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Blaenau Gwent

Our Ref./Ein Cyf.
Your Ref./Eich Cyf.
Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services

THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

7th July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Democratic Services Committee will be held in Hybrid Meeting to be held virtually via MS Teams or in The Sir Williams Firth Room, General Offices, Steelworks Road, Ebbw Vale on Thursday, 13th July, 2023 at 12.00 pm.

Yours faithfully

Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA

Pages

1. **SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION**

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

2. **APOLOGIES**

To receive.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

To consider any declarations of interest and dispensations received.

4. **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE** 5 - 8

To receive the decisions of the Democratic Services Committee held on 27th March, 2023.

(Please note the decisions are submitted for points of accuracy only).

5. **PROPOSED COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24** 9 - 12

To consider the report.

6. **SCHEDULE OF MEMBERS REMUNERATION 2023-24** 13 - 48

To consider the report of the Head of Organisational Development.

7. **BLAENAU GWENT ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION STRATEGY** 49 - 52

To consider the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships.

8. **TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To consider.

To: Councillor J. Hill (Chair)
Councillor E. Jones (Vice-Chair)
Councillor J. C. Morgan
Councillor C. Bainton
Councillor D. Bevan
Councillor G. A. Davies
Councillor L. Parsons
Councillor C. Smith
Councillor L. Winnett

All other Members (for information)
Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officers

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

**REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE –
27TH MARCH, 2023**

**REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT
OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)

Councillors C. Bainton
D. Bevan
E. Jones
J.C. Morgan
L. Parsons
C. Smith
L. Winnett

ALSO: Scrutiny Chairs & Vice-Chairs

Vice-Chair of Corporate & Performance Scrutiny
Committee

Councillor J. Thomas

Chair and Vice-Chair of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Councillor W. Hodgins & P. Baldwin

Chair of People Scrutiny Committee

Councillor T. Smith

Chair and Vice-Chair of Places Scrutiny Committee

Councillor M. Cross & R. Leadbeater

**AND: Head of Democratic Services, Governance &
Partnerships (Statutory Head of Democratic Services)
Organisational Development Manager**

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
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No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillors Jen Morgan and M. Day Service Manager, Performance & Democratic</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th November, 2021.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be received as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and that the determinations in the final IRPW Annual Report for 2023/2024 be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES 2022/23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Statutory Head of Democratic Services.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorsed Option 1; namely that the report be recommended to Council for approval.</p>	

<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>DIVERSE COUNCIL ACTION PLAN UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships and the Service Manager Performance and Democratic.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorsed Option 1; namely that the Committee was satisfied with the action taken to date, identified in Appendix 1, and did not make any amendments to future actions.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>COUNCIL'S SUITE OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT POLICIES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorsed Option 1; namely that the suite of Policies as set out in the appendices be agreed prior to approval at Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Development Strategy 2022 – 2027 (appendix 1) • Members' Mentoring Framework 2022 – 2027 (appendix 2) • Elected Members Personal Development Review and Competency Framework 2022 (appendix 3) 	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL PETITIONS PROTOCOL 2023-27</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services, Governance & Partnerships.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorsed Option 1; namely that the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Petitions Protocol 2023-2027 (found at Appendix 1) be agreed prior to approval at Council.</p>	

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Agenda Item 5

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Democratic Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th July 2023**

Report Subject: **Proposed Committee Forward Work Programme 2023-24**

Portfolio Holder: **Leader / Cabinet Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
June 2023				13.07.23		Cabinet FWP – 19.07.23	Council FWP – 20.07.23	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the Democratic Services Committee Work Programme for 2023-24 (Appendix 1) and to seek approval from Committee.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
- 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27, agreed by the Council in October 2022, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
- 2.3 The Forward Work Programmes is aligned to the Council Forward Work Programme.
- 2.4 The Work Programme is a fluid document and there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Chair and the Committee.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The work programmes have been endorsed by the relevant departments of the Council.

3.2 Option 1

To agree the Forward Work Programme for the Democratic Services Committee.

Option 2

To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.

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DRAFT Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme

Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Council
Meeting Date: 13 th July 2023	Deadline: 29 th June 2023		
Forward Work Programme 2023/24	To agree the FWP.	Scrutiny and Democratic Officer	N/A
Schedule of Members Remuneration	To consider the agree the Schedule of Members Remuneration.	Andrea Prosser	20 th July 2023
Engagement and Participation Strategy	To consider the report.	Sarah King	N/A

Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Council
SPECIAL Meeting Date: 18 th September 2023	Deadline: 4 th September 2023		
Statement of Payments made to Members	To consider and agree the publication of the Statement of Payments made to Members.	Andrea Prosser	21 st September 2023

Meeting Date: 13 th November 2023	Deadline: 30 th October 2023		
Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report	To inform Members of the proposals contained within the Draft report of the IRPW.	Andrea Prosser	23 rd November 2023
Diverse Council Action Plan	To present to Members progress of the Diverse Council Action Plan.	Gemma Wasley	23 rd November 2023

DRAFT Democratic Services Committee Forward Work Programme

Meeting Date: 11th March 2024	Deadline: 26th February 2024		
IRPW Final Annual report	To inform Members of the proposals contained within the annual report of the IRPW.	Andrea Prosser	21 st March 2024
Annual Report of the Head of Democratic Services 2023/24	To present the 2023/24 Annual report of the Head of Democratic Services.	Sarah King	21 st March 2024

Meeting Date: Dates for Items to be confirmed	Deadline:		
Member Support and Research		Gemma Wasley	
Welsh Government Local Democracy Handbook		Gemma Wasley	
WLGAs Members Charter		Gemma Wasley	
Support Arrangements for Members on Outsider Bodies	To consider options for recommendation to Council.	Sarah King	
Multi-Location Meeting Policy	To review the policy	Gemma Wasley	

Agenda Item 6

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Democratic Services Committee**
Date of meeting: **13th July 2023**
Report Subject: **Schedule of Members Remuneration 2023-24**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Stephen Thomas
Leader / Cabinet Member – Corporate Overview &
Performance**
Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser
Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
x	x			13.07.23			20.07.23	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To consider and agree the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2023-24.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 To comply with Part 8 (sections 141 to 160) and schedules 2 and 3 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regulations the Council is required to produce annually a schedule of payments it intends to make to its members and co-opted members.
 - 2.2 The proposed schedule for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is provided at Appendix 1.
 - 2.3 This report outlines the information that the Schedule should contain including the arrangements for the payment of salaries, allowances and fees to all members and co-opted members.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 Option 1 (**preferred option**) – to agree and publish the Schedule of Members Remuneration for 2023/24.
 - 3.2 Option 2 – to make suggestions to amend the Schedule although the process is prescriptive in line with the legislation quoted above.
4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
 - 4.1 In agreeing and publishing the Schedule of Members Remuneration, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is complying with its statutory responsibilities under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the

requirements of the IRPW aligning to the priority of being an efficient Council.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

Option 1 - It is estimated that the publication costs will be approximately £200.

