



<b>Date of meeting:</b>	4 November 2025
<b>Subject</b>	DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU DRAFT REPORT ON FINANCIAL REMUNERATION TO COUNCILLORS FOR 2026/27
<b>Recommendation</b>	The Democracy Services Committee is asked for comments on the proposed decisions or any other relevant fields to form a response to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru consultation.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Vera Jones, Democracy and Language Services Manager

#### **What is the background and relevant considerations?**

1. This year, for the first time, the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (the Commission) is responsible for setting the remuneration for Wales' Councillors. Previously, this was the responsibility of the Independent Remuneration Panel, but the Panel has now ceased. The draft report was published on 23 September 2025, outlining the proposed changes for the 2026-27 financial year. There is an opportunity to respond to the recommendations presented by **18 November 2025**.
2. The draft changes, should they come into force, will be published by the end of February 2026 and will be effective for the 2026-27 financial year, namely 1 April 2026.

#### **The role of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru**

3. As noted above, this is the first year for the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru to be responsible for creating the report, and it is noted that there are some specific changes in the principles they present. They clearly note their intention to make significant changes to the payments framework once in each electoral cycle. The report prior to every local government election will consider major changes to the framework, with those in between focusing on annual upgrades.
4. This means that the draft report for 2026-27 considers upgrading sums where appropriate, but the framework is left unchanged. The next report, for 2027-28, will update the framework for those members who will be elected in the local elections in May 2027.



## Main Decisions relevant to the Councillors

5. A full copy of the report in its draft form is available by clicking on the following link.

[draft-annual-report-2026-27-Final.pdf](#)

### Remuneration for Elected Members.

6. The basic salary, which is paid to every elected member, is remuneration for the responsibility of representing the community and participating in the scrutiny and regulatory work and the functions associated with local governance. It has been based on a sum equivalent to three full days per working week, and the Commission is not changing this. The Commission has also noted that they are completely aware of the current restrictions on public funds and the impact that its decisions will have on the budgets of main councils.
7. The Commission has decided that it is right to maintain the link between the basic salaries of councillors and the average salaries of their electors for the 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 financial year. The basic salary will be aligned with three-fifths of the all-Wales ASHE 2024 (Annual Survey of hours and earnings 2024 - Welsh Government), the latest figure available at the time of writing. It is therefore noted that the increase for the basic salary and the senior salaries is 6.4%.
8. The basic salary will be **£21,044 for 26/27**, which is a 6.4% increase. The basic salary was £19,771 in 2025/26 and £18,666 in 2024/25.
9. The Commission has noted that they will look at the relationship between the salaries of Councillors and the relationship with ASHE Wales in more detail during the coming year. ***It is recommended that the committee members welcome this work, especially as there is a difference between the percentage of increase to members' salaries compared to the increase of 3.2% that staff received in 25/26.***
10. There are no details in the report noting that every Member will automatically receive the remuneration, or details about occasions where an individual member wishes not to receive the sum or a proportion of it, and the arrangements that will be in place for that to happen. ***It is recommended that the committee members seek confirmation of the situation as part of the response to the consultation.***


### Senior Salaries for Elected Members

11. The report's appendix notes that a cap on the number of senior salaries continues to be 18 for Cyngor Gwynedd.
12. The table below shows the details of payments for senior roles, and every senior salary includes the basic salary payment. Note that the increase to the 'senior' element of the salaries is 6.4% for each role. The relevant figures for Cyngor Gwynedd (group B) are shown for 2026-27.

#### **Financial remuneration**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Likely 26/27</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
Basic salary (payable to every elected member)	£21,044	£19,771	£18,666
Band 1: leader	£71,025	£66,727	£62,998
Band 1: deputy leader	£49,717	£46,709	£44,099
Band 2: executive members	£42,615	£40,036	£37,799
Band 3: committee chairs (if the role receives remuneration)	£31,567	£29,657	£27,999
Band 4: the leader of the largest opposition party	£31,567	£29,657	£27,999
Band 5: leaders of other political groups	£25,253	£23,726	£22,406
Civic Head (Chair of the Council)	£31,567	£29,657	£27,999
Deputy Civic Head (Vice-chair of the Council)	£25,253	£23,726	£22,406

13. The Civic Head is a senior post in councils that is different to political or executive leadership. As well as chairing important meetings, the civic head is the 'first citizen' and the authority's 'ambassador', who represents the council in its dealings with all types of organisations and bodies.



