

<u>BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</u>	
Report to	The Chair & Members of the Democratic Services Committee
Report Subject	Draft Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales 2016/17
Report Author	Rhian Hayden, Head of Financial Services
Report date	4 December 2015
Directorate	Resources
Portfolio	Financial Management & Strategy
Date of meeting	16 December 2015
Date signed off by Monitoring Officer	
Date signed off by Section 151 Officer	
Date signed off by Chair	
Key words	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Report Information Summary

1.	Purpose of Report*
1.1	To inform Members of the proposals from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for 2016/17.
2.	Scope of the Report*
2.1	The report considers the main proposals included within the draft 2016/17 report (Appendix 1) of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (the Panel) as they relate to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.
3.	Recommendation/s for Consideration*
3.1	The Committee consider the proposals within the Panel's draft report for 2016/17.

Why this topic is a priority for the Council?*					
<i>Report author to identify links to the main corporate strategies.</i>					
Single Integrated Plan (SIP)	Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP)	Performance Management Improvement Framework (PMIF)	Operating Model	Transforming Blaenau Gwent (TBG Programme)	Other (please state)
			X		

Reporting Pathway*							
<i>Report author to identify proposed reporting pathway. (To include dates where possible)</i>							
Directorate Management Team (DMT)	Corporate Management Team (CMT)	Audit	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny	Executive	Council	Other (please state)
			16/12/15				

***Denotes mandatory section**

Main Report

1.	Background and Context*
1.1	The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 extended the responsibilities of the Panel and its powers under Section 142 to decide (prescribe) payments to members of relevant authorities. This enabled the Panel to move beyond the previous limitation of setting maximum limits for member payments and the Panel has been able to use this power of prescription from April 2012.
1.2	On an annual basis the Panel publish its report on Members remuneration. All members of the Council had an opportunity to respond individually to the consultation on the draft 2016/17 report and the final report will be published by 29 February 2016.
2.	Options for Consideration (to be completed in every case where relevant to the report topic and information)
2.1	Not applicable
3.	Performance Evidence and Information*
3.1	For 2015/16, given the continuing constraints on local government spending, the Panel decided that there would be no increase in remuneration. The same approach has been taken this year and again it is proposed that there will be no increase in remuneration for 2016/17.
3.2	This year, the Panel has been given a 'remit' letter by its sponsor Minister in which the Minister drew the Panels attention to the desire of WG to reduce the cost of politics to the public purse and pointed to a number of aspects of the current remuneration that he felt needed to be given consideration. The Minister also asked the Panel to consider whether the rates of payments to Leaders & Executive Members is justified when compared with those paid in similarly sized councils in other parts of the UK.
3.3	The Panel obtained comparative information on this from a national expert on remuneration, as a result the Panel was reassured that its rates of remuneration are justified and appropriate in comparison to other UK nations.
3.4	The Panel has however made a number of changes to the Payment of senior salaries as a result of its further consideration of these aspects of the framework as follows:-

	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u> <u>(proposed)</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Basic Salary	13,300	13,300
<i>Senior Salaries:</i>		
Leader	43,000	43,000
Deputy Leader	30,000	29,900
Executive Members (4)	26,000	26,000
Executive Members (remaining)	26,000	23,400
Committee Chairs – Level 1	22,000	22,000
Committee Chairs – Level 2	22,000	20,000
Leader of Largest Opposition Group	22,000	20,000
Leader of other political groups	17,000	17,000

3.5 **Executive**
Although many Councils operate with a cabinet of 10 (the statutory maximum) others choose to have a smaller cabinet and the range of individual portfolios is much greater. The Panel have concluded that this should be reflected in the remuneration framework.
The Panel is therefore proposing that up to 5 Executive Members receive a salary of £26,000 (up to 4 if the Council operates with a Deputy Leader) and the remaining Executive members receive £23,400.

3.6
It is for the Council to determine the structure of its cabinet and the proposed determinations provide flexibility for each council to decide the appropriate range of portfolios to meet local needs, recognising that there is an inevitable variation on the level of responsibility and workload.

3.7 **Committee Chairs**
The Panel recognises that the specific responsibility and workload of some chairs is greater than others and consider that this should be reflected in the remuneration framework.
The Panel is therefore introducing two levels of remuneration for chairs of committees:

