



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