There are no other direct financial implications as a result of this report - the remuneration levels of Members of the Council for 2023/24 are identified in the attached Appendix 1.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Option 1 – There are no significant risks for the Council with this option.

Option 2 - Non-compliance with the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) could result in reputational damage for the Council.

To mitigate this risk, agreeing and publishing the Schedule of Members Remuneration is proposed (option 1).

5.3 ***Legal***

Option 1 – This option ensures the Council complies with statutory responsibilities.

Option 2 – This would result in non-compliance within the statutory requirements.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no Human Resources implications that impact upon the report other than the time required to produce and maintain the Schedule of Members Remuneration throughout the year.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 The Schedule should confirm that the Council's maximum limit of Senior Salaries has not been exceeded and include a declaration of whether:

- A statement of the basic responsibility of a councillor is in place.
- Role descriptions of senior salary office holders is in place.

Records are kept of councillor attendance.

- 6.1.2 It is also statutory to set out arrangements for the payment of salaries, allowances and fees to all members and co-opted members and must include a statement of allowable expenses together with details of the duties for which they may be claimed.
- 6.1.3 The Council must as soon as practicable after determining its Schedule for the year and no later than 31st July of the year to which the Schedule relates, make arrangements for its publication within the Council's area and in addition forward the Schedule to the IRPW.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Publication provides taxpayers and citizens with information about the remuneration of their elected members.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The IRPW consulted with Councils and elected members prior to determining remuneration levels to be paid, this included visiting all 22 Welsh councils.

The Schedule of Members Remuneration will be published on the Councils website.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

It is a requirement that similar information is published on an annual basis.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Not relevant to this report.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Not relevant to this report.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Not relevant to this report.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Not relevant to this report.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

Not relevant to this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Monitored by the IRPW.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Schedule of Members Remuneration 2023/24*
- *Appendix 2 - IRPW Annual Report 2023/24*

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

MEMBERS' SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION

This Scheme is made under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 with regard to Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Regulations which apply to payments made to members and co-opted members of local authorities.

1. Basic Salary

- 1.1 A Basic Salary shall be paid to each elected Member of the Authority.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Regulations, the rate of the Basic Salary shall be reviewed annually as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 1.3 Where the term of office of a Member begins or ends other than at the beginning or end of a year, their entitlement to the Basic Salary will be pro-rata.
- 1.4 No more than one Basic Salary is payable to a Member of the Authority.

2. Senior Salaries & Civic Salaries

- 2.1 Members occupying specific posts shall be paid a Senior Salary as set out in **Schedule 1**.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Regulations, the rates of Senior Salaries and Civic Salaries shall be reviewed annually as determined by the Annual or Supplementary Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 2.3 Only one Senior Salary or Civic Salary is payable to a Member of the Authority.
- 2.4 A Member of the Authority cannot be paid a Senior Salary and a Civic Salary.
- 2.5 All Senior and Civic Salaries are paid inclusive of Basic Salary.
- 2.6 A Senior Salary may not be paid to more than the number of members specified by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in its Annual Report and cannot exceed fifty percent of the total membership of the authority, except to include a temporary Senior Salary office holder providing temporary cover for the family absence of the appointed office holder.
- 2.7 A Member of the Authority in receipt of a Band 1 or Band 2 Senior Salary **cannot** receive a salary from any National Park Authority (NPA) or Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) for which they have been nominated.
- 2.8 Where the term of Senior Salary or Civic Salary of a Member begins or ends other than at the beginning or end of a year, their entitlement to the Salary will be pro-rata.

3. Election to Forgo Entitlement to Allowance

- 3.1 A Member may, by notice in writing delivered to the Proper Officer of the authority, personally elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to any salary, allowance or fee payable under this Scheme from the date set out in the notice.

4. Suspension of a Member

- 4.1 Where a Member of the Authority is suspended or partially suspended from their responsibilities or duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, the part of the Basic Salary payable to them in respect of that period for which they are suspended will be withheld by the Authority (Section 155 (1) of the Measure).
- 4.2 Where a Member in receipt of a Senior Salary is suspended or partially suspended from being a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, the Authority must not make payments of the Member's Senior Salary for the duration of the suspension (Section 155 (1) of the Measure). If the partial suspension relates only to the specific responsibility element of the payment, the Member may retain the Basic Salary.

5. Repayment of salaries, allowances or fees

- 5.1 Where payment of any salary, allowance or fee has been made to a Member of the Authority or Co-opted Member in respect of any period during which the Member concerned:
- (a) is suspended or partially suspended from that Member's or Co-opted Member's duties or responsibilities in accordance with Part 3 of the 2000 Act or regulations made under that Act;
 - (b) ceases to be a Member of the Authority or Co-opted Member; or
 - (c) is in any other way not entitled to receive a salary, allowance or fee in respect of that period,

The Authority will require that such part of the allowance as relates to any such period be repaid.

6. Payments

- 6.1 Payments of all allowances will be made by the Chief Officer Resources by direct bank credit in instalments of one-twelfth of the Member's annual entitlement on the 28th day of each month.
- 6.2 Where payment has resulted in a Member receiving more than their entitlement to salaries, allowances or fees the Authority will require that such part that is overpayment be repaid.
- 6.3 All payments are subject to the appropriate tax and National Insurance deductions.

7. Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance

- 7.1 Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance shall be paid to a Member or Co-opted Member, who has caring responsibility for dependent children or

adults, or a personal care requirement, provided the Member incurs expenses in the provision of such care whilst undertaking 'approved' council duties.

- 7.2 Contribution towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance applies in respect of a dependant under 16 years of age, or a minor or adult who normally lives with the member as part of their family and who cannot be left unsupervised for whom the Member or Co-opted Member can show that care is required. If a Member or Co-opted Member has more than one dependant the Member may claim more than one allowance, provided the Member can demonstrate a need to make separate arrangements for care.
- 7.3 Eligible Members may claim contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance for actual and receipted costs as set out in **Schedule 1**. All claims for the contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance should be made in writing to Democratic Services detailing times, dates and reasons for claim. Receipts are required for both informal and formal care arrangements.

