Determination 33 has been updated so that the fees for Co-opted Members (who have voting rights) have been increased by 1.06% in line with other allowances. The increase amounts to an additional £12 on the daily rate for ordinary co-opted members and for those with additional responsibility.

Determination 39 has been updated in respect of all relevant authorities in relation to the Contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance as follows.

Formal (Registered with Care Inspectorate Wales) care costs to be reimbursed in full.

Informal (unregistered) care costs to be reimbursed up to a maximum rate equivalent to the Real Living Wage at the time the costs are incurred.

It was noted that reimbursement must be for the additional costs incurred by members to enable them to carry out official business or approved duties. Each authority must ensure that any payments made are appropriately linked to official business or approved duty. Reimbursements should only be made on production of receipts from the carer. This provision was explained in more detail in the body of the report, as it linked to the principles set out in the Supplementary Report attached at Appendix 2.

The second part of the report informed members of the publication of the Supplementary Report the Principles in respect of the Reimbursement of Costs of Care published by the Panel in May 2020 which was attached at Appendix 2 and which is linked to determination 39 above.

The Supplementary Report highlighted several principles, which the Panel expects all authorities to adopt as a minimum.

The Democratic Services Committee thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

A Member, in noting recent increases in salaries for Senedd Members and MPs felt that the remuneration for Councillors was set at an appropriate level and welcomed the report.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers Report: -

- i) That the Democratic Services Committee noted the Panel's draft Annual Report for 2021/22 attached at Appendix 1 and this response be submitted by the Head of Democratic Services to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales by 23rd November 2020; and
- ii) The principles set out within the Supplementary Report attached at Appendix 2 be noted and supported, which aim to promote and encourage the take up by Members of the financial support in respect of the costs of care, before a report is taken to Council with a recommendation that the principles be adopted.

The meeting closed at 5.26 pm.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2021, they were signed by the Chair

CHAIR