

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 7TH MARCH, 2019</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. CROSS (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Millard
J. Collins
M. Day
K. Hayden
J. Holt
H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)
J.P. Morgan
L. Parsons
T. Sharrem

ALSO: **Scrutiny Chairs & Vice-Chairs**

Councillors S.C. Thomas
H. Trollope
K. Rowson
P. Edwards

AND: Head of Democratic Services
Organisational Development Manager – Payroll/Health
& Safety

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	

2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from from Councillors N. Daniels, L. Elias, M. Holland and J. Wilkins.</p>	
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
4.	<p><u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Democratic Services Committee held on 23rd October, 2018 were submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><i><u>Democratic Arrangements Progress Report</u></i></p> <p>A Member referred to the penultimate paragraph on page 8 of the minutes and said that this should have been brought out as an action point.</p> <p>In response the Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the information requested would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing that the Minutes be received as a true record of proceedings.</p>	<p>Head of Democratic Services</p>
5.	<p><u>REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES 2019/20</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Organisational Development Manager which informed Members of the details contained within the annual report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales 2019/20, attached at Appendix 1.</p> <p>The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein. The gap between the level of basic</p>	

remuneration for elected Members and relevant indicators of rises in income and costs of living indicators had continued to grow. In 2017 the Panel took action to narrow the gap and limit the rate of erosion. Although public sector funding continued to be constrained the Panel considered that an increase to the basic salary was justified, and determined that the basic salary for elected Members be increase by £268 per annum effective from April, 2019. The Panel also determined that the limit on the number of senior salaries payable would remain in place, and for Blaenau Gwent this was 17.

The Panel determined that there would be an increase to the Band 1 and Band 2 senior salaries payable to the Leader, the Deputy Leader and Executive Members of £800, inclusive of the £268 increase to the basic salary that all Members would receive.

In relation to Chairs of Committees, where these are paid, the remuneration for 2019/20 would be £22,568. The Panel remained of the view that a Council must make a senior salary available to the leader of the largest opposition group and determined that this role should be remunerated at £22,568.

The Officer said there was no change to the reimbursement of Costs of Care which remained at a maximum of £403 per month upon production of receipts from the carer. The Panel urged Authorities to promote and encourage greater take-up of the reimbursement of costs of care. The Panel recognised the issues relating to the publication of this legitimate expense, and therefore decided to provide Authorities with two options, namely:-

- Details of the amounts reimbursed to named Members; or
- The total amount reimbursed by the Authority during the year but not attributed to any named Members.

In response to comments raised, the Head of Democratic

<p>Services said she would be happy to provide advice and guidance on this core element, and encouraged all Members to consider this support where appropriate.</p> <p>A discussion ensued regarding the implications on Members' car insurance policies when travelling together to attend meetings etc. The Organisational Development Manager undertook to provide clarification on this matter.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Democratic Services Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. agree the IRPW proposals for 2019/20 prior to consideration by full Council; andii. agree the preferred option for the publication of the costs of care, i.e. the total amount reimbursed by the Authority during the year but not attributed to any named Member, as agreed previously.	<p>Organisational Development Manager</p>
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