8. Family Absence

- 8.1 Members are entitled under the provisions of the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013 to a period of family absence, during which if they satisfy the prescribed conditions they are entitled to be absent from authority meetings.
- 8.2 When taking family absence Members are entitled to retain a basic salary irrespective of their attendance record immediately preceding the commencement of the family absence.
- 8.3 Should a senior salary holder be eligible for family absence they will be able to continue to receive their senior salary for the duration of the absence.
- 8.4 If the authority agrees that it is necessary to make a substitute appointment to cover the family absence of a senior salary holder the Member substituting will be eligible if the authority so decides to be paid a senior salary.
- 8.5 If the paid substitution results in the authority exceeding its maximum number of senior salaries, an addition to the maximum will be allowed for the duration of the substitution.

9. Co-optees' payments

- 9.1 A daily fee (with a provision for half day payments) shall be paid to Co-optees, provided they are statutory Co-optees with voting rights.
- 9.2 Co-optees' payments will be capped at a maximum of the equivalent of 10 full days a year for each committee to which an individual may be co-opted.
- 9.3 Payments will take into consideration travelling time to and from the place of the meeting, reasonable time for pre meeting preparation and length of meeting (up to the maximum of the daily rate).

- 9.4 The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) is designated as the “appropriate officer” and will determine preparation time, travelling time and length of meeting, the fee will be paid on the basis of this determination.
- 9.5 The Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance (Monitoring Officer) can determine in advance whether a meeting is programmed for a full day and the fee will be paid on the basis of this determination even if the meeting finishes before four hours has elapsed.
- 9.6 A half day meeting is defined as up to 4 hours.
- 9.7 A full day meeting is defined as over 4 hours.
- 9.8 The daily and half day fee for the Chairpersons of the Standards Committee and Audit Committee, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, is set out in **Schedule 1**.
- 9.9 The daily and half day fee for other statutory Co-optees with voting rights, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, is set out in **Schedule 1**.

10. Travel and Subsistence Allowances

10.1 General Principles

- 10.2 Members and Co-opted Members are entitled to claim travelling expenses when travelling on the Authority’s business for ‘approved duties’ as set out in **Schedule 2**. Where Members travel on the Authority’s business they are expected to travel by the most cost effective means. In assessing cost effectiveness regard will be given to journey time. A Member who does not travel by the most cost effective means may have their claim abated by an appropriate amount.
- 10.3 Where possible Members should share transport.
- 10.4 The distance claimed for mileage should be the shortest reasonable journey by road from the point of departure to the point at which the duty is performed, and similarly from the duty point to the place of return.
- 10.5 The rates of Members’ Travel and Subsistence Allowances are set out in **Schedule 3** and are subject to annual review by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 10.6 Where a Member is suspended or partially suspended from their responsibilities or duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (Conduct of Members), or regulations made under the Act, any travel and subsistence allowances payable to them in respect of that period for which they are suspended or partially suspended must be withheld by the Authority.

11. Travel by Private Vehicle

- 11.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has determined that the maximum travel rates payable should be the rates set out by Her Majesty’s Revenue & Customs

for the use of private cars, motor cycles and pedal cycles plus any passenger supplement.

11.2 The mileage rates for private vehicles as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales are set out in **Schedule 3**.

11.3 Where a Member makes use of their private vehicle for approved duty purposes, the vehicle must be insured for business use. Proof of appropriate insurance must be provided to the Authority on request.

12. Travel by Public Transport

12.1 Rail or Coach Travel

Unless otherwise authorised rail tickets will be second-class.

12.2 Taxi Fares

Taxi fares will only be reimbursed where their use has been authorised for cases of urgency, where no public transport is reasonably available, or a Member has a particular personal need. Re-imburement will be upon receipt only.

12.3 Air Fare

Travel by air is permissible if it is the most cost effective means of transport. Authorisation of the Head of Democratic Services is required and tickets will be purchased directly by the Council.

12.4 Travel Abroad

Travel abroad on the Authority's business will only be permitted where authorised by Head of Democratic Services. Democratic Services will arrange travel and accommodation.

12.5 Other Travel Expenses

Members are entitled to reimbursement of toll fees, parking fees, overnight garaging and other necessary travel associated expenses. Re-imburement will be upon receipt only.

13. Overnight Accommodation

13.1 Overnight stays will only be permitted where the Authority's business extends to two days or more, or the venue is at such a distance that early morning or late night travel would be unreasonable. All overnight stays must receive prior authorisation from the Head of Democratic Services.

13.2 Overnight accommodation will be booked by the Council. Wherever possible the overnight accommodation will be pre-paid or invoiced.

13.3 Direct booking of overnight accommodation by a Member will only be permitted in the event of an emergency. Reimbursement will only be made upon the production of a

receipt and will be at a level deemed reasonable and not in excess of the rates set out in **Schedule 3**.

14 Subsistence Allowance

- 14.1 The day subsistence rate to meet the costs of meals and refreshments in connection with approved duties (including breakfast when not provided as part of overnight accommodation) is set out in **Schedule 3**. The maximum daily rate covers a 24 hour period and can be claimed for any meal that is relevant, providing such a claim is supported by receipt(s)
- 14.2 No provision is made for subsistence claims within the Authority.

15. Claims and Payments

- 15.1 A claim for travel and subsistence allowances must be made in writing within two months of the end of the calendar month in which entitlement to allowances arises and must be accompanied by the relevant receipts.
- 15.2 Allowances will be paid by the Chief Officer Resources by direct bank credit.

16. Pensions

- 16.1 The Authority shall enable its Members who are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

17 Supporting the work of Authority Members

- 17.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales expects Members to be provided with adequate support to carry out their duties and that the support provided should take account of the specific needs of individual Members. The Authority's Democratic Services Committee is required to review the level of support provided to Members and should take proposals for reasonable support to the full council.
- 17.2 All elected Members and Co-opted Members should be provided with adequate telephone, email and internet facilities to give electronic access to appropriate information.
- 17.3 Such support should be without cost to any Member. Deductions must not be made from Members' salaries as a contribution towards the cost of support which the Authority has decided is necessary for the effectiveness and or efficiency of Members.

18 Compliance

- 18.1 In accordance with the Regulations, the Authority must comply with the requirements of Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of the monitoring and publication of payments made to Members and Co-opted Members as set out in **Schedule 4**.

Members and Co-opted Members are reminded that expense claims are subject to both internal and external audit.

