

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 17th October, 2018.

Present: Councillor O. Griffiths (Chairman); Councillor S.J. Griffiths (Vice-Chairman); Councillors G.D.D. Carroll, N.P. Hodges, K.F. McCaffer, N. Moore, M.J.G. Morgan, N.C. Thomas and E. Williams.

434 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 25th July, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

435 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

436 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 (HDS) –

The IRPW had recently issued its draft Annual Report for 2019/20. The draft Report contained a number of changes to the IRPW's Remuneration Framework including a small increase in the basic salary and some significant changes in respect of Town and Community Councils. The consultation period in regard to the draft Annual Report would end on 27th November, 2018 and at that point, the IRPW would consider any responses submitted from consultees prior to the production of its final Annual Report in February 2019.

The Committee was reminded that the information contained in the Foreword to the draft Annual Report which reflected some of the issues that arose during its previous visits to 22 principal Councils the previous year. The Panel at that time had previously indicated that payments to Councillors had not kept pace with the original comparator the Panel used to establish an appropriate level of remuneration due to pressure on public expenditure. In addition, the financial constraints on local authorities over the previous years had meant that the link with average Welsh ceilings had not been maintained. The Panel was now therefore proposing a further modest increase in the basic salary of Elected Members of Principal Councils in an effort to prevent further erosion of Member remuneration. The Panel was also for the first time in several years proposing a small increase in the remuneration of Leaders and Executive Members.

Set out in paragraph 7 of the report were the main draft Panel Determinations and related to the following:

- a proposed increase in the basic annual salary to £13,868 (an increase of 1.97%) (Determination 1);

- a modest increase of £800 (inclusive of the £268 increase in the basic salary) (Determination 2);
- reference to the Panel's continuing concern regarding the reluctance of Members to claim reimbursement of the costs associated with care; (See Annex 4 for the publication actions). The Panel was urging Democratic Services Committees to take steps to encourage and facilitate the greater use of this provision so that Members concerned were not financially disadvantaged;
- the Panel was continuing to contribute wherever possible to enhancing diversity in Local Government in Wales. Through its determinations to take this step further the Panel had produced a leaflet for prospective candidates on the remuneration of Members of Councils;
- the Panel had continued its engagement with Community and Town Councils and had met several representative groups earlier in the year. The Panel had also convened four sessions with Council Clerks to provide an opportunity for clarification about administrative matters and as a result, they were now proposing further amendments to the Framework with the proposed related determinations set out in Section 13 of the draft Report (Determinations 37 to 45).

Discussion ensued in relation to the take up of the care allowance and the practical ability of Members accessing support. Particular reference was made to difficulties in accessing childcare beyond 6.00 p.m. in the evening (many providers do not offer a service beyond this time). The current requirements for receipted costs made it impractical to access less formal childcare provision. Other practical solutions to allow Members to participate in Council meetings and who had carer responsibilities were also touched upon e.g. meetings held in the daytime. Concern was also expressed in terms of work/life balance for officers who were required to attend formal meetings of the Council in the evening.

The Council's Members' Allowances Scheme (as contained in the Council's Constitution) reflected the fact that the Council had previously resolved to abide by the determination of the IRPW as set out in its Annual Report each year.

Having regard to the report, it was

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the IRPW draft Annual Report for 2019/20 be noted.
- (2) T H A T a copy of the draft Annual Report be forwarded to all Members in the event of an individual Member wishing to submit their comments.

Reason for decisions

(1&2) To provide the opportunity for Committee and individual Members to consider the draft IRPW Annual Report and submit any comments on the same.

437 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT EXPO WORKING GROUP (MD) –

The report provided the Committee with an update following the first Member Development Expo Working Group meeting which met on 24th September, 2018.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that six Members had attended and the comments and the suggestions as a result of the Working Group meeting were set out in Appendix B to the report. In outline, the Head of Democratic Services indicated that the Working Group had been requested to consider the best approach to structuring a Member Development Programme taking into consideration the comments raised by Elected Members during the WLGA Member Development Focus Group held in April 2018, the existing WLGA Competency Framework for Members and the Vale of Glamorgan Management Competency Framework. The Group had been asked to identify the following matters:

- The Competency Headings most relevant to the role of a Vale of Glamorgan Elected Member;
- The most appropriate Event Framework for delivering a Member Development Expo Event; and
- The most relevant development topics to help Elected Members support their constituents.

He indicated that the Working Group had also been asked to develop a draft Local Member Competency Framework linked to the following five competencies:

- Managing my role
- Working with citizens
- Navigating future change
- Managing myself
- Managing relationships.

For the benefit of the Committee, the Head