

MEETING	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE	19 NOVEMBER, 2019
SUBJECT	FINANCIAL REMUNERATION FOR ELECTED MEMBERS
PURPOSE	Report on the information of the Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
RECOMMENDATION	Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider any responses they wish to submit as a response to the consultation on financial remuneration • Consider how to promote the process of care reimbursement claims.
AUTHOR	Vera Jones, Democratic Services Manager

BACKGROUND

1. The annual report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (February 2020) was published in draft form on 15 October, 2019. The report is submitted to the Democratic Services Committee in order to make observations upon which to form a response to the draft consultation by the Panel. There is a need to respond to the consultation by 10 December, 2019. A link to the full report can be viewed via the link below.

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report - February 2020](#)

MAIN MATTERS

2.1 The main points that derive from the report are as follows:

- Increase of £350 in the basic salary for all elected Members (increasing from £13,868 to £14,218 - a 2.5% increase) from April 2020.
- No additional increases will be paid to senior salary post-holders in 2020. In other words, the salary of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Members of the Executive, Committee Chairs (who receive remuneration) and Leader of the largest Opposition Party will only receive an increase to the basic salary (i.e. an increase of £350 only).
- The salary for the Head of the Civic Department and the deputy head of the Civic Department has been set on the same scale as last year, with only an increase to the basis salary.

- 2.2 As reported annually, the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales independently sets the salary levels for all Councillors in Wales.
- 2.3 If an Elected Member decides to surrender the salary, it is necessary for him/her to declare so in writing to the Head of Democratic Services, see clause 3.5 which states as follows:

“This salary will be paid by every principal authority in Wales from 1 April 2020 to all of its elected members unless any individual member will personally, and in writing, opt to receive a lower sum”.

REIMBURSEMENT OF CARE COSTS

- 3.1 One of the main issues that needs to be addressed according to the Panel is the low number of Councillors using the provision in the framework to reimburse care costs.

“From the discussions during our visits with councils, it is clear that very few members use the provision in the framework to reimburse care costs. It appears that some members are still reluctant to claim all of what they are entitled to in order to support their work due to concerns regarding the unfavourable publicity this could attract (see Appendix 4 for publishing requirements).”

- 3.2 The Panel further reports:

“We urge the Democratic Services Committee to take steps to encourage more members to use this element of our framework and to facilitate the claim process so that the members in question do not face financial disadvantage. We are currently undertaking a review of this provision with the aim of encouraging more members with care responsibilities to take advantage of it.”

- 3.3 The numbers who claim care cost reimbursements (caring for an older or young dependant) is very low in Wales, and this is also true here in Gwynedd. We now publish the information anonymously on the Council website but it appears that Members are still reluctant to claim the care cost reimbursements. Committee Members are asked to consider what steps can be taken to further promote these rights.

RECOMMENDATION

- 4 Members of the Committee are asked to:
- Consider any specific observations in response to the consultation
 - Consider how to promote the process of care reimbursement claims.