SCHEDULE 1

SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION 2023-24

MEMBERS ENTITLED TO BASIC SALARY	ANNUAL AMOUNT OF BASIC SALARY
<p>The following named elected members of the authority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Keith Chaplin2. Julie Holt3. Ross Leadbeater4. Godfrey Thomas5. Dean Woods6. John P Morgan7. Jules Gardner8. John Hill9. Derrick Bevan *10. George Humphreys11. Malcolm Day12. Dai Davies13. Jen Morgan14. Carl Bainton15. Jacqueline Thomas ***16. Lee Parsons17. Peter Baldwin18. Sonia Behr **19. Gareth A Davies20. David Wilkshire21. Dianne Rowberry22. Ellen Jones ** <p><i>* Denotes relinquished amount of £200 per annum</i> <i>** Denotes relinquished amount of £240 per annum</i> <i>*** Denotes relinquished amount of £480 per annum</i></p>	£17,600

	SENIOR SALARIES ENTITLEMENTS (includes basic salary)		ANNUAL AMOUNT OF SENIOR SALARY
	ROLE	MEMBER	
1.	Leader / Cabinet Member – Corporate Overview & Performance	Stephen Thomas	£56,100 (Relinquished £3,240 per annum)
2.	Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member – Place & Environment	Helen Cunningham	£39,270 (Relinquished £1500 per annum)
3.	Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration and Economic Development	John C Morgan	£33,660 (Relinquished £1,200 per annum)
4.	Cabinet Member – People & Education	Sue Edmunds	£33,660 (Relinquished £240 per annum)
5.	Cabinet Member – People & Social Services	Hayden Trollope	£33,660 (Relinquished £1,200 per annum)
6.	Chairperson of People Scrutiny Committee	Tommy Smith	£26,400 (Relinquished £240 per annum)
7.	Chairperson of Place Scrutiny Committee	Malcolm Cross	£26,400 (Relinquished £240 per annum)
8.	Chairperson of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee	Wayne Hodgins	£26,400
9.	Chairperson of Planning Committee/General Licensing/Statutory Licensing Committees	Lisa Winnett	£26,400
10.	Leader of the Independent Group / Chairperson of Corporate & Performance Scrutiny Committee	Joanna Wilkins	£26,400
11.	Presiding Member of the Council	Chris Smith	£26,400 (Relinquished £600 per annum)

	SENIOR SALARIES ENTITLEMENTS (includes basic salary)		ANNUAL AMOUNT OF SENIOR SALARY
	ROLE	MEMBER	
12.	Not Used		
13.	Not Used		
14.	Not Used		
15.	Not Used		
16.	Not Used		
A maximum of 16 senior salaries for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council may be paid and this has not been exceeded.			

ENTITLEMENT TO CIVIC SALARIES		ANNUAL AMOUNT OF CIVIC SALARY
ROLE	MEMBER	
Civic Head (Mayor or Chair)	Not Used	N/A
Deputy Civic Head (Deputy Mayor or Chair)	Not Used	N/A

ENTITLEMENT AS STATUTORY CO-OPTees		AMOUNT OF CO-OPTees ALLOWANCES
ROLE	MEMBER	
Chairperson Of Standards Committee	TBC	£268 Daily Fee £134 ½ Day Fee
Chairperson of Governance & Audit Committee	TBC	£268 Daily Fee £134 ½ Day Fee
Statutory Co-optees – Ethics & Standards Committee, Education OVSC Committee, Governance & Audit Committee, Crime and Disorder OVSC	<u>Ethics & Standards:</u> R. Lynch S. Williams S. Rosser H. Roberts Vacant <u>Audit</u> M. Veale J. Absalom Vacant <u>People Scrutiny Committee</u> T. Baxter	£210 Daily Fee £105 ½ Day Fee

ENTITLEMENT AS STATUTORY CO-OPTEEES		AMOUNT OF CO-OPTEEES ALLOWANCES
ROLE	MEMBER	
	T. Pritchard Vacant	
Statutory Co-optees -ordinary members of Standards Committee who also chair Standards Committees for Community Councils	Not Used	£238 Daily Fee £119 ½ Day Fee

Contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance	
All Members	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal (registered with Care Inspectorate Wales) care costs to be paid as evidenced. • Informal (unregistered) care costs to be paid up to a maximum rate equivalent to the Real UK Living Wage at the time the costs are incurred. 	

Members Support – what is provided in terms of telephone, internet or email (see Determination 6)	
Telephone Support for Executive Members	
Telephone Support for Chairs of Committees	
Telephone Support for all other Members	
Access to Email for Executive Members	
Access to Email for Chairs of Committees	
Access to Email for all other Members	
Internet Support for Executive Members	
Internet Support for Chairs of Committees	
Internet Support for all other Members	

SCHEDULE 2

Approved duties: -

- attendance at a meeting of the Authority or of any committee of the Authority or of any body to which the Authority makes appointments or nominations or of any committee of such a body;
- attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the Authority is a member;
- attendance at any other meeting the holding of which is authorised by the Authority or by a committee of the Authority or by a joint committee of the Authority and one or more other Authorities;
- a duty undertaken for the purpose of or in connection with the discharge of the functions of Cabinet;
- a duty undertaken in pursuance of a standing order which requires a Member or Members to be present when tender documents are opened;
- a duty undertaken in connection with the discharge of any function of the Authority which empowers or requires the Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
- attendance at any training or developmental event approved by the Authority or its Cabinet;
- Any other duty approved by the authority, or any other duty of a class so approved, undertaken for the purpose, of or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees.

SCHEDULE 3

Mileage Rates

All sizes of private motor vehicle Up to 10,000 miles Over 10,000 miles	45 pence per mile 25 pence per mile
Private Motor Cycles Pedal Cycles	24 pence per mile 20 pence per mile
Passenger supplement	05 pence per mile

Subsistence Allowance

The day subsistence rate is up to a maximum of £28 and covers a 24 hour period and can be claimed for any meal if relevant provided such a claim is supported by receipts.

Re-imbusement of alcoholic drinks is not permitted.

Overnight Stay

The maximum allowances for an overnight stay are £200 for London and £95 for elsewhere. A maximum of £30 is available for an overnight stay with friends or relatives whilst on approved duty.