<p>3.8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 – to be paid a salary of £22,000 • Level 2 – to be paid a salary of £20,000 <p>It is a matter for individual councils to decide which of the chairs (if remunerated) are level 1 or level 2 and the Panel expects that the payment of a level 1 salary would be to recognise exceptional responsibility. Previously all Chairs, where paid, were remunerated at £22,000.pa.</p>															
<p>3.9</p>	<p>Leader of Largest Opposition Group The Panel remains of the view that a council must make a senior salary available to the leader of the largest opposition group and has determined that this role should be remunerated at £20,000 (previously £22,000)</p>															
<p>3.10</p>	<p>Civic Heads and Deputies The Panel has made no change to the determinations in respect of Civic salaries.</p>															
<p>3.11</p>	<p>There continues to be 3 possible levels of civic salary, higher, mid and lower. Each authority will decide which level (if any) is to be paid for each of these roles according to local factors. For example the civic head of a small council may be paid at the highest rate, whilst that of a large council may be paid the lowest. The remuneration levels set by each council will reflect the activity and responsibility of Civic Heads and Deputies.</p>															
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Remuneration of civic heads and deputy civic heads (inclusive of basic salaries)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Responsibility Level</th> <th>Civic Heads (Mayor)</th> <th>Deputy Civic Heads</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Level 1</td> <td>£24,000</td> <td>£18,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 2</td> <td>£21,500</td> <td>£16,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 3</td> <td>£19,000</td> <td>£14,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Remuneration of civic heads and deputy civic heads (inclusive of basic salaries)			Responsibility Level	Civic Heads (Mayor)	Deputy Civic Heads	Level 1	£24,000	£18,000	Level 2	£21,500	£16,000	Level 3	£19,000	£14,000
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<p>3.12</p>	<p>Presiding Member The Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013 allows councils to appoint a presiding member whose role it will be to</p>															

	<p>chair meetings of the whole council. Where appointed, there would be a consequential reduction in the responsibilities of the respective Civic Head.</p> <p>The Panel has therefore determined the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presiding Member, where appointed and if remunerated, to be paid a salary of £22,000. • Deputy Presiding member will be unpaid. <p>3.13 Supporting the Work of Elected members The Panel held a series of meetings in 2015 with Chairs and members of Democratic Services Committees and Heads of Democratic Services and following this the Panel remains concerned that there continues to be a variation and inconsistency of support provided to members.</p> <p>3.14 The Panel expects that the support provided, including training, should take account of the specific needs of individual members. It is considered necessary for each elected member to have ready use of telephone and e-mail services, and to have electronic access to appropriate information via an internet connection (it is not considered appropriate that such facilities are only available within Council offices within office hours).</p> <p>3.15 The functions of the Democratic Services Committees include a requirement to review the level of support provided to members to carry out their duties, bringing forward proposals to full council as to what is considered to be reasonable.</p> <p>3.16 Reimbursement of Mileage, Other Travel & Subsistence Costs The Panel has determined that there will be no change to mileage rates which members are entitled to claim.</p> <p>3.17 The Subsistence rates will be as follows, these rates are in line with Welsh Government Rates:-</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1789 1401 2011"> <tr> <td>£28 per day</td> <td>Day allowance for meals, including breakfast, where not provided in the overnight charge</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£200 per night</td> <td>London (an increase from £150)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£95 per night</td> <td>Elsewhere</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£30 per night</td> <td>Stay with friends / family (increase from £25)</td> </tr> </table>	£28 per day	Day allowance for meals, including breakfast, where not provided in the overnight charge	£200 per night	London (an increase from £150)	£95 per night	Elsewhere	£30 per night	Stay with friends / family (increase from £25)
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<p>3.18</p> <p>3.19</p> <p>3.20</p> <p>3.21</p>	<p>Recommended practice is that overnight accommodation should usually be reserved and paid for on behalf of members by the Authority, in which case the authority may set its own reasonable limits.</p> <p>Reimbursement of Costs of Care There is no change to the reimbursement of Costs of Care, this remains at a maximum of £403 per month upon production of receipts from the carer.</p> <p>Entitlement to Family Absence There is no change to this entitlement. An elected member is entitled to retain a basic salary when taking family absence. When a senior salary holder is eligible for family absence, he/she will continue to receive the salary for the duration of the absence. It is matter for the authority to decide whether or not to make a substitute appointment.</p> <p>Future Considerations The Local Government (Wales) Bill currently being considered proposes additional powers and responsibilities for the Panel. These will on a temporary basis extend their functions relating to Heads of Paid Service to Chief Officers of principal local authorities. In addition the Bill provides that the Panel be given powers to determine remuneration for Members of shadow authorities and newly forming principal councils.</p>
4.	Impact Assessment Against Proposals / Options*
4.1	The proposals will impact upon the senior salaries paid to members of the Council.
5.	Financial Implications*
5.1	The financial implications are highlighted in section 3, and should reduce the overall cost of Members remuneration.
6.	Risk Implications*
6.1	Failure to comply with the Panel's determinations will result in reputational damage for the Council.

7.	Staffing/Workforce Development Implications*
7.1	There are no direct staffing implications from this report.
8.	Conclusion*
8.1	The final report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for 2016/17 will be published by 29 February 2016 for implementation by the Council following its annual meeting.

***Denotes mandatory section**