14. Note that there are no details regarding whether the role of Civic Head and Deputy Civic Head (if paid), have been included within the cap or not. (In the past, it was clear that it was not within the cap). ***It is recommended that committee members seek confirmation of the situation about the senior salaries for the Civic Head and Deputy Civic Head as part of the response to the consultation.***

15. The report notes that there are no further changes to the payments and the benefits paid to elected Members. The list in chapter 4 is welcomed as it confirms the decisions that already stand, especially the note explaining where to find the latest information (e.g. details of travel costs for councillors in the 2022 report - decision 9 and a list of the latest subsistence costs in point 81).

#### Overview and Scrutiny Joint Committee Members

16. The salary for the chair of the overview and scrutiny joint committee will be set at £10,522 and the salary of the vice-chair will be set as half of that, namely £5,261. This decision has existed for some years and refers to Scrutiny joint committees from local authorities, not the Scrutiny joint committee for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

#### Co-opted members and lay members

17. There is no change to the rates recommended for co-opted Members and lay Members for 2026/27. Note that the rates for co-opted Members and lay Members have not increased for some years. However, there is particular emphasis on an 'appropriate officer' within the authority to appoint beforehand whether a meeting has been programmed for a full day or half a day, and to determine when it would be appropriate to qualify a full or half day or to use the hourly rate where it is sensible to combine many meetings. Given that the hourly rate was originally introduced to reflect the new way of working (e.g. briefing meetings for 45 minutes), ***it is recommended that Committee Members ask the Commission to emphasise the need to use the hourly rate to show that county Councils are financially prudent and pay fairly for work completed.***

18. Note that the Commission has already identified that payments for co-opted members and lay members is a particular subject to be addressed during 2026/27. ***It is recommended that Committee Members emphasise the need for this subject to receive due consideration, because attracting lay Members to carry out extremely important work is difficult, and therefore financial remuneration for these Members must also be increased year after year, like the financial remuneration of Elected Members.***

19. The current salary rates for 2026/27 are noted below.

Role	Hourly rate payment	Payment rate up to 4 hours	Payment rate 4 hours and above
Standards Committee Chairs, and Audit Committees	£33.50	£134	£268
General members of Standards committees who also chair Standards Committees for Town and Community Councils	£29.75	£119	£238
General members of Standards Committees, Education Scrutiny Committee, Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee	£26.25	£105	£210
Town and Community Councillors who are Members of Principal Councils' Standards Committees	£26.25	£105	£210

#### Payments for town and community council Members

20. Note that there is an amendment in the terms for Town and Community Council Members for 'compensation for financial loss' with the Commission noting the need to do work to promote more town and community council Members to take the payment during 2026/27.

#### Future work

21. The Commission clearly focuses on future work in its report. Chapter 1 notes the work underway and provides an outline of what is under consideration for each heading. They have noted some specific significant subjects (as well as the annual work of upgrading salaries):

- The Democracy and Boundaries Commission Cymru Act 2013 makes it a requirement of the Commission to consider resettlement payments for those elected members who are losing their seats in an election, with the intention of briefing colleagues at Welsh Government on what would be an appropriate pay scheme in the view of the Commission.
- They will review the framework for how senior roles are remunerated financially with main councils and corporate joint committees to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose, making changes where appropriate.
- It is also noted that they consider the measure used to decide on the annual upgrading of financial remuneration levels to assess whether the index continues to be the most relevant to use, and to reassess members' workload.



22. Additionally, they have also noted their intention to look at payments for elected Members and lay Members, and also to encourage Town and Community Council Members to receive the allowances that they are entitled to.

**Recommendation**

23. The Democracy Services Committee is asked for

- comments on the proposed decisions or any other relevant fields to form a response to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru consultation.