SCHEDULE 4

Compliance

- The Authority will arrange for the publication on the council's website the total sum paid by it to each Member and Co-opted Member in respect of salary, allowances, fees and reimbursements not later than 30 September following the close of the year to which it relates. In the interests of transparency this will include remuneration from all public service appointments held by elected Members.
- The Authority will publish on the council's website a statement of the basic responsibility of a councillor and role descriptors for senior salary office holders, which clearly identify the duties expected.
- The Authority will publish on the council's website the annual schedule of Member Remuneration not later than 31 July of the year to which the schedule refers.
- The authority will send a copy of the schedule to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales not later than 31 July of the year to which the schedule refers.
- The Authority will maintain records of Member or Co-opted Members attendance at meetings of council, cabinet and committees and other approved duties for which a Member or Co-opted Member submits a claim for reimbursement.
- The Authority will arrange for the publication on the council's website of annual reports prepared by Members.
- When the Authority agrees a paid substitution for family absence it will notify the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales within 14 days of the date of the decision of the details including the particular post and the duration of the substitution.



Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Annual Report

February 2023

Annual Report 2023 to 2024

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Section 1: Introduction

This is the Final Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, setting the Decisions and Determinations on pay, expenses and benefits for elected members of principal councils, community and town councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2023.

This is my first Report as Chair of the Panel, having been appointed in June 2022. I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Bader, the outgoing Chair, for his service over many years and who led the Panel through two significant pieces of work last year – the [Independent 10 Year Review of the Panel](#) and restoring the link between elected members salaries and average earnings in Wales. I also thank Joe Stockley for his service and I am pleased to announce the appointment of Bev Smith in June this year. Saz Willey, Vice Chair, and Ruth Glazzard continued to lead the work of the Panel during this period of change and I thank them for the support they have given both Bev and I, as new members. Ruth Glazzard stood down from the Panel at the end of 2022, when she took up a new Public Appointment. The Public Bodies Unit is currently recruiting for a new Panel member.

This year the Panel has continued to focus on and take forward the recommendations from the [Ten-Year Review](#). There are four key strands to this work – review the way we work, set out a three year strategy for the Panel, improve how we communicate and engage with stakeholders and build a robust evidence base to inform decisions.

We have embarked on the recommended Effectiveness Review of the way we work and have started developing our longer-term strategy with Panel Development Days in August and February. We have agreed that our mission is to deliver a fair and accountable reward framework for Wales, to support communities to have their voices heard within our local democratic bodies. We will use our expertise and professionalism to build trusting, sustainable partnerships to inform our work and deliver the changes Wales needs.

We aim to improve the way we communicate and engage both with our immediate stakeholders and the general public. As a first step we now publish a summary of our monthly meetings on our [website](#), but recognise there is much more to do. We aim to improve the accessibility and ease of use of our website and develop it into a more useful resource tool for people. We intend it to be an easy-to-use store of information on our Determinations, and, building on our current [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page, develop our Guidance on how all decisions should be applied.

Whilst we are an independent body, we will continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders engaged in promoting participation in local democracy. The Welsh Government published research exploring the barriers to standing for elected office and the changing role of the councillor and held a series of events across Wales to highlight and discuss the findings.

We took an active part in these events, hosting seminars on remuneration and the changing role of local councillors. We welcomed the opportunity to share knowledge, experience, and best practice across a range of subjects and particularly the focus

on developing a shared understanding of how we can take collective action to increase diversity in local democracy.

The Panel has decided that this year will be a year of consolidation. Major changes were put in place last year, and a significant uplift in salary levels was agreed. We wish to allow time for last year's Determinations to bed in and to allow the Panel to continue its development of a research and evidence base to inform future decisions and move to a longer term planning cycle. This report reflects that decision.

During the past few years, we have been considering the structure of our reports and how we can make them more accessible to all. We have concluded that much of the information published replicates previous years, often without significant change. For this report we decided to focus on the changes made as a result of the proposals. We have therefore decided that the majority of the content set out in previous reports will be removed from the report and placed on the Panel's website. We will make arrangements for those who are unable to access the website.

This change has significantly reduced the size of the report and made it more manageable to navigate. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

We included an online survey in this year's Draft Annual Report for the first time and would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete this, or send in written responses to our consultation questions and comments on the Draft report.

Panel Membership

Frances Duffy, Chair
Saz Willey, Vice Chair
Bev Smith

Detailed information about the members can be found on the website: [Panel website](#)

Section 2: Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Role of the Panel

The Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of members of the following organisations.

- Principal councils – county and county borough councils
- Community and town councils
- National Park Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Corporate Joint Committees

The Panel is an independent body and is able to make decisions about:

- The salary structure within which members are remunerated
- The type and nature of allowances to be paid to members
- Whether payments are mandatory or allow a level of local flexibility
- Arrangements in respect of family absence
- Arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Panel's decisions

The Panel is an independent organisation and the organisations listed above are required, by law, to implement the decisions it makes. There is no requirement set by the Panel for principal councils to vote on the Determinations. The Panel also sets out Guidance on how its Determinations should be applied, and all councils must have due regard to this Guidance. The current guidance is set out in the [2022 to 2023 Annual Report, Annex 2 "The Regulations"](#). This guidance is still applicable.

The Panel is also consultee for proposed changes to the pay of principal council Chief Executives.

Principles

The work of the Panel is underpinned by a set of principles which guides its approach, methodology and decision making. They are:

- **Upholding trust and confidence** – Citizens rightly expect that all those who choose to serve in local authorities uphold the public trust by embracing the values and ethics implicit in such public service.
- **Simplicity** – The Framework is clear and understandable.
- **Remuneration** – The Framework provides for payment to members of authorities who carry a responsibility for serving their communities. The level of payment should not act as a barrier to taking up or continuing in the post.
- **Diversity** – Democracy is strengthened when the membership of authorities adequately reflects the demographic and cultural make-up of the communities such authorities serve.

- **Accountability** - Taxpayers and citizens have the right to receive value for money from public funds committed to the remuneration of those who are elected, appointed or co-opted to serve in the public interest.
- **Fairness** - The Framework will be capable of being applied consistently to members of all authorities within the Panel's remit as a means of ensuring that levels of remuneration are fair, affordable and generally acceptable.
- **Quality** - The Panel recognises that the complex mix of governance, scrutiny and regulatory duties incumbent upon members requires them to engage with a process of continuous quality improvement.
- **Transparency** - Transparency of members' remuneration is in the public interest.

Section 3: Summary of Deliberations and Determinations

Methodology

Each year the Panel engages with members of the bodies for which it sets remuneration levels, officers within those organisations and clerks. The Panel also engages with relevant membership bodies including Welsh Local Government Association, One Voice Wales and the Society for Local Council Clerks. It does this through a range of meetings which, at the moment, remain mostly online. The Panel has continued with these discussions. They provide an opportunity for the Panel to explore views about existing arrangements, the impact decisions are having on individuals, how the arrangements are operating in practice and any issues or concerns individuals wish to raise. They have also provided an opportunity for discussion about emerging situations which the Panel has considered in its decision making.

The draft report was published widely and members of the public encouraged to and have provided valuable feedback and we welcome this. This year, the Panel had the opportunity to engage with a wider group of stakeholders at the three Welsh Government “Diversity in Democracy” events and workshops.

The Panel also considers feedback from the publishing of the Annual Report in the previous year. The changes made in last year’s Report, in particular the uplift in the basic salary, seem to have been well received by stakeholders. The issues raised with the Panel have all been centred around the detail of the Determinations, asking for guidance on how they should be applied or asking for points of clarification where the text of the Report was unclear.

The Panel has therefore agreed to review the format and structure of the main Report and make better use of the Panel website to provide information and guidance.

The Panel has a duty to set payments that are fair and that encourage and enable democratic participation. It must also take account of affordability and acceptability.

In making its determinations the Panel considered a range of benchmarks, including past, current and projected indices and actual figures and the known and forecast extent and impact of multiple economic and social factors. These included post Brexit and COVID work environments and the cost of living, energy and climate crises.

Consultation on the draft Annual Report

The Panel produced and issued a draft report on 6 October 2022 for an eight-week consultation, which closed on 1 December 2022.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer five questions using an online survey or by return email. A total of 89 responses were received online, whilst 44 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox. The

Panel would like to thank everyone who contributed to the consultation. A summary of the responses is included in section 4.

Overall, the responses supported the Panel's determinations and so no changes have been made in the final Determinations. In some areas the wording of the Determinations has been strengthened to clarify areas of uncertainty raised through the consultation, primarily a restatement of the ability for members, on an individual basis, to opt out of part or all of their remuneration.

In addition, the consultation responses, highlighted a few areas that the Panel will consider in their forward work programme for this year. The forward work programme will be published on the Panel's website at the end of March.

Following consideration of the views received in response to its consultation the Panel now makes its final determinations.

Panel's Determinations for 2023 to 2024

Basic salary for elected members of principal councils: Determination 1

The basic salary, paid to all elected members, is remuneration for the responsibility of community representation and participation in the scrutiny, regulatory and related functions of local governance. It is based on a full time equivalent of three days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment and no changes are proposed for 2023 to 2024.

Last year the Panel reset the basic salary to align with the [2020 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\)](#) published by the Office of National Statistics. This reduced the imbalance that had arisen between the basic salary of members of principal councils and the average salaries of their constituents. The change took effect from the May 2022 local elections. The rationale for this significant step can be found in last year's Annual Report and a detailed explanatory paper setting out the historical context and analysis is available on the Panel's website.

Building on this decision the Panel has determined that for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 it is right to retain a link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. **The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of the all Wales 2021 ASHE, the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £17,600. This will represent a 4.76% increase in the basic salary.**

Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils: Determination 2

The limit on the number of senior salaries payable ("the cap") will remain in place. At the 2022 local elections boundary reviews changed the number of members for some councils. The Panel adjusted the senior salary cap for these councils in its 2022 to 2023 Annual Report. As there are no further changes for 2023 to 2024, the

maximum number of senior salaries payable within each council remains as set out in the 2022 to 2023 [Report](#).

All senior salaries include the basic salary payment. The different levels of additional responsibility of and between each role is recognised in a banded framework. The framework was revised last year after a review of differentials and market comparators. No changes to banding are proposed this year. Early next year the Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed.

The [ASHE 2021](#) increase applies to the role element of Band 1 and Band 2 salaries – leader, deputy leader and executive members.

To complete the last year’s realignment of the framework, Band 3 and Band 4 salary holders will receive a small increase to the role element of their pay and the role element of Band 5 pay will remain frozen. The increase in basic salary will apply.

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £66,000. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Salaries payable to Basic, Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils

Description	Remuneration		
Elected members of principal councils			
Basic salary (payable to all elected members)	£17,600		
Senior salaries (inclusive of basic salary)	Group A	Group B	Group C
Band 1:			
Leader	£66,000	£59,400	£56,100
Deputy Leader	£46,200	£41,580	£39,270
Band 2:			
Executive members	£39,600	£35,640	£33,660
Band 3:			
Committee Chairs (if remunerated): Civic Head Presiding Officer	£26,400		
Band 4:			
Leader of largest Opposition Group	£26,400		
Band 5:			
Leader of Other Political Groups Deputy Civic Head	£21,340		
Deputy Presiding Member – no role payment	£17,600		

Group A: Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea

Group B: Bridgend, Caerphilly, Carmarthenshire, Conwy, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Newport, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Vale of Glamorgan, Wrexham

Group C: Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Isle of Anglesey

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Travel and subsistence;
- Care and personal assistance;
- Sickness absence;
- Corporate Joint Committees,
- Assistants to the Executive,
- Additional salaries and Job sharing arrangements and
- Co-opted members

Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,400.

There are no other changes.

Contribution to costs and expenses of members of Community and Town Councils: Determination 4

Last year the Panel carried out a major review of the remuneration framework for community and town councils and undertook a comprehensive consultation exercise with the sector. The Framework was updated then and this year the Panel has decided to make limited but important changes.

The Panel recognise that all members of community and town councils necessarily spend time working from home on council business. This was the case before and during COVID and is continuing. As a result, members have extra domestic costs and also need office consumables.

The Panel considers members should not be out of pocket for carrying out their duties. However, an individual may decline to receive part, or all, of the payments if they so wish. This must be done in writing and is an individual matter. A community or town council member wishing to decline payments must themselves write to their proper officer to do so. Each community and town council must ensure that it does not create a climate which prevents persons accessing any monies to which they are entitled that may support them to participate in local democracy. Payments should be made efficiently and promptly.

Reimbursement for extra costs of working from home

All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home.

Reimbursement for consumables

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.

It is a matter for each council to make and record a policy decision in respect of when and how the payments are made and whether they are paid monthly, yearly or otherwise. The policy should also state whether and how to recover any payments made to a member who leaves or changes their role during the financial year.

Guidance on taxation

It is not within the remit or authority of the Panel to provide specific advice on matters of taxation. Advice can be provided by One Voice Wales and guidance is available on the HMRC website.

The £156 should fall under the statutory provisions of section 316A ITEPA: [Income Tax \(Earnings and Pensions\) Act 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) and the current amount that can be paid without attracting a tax liability is £6 per week: [Expenses and benefits: homeworking: Homeworking expenses and benefits that are exempt from tax - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

The level of payments is set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Payments to Community and Town Councils

Type of payment	Requirement
Group 1	Electorate over 14,000
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all Members
Senior Role	Mandatory £500 for 1 member; optional for up to 7
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Costs of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 2	Electorate 10,000 to 13,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Mandatory for 1 member; optional up to 5
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 3	Electorate 5,000 to 9,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 4	Electorate 1,000 to 4,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory

Type of payment	Requirement
Group 5	Electorate less than 1,000
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory

Group number	Size of Electorate
Group 1	Electorate over 14,000
Group 2	10,000 to 13,999
Group 3	5,000 to 9,999
Group 4	1,000 to 4,999
Group 5	Under 1,000

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Payments for undertaking senior roles;
- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs;
- Compensation for financial loss:
- Attendance allowance and
- Co-opted members

Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5

The three national parks in Wales - Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia were formed to protect spectacular landscapes and provide recreation opportunities for the public. The Environment Act 1995 led to the creation of a National Park Authority (NPA) for each park.

National Park authorities comprise members who are either elected members nominated by the principal councils within the national park area or are members appointed by the Welsh Government through the Public Appointments process. Welsh Government appointed and council nominated members are treated equally in relation to remuneration.

The three fire and rescue services (FRAs) in Wales: Mid and West Wales, North Wales and South Wales were formed as part of Local Government re-organisation in 1996. FRAs comprise elected members who are nominated by the Principal Councils within each fire and rescue service area.

Payments will increase as a result of the uplift proposed for elected members of principal councils. Therefore, there will also be an uplift of 4.76% in the basic salary element.

The remuneration for Chairs will remain linked to a Band 3 senior salary of principal councils. Therefore there will be a small increase to the role element of their pay. Deputy Chairs, Committee Chairs and other senior roles will remain linked to Band 5. Therefore their role element of pay will remain frozen. The increase in basic salary will apply. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities, is set out in Table 3.

Table 3 – Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

National Parks Authorities	
Basic salary for ordinary member	£4,964
Chair	£13,764
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£8,704
Committee Chair or other senior post	£8,704
Fire and Rescue Authorities	
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,482
Chair	£11,282
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£6,222
Committee Chair or other senior post	£6,222

All other Determinations for 2022 to 2023 will still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering;

- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs;

- Compensation for financial loss;
- Co-opted members and
- Restrictions on receiving double remuneration where a member holds more than one post.

Section 4: Consultation: Summary of Responses

The Panel produced and issued a draft report on 6 October 2022 for an eight-week consultation, which closed on 1 December 2022.

The website link and pdf version of the draft report was sent to:

- One Voice Wales
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Society for Local Council Clerks
- Principal councils
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- National Park Authorities and
- Community and Town Councils.

Determination 1: Basic Salary increase

Not all councils commented. Three highlighted whether it was correct that members be given an increase during the current cost of living crisis. However, these accepted that personal circumstances of members need to be considered and therefore it should be a personal matter for members to determine themselves whether or not they accept the pay rise or make the choice to opt-out. The Panel considered this feedback, and, whilst mindful of the overall impact on council budgets, agreed that the increase in basic salary was an important factor in encouraging and supporting a diverse group of people to stand for election.

Determination 2: Senior Salaries

There were two key issues raised by stakeholders; firstly whether the level of remuneration adequately recognises the increasing responsibilities of principal council members and secondly whether the current maximum number of senior salaries ought to be reviewed. The Panel noted these points and will consider whether this area should be a focus of the future workplan.

Determination 3: Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees

No representations were received in relation to the salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Determination 4: Payments towards costs and expenses of members of Community and Town Councils

Over half of the responses highlighted a concern that the payments were mandatory and that their council did not wish to increase their precept to meet these costs. The fact that the Report did not restate that members can choose to decline their entitlement to payments was not helpful. However, other responses supported the payments.

Ten per cent of the responses received raised concerns about the costs of administration and fifteen responses raised questions about the correct treatment for tax purposes. One clerk also asked if the payments that members receive could be

published globally, similar to how the contribution to costs of care and personal assistance is publicised.

Other comments mentioned the need to encourage “green” travel and one queried the need for payments to be made for senior positions.

The Panel considered these responses and agreed to reiterate the policy on individual opt outs in the Final Report and to provide a link to helpful HMRC websites.

The Panel will continue to work with stakeholders to improve support and advice to Community and Town Councils.

Determination 5: Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

No representations were made in relation to payments to members of National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer five questions via an online survey or by return email. A total of 89 responses were received online, whilst 48 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox.

Question 1

The Panel has continued to use the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office for National Statistics as the benchmark for setting the basic salary of elected members of principal councils. There is a corresponding proportionate increase proposed for the members of National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel has continued to refer to the last published ASHE which was 2021. Do you agree that the basic salary element should be referenced to the [ASHE 2021](#) data.

Responses

90% of those who answered this question agreed that the Panel should reference the basic salary element to the ASHE 2021 data. 3% did not agree whilst 7% had no opinion on this question

Question 2

The Panel has made changes to the payment of costs and expenses of members of community and town councils. Do you agree with the addition of the “consumables” element?

Responses

72% agreed to the addition of the ‘consumables’ element, whilst 25% did not agree to this additional payment.

The most common theme in the answers given to question two was whether this payment was now mandatory or if the payment was optional and that Councillors had the choice to forgo. The same question was asked of the £156 payment.

Question 3

The Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed to inform future Determinations. Are you content that the Panel should build this review into its future work plan and build the evidence base to support decisions?

Responses

97% of those who responded to this question agreed.

The majority of the answers highlighted the additional work that elected members now undertook in their role.

Community and town councils welcomed this as it would recognise the amount of work that the sector does.

Question 4

We have significantly reduced the size of the report this year to concentrate on key decisions made and intend to make more use of the website to provide easy to use guidance to users. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

How would you like to access information and guidance from the Panel? (choose all that apply)

Responses

Summary report with links to detailed guidance	84
Easy to use guidance notes	71
Frequently asked questions	49
Website	54
Social media	16
Information events	25
Other	14

If other, please specify:

The proposed summary report, detailed guidance notes and frequently asked questions were welcomed. Other answers included seminars, online meetings and an information event.

Have you experienced any challenges accessing or understanding our guidance and information through our website? Please let us know how we can make it easier for you?

A simplified report and separate guidance document will help stakeholders find the information they require.

No stakeholders experienced any challenges accessing or understanding the guidance and information through the website

Question 5

The Panel intend to undertake a series of engagements with all relevant stakeholders over the next year as part of the development of its forward planning and building of its evidence and research strategy.

Have you any comments that would help the Panel shape this engagement?

For example, a preference for online polls, the holding of engagement events, virtual or face to face, which groups should be involved, how do we engage with prospective candidates etc.

Responses

The most popular answers given to this question were:

- online polls
- Virtual meetings
- Face to face meetings

There was a mixture of support for both online and in-person events. Some responses proposed that the Panel held regional engagement events so that several Councils could attend at the same time. Other comments received suggested these events would help to discuss any issues with the Panel in depth and for the Panel to receive a broader viewpoint and more comprehensive feedback on any proposals.

One Voice Wales offered support to the Panel in arranging any events in the Community and Town Council sector.

Summary of Determinations:

Determination 1:

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils will set at £17,600.

Determination 2:

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £66,000. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out in Table 1.

Determination 3:

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,400.

Determination 4:

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.

Determination 5:

The basic pay of members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities has been increased by 4.76%. All payments are set out in Table 3.

Determination 6:

All other Determinations set out in the 2022 to 2023 [Annual Report](#) of the Panel remain valid and should be applied.

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The Report and other information about the Panel and its work are available on our website at:

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales](#)

Agenda Item 7

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Democratic Services Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th July 2023**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Engagement & Participation Strategy**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Steve Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Sarah King, Head of Democratic Services, Governance and Partnerships**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	29/06/23	12.06.23		03/07/23	22/06/23			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide details in advance of Member and wider public involvement around the development of a new Engagement and Participation Strategy for Blaenau Gwent Council.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Our previous engagement strategy document, 'Our Approach to Engagement 2018 to 2022' has now concluded and a new approach needs to be developed and implemented. As well as this, we have a statutory requirement within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, to publish our intentions regarding how we intend to participate with the people of Blaenau Gwent. (see section 4)
- 2.2 The intention is to combine the two elements into one strategy document, and to assist in the development of the strategy document there is an intention to involve members, staff and the public to ensure that we are 'engaging' appropriately and allowing sufficient 'participation'.
- 2.3 The document will set out why we need to engage, who with and how we will achieve this. We will use the same principle for the participation element, although this will be more specific to address the requirements detailed in section 4 of this report to ensure that local people are able to participate in the making of decisions by the council.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 Option 1 – That the Committee notes the planning and consultation process for a new Engagement & Participation Strategy and agrees to a joint Corporate Overview & Performance Scrutiny and Democratic Services Committees Workshop on 26th July 2023 to shape development of the initial Strategy.

Option 2 – That the Committee notes the planning and consultation process for a new Engagement & Participation Strategy and provides any further comment.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Statutory Responsibilities**

4.1 The Corporate Plan 2022/27 sets out that the community of Blaenau Gwent is at the heart of everything the Council does. Engagement, participation and customer experience feature as a key theme which runs across the Council in order to shape services and make decisions.

4.2 We are committed to engage effectively and this is underpinned by a range of legislation including the:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Welsh Language Measure 2011
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – wherein we must address:

- a) ways of promoting awareness among local people of the principal council's functions;
- b) ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails;
- c) ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the principal council;
- d) ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the principal council about a decision before, and after, it is made;
- e) arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees);
- f) ways of promoting awareness among members of the principal council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

Whilst there are no direct costs associated with the adoption of an Engagement & Participation Strategy, the public consultation process will utilise existing staff resources to develop and deliver any engagement workshop events, whilst the commitments within the final Strategy may require consideration of the resources currently committed to corporate engagement.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Failure to develop an Engagement and Participation Strategy would lead to the Council not complying with its' obligations under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

5.3 **Legal**

Failure to develop an Engagement and Participation Strategy would lead to the Council not complying with its' obligations under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

5.4 **Human Resources**

The Policy and Performance Division leads on the delivery of the Council's duties under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Ongoing training and development will also be required during the lift of the Strategy to successfully embed the engagement framework across all council services.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

To enable effective monitoring of the impact of the Engagement and Participation Strategy, monitoring of key metrics relating to increased engagement and participation will be considered during the development of the plan. Progress updates will be reported through the Joint Report and via a mid-term report to the Committee.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

It is anticipated that there will be an improvement in the public interest in the workings of the Council, especially concerning the decision-making process. There is an expectation that the public will have an improved understanding of council business, as well as a greater direct contribution to the democratic process.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

An Action Plan has been developed to show the necessary involvement from multiple parties in the development of the strategy as below.

WHAT	HOW
Engage Members	Joint Scrutiny Workshop Online survey/questionnaire All-member Workshop (to finalise)
Consult Staff	CLT WCLT Staff Workshops Online survey/questionnaire
Public Consultation	Online survey Engage with known community activity groups BGCBC Engagement Forums Workshop events (ensure geographical spread)
Participation Case Studies	Lived experiences from council and community members
Consider responses/ feedback and create draft	Officer working group Scrutiny
Publish final Strategy	CLT, Scrutiny Committee & Council approval
Engage / Inform staff & embed corporately (ongoing)	DMTs Staff training / Workshops

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Strategy will take consideration of the data and future trend information in terms of increasing levels of engagement and participation in democratic processes. An enhanced, more coordinated engagement framework can enable richer public engagement on what local people consider would make the area a better place for the future and have most positive impact on their well-being. Increased levels of participation will help ensure future generations continue to participate in local government decision-making.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Corporate Plan considers Prevention as one of the five ways of working under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The Engagement & Participation Strategy will outline a series of steps for enhancing local engagement and participation, taking preventative action to help achieve the objectives.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Strategy will support collaborative and partnership working. The Council's Engagement team are active members of several regional and national networks, designed to develop and share best practice and ensure that our engagement and participation activities focus on economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being outcomes.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The corporate engagement and participation framework needs to be shaped by members and must be integrated and embedded across all council service areas to ensure a consistent approach to engaging with our residents, community groups, and businesses. This will be an ongoing approach throughout the development and delivery of the final Strategy.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Increasing participation in hybrid/virtual committee meetings for members of the public and building on opportunities to engage with residents, businesses and community groups virtually as well as in person, reducing the need to travel to a central location by car.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

An IIA will be undertaken during the development of the Strategy. It is anticipated that the Strategy, alongside the new Strategic Equalities Plan, will have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Through the Corporate Overview & Performance Scrutiny and Democratic Services Committees.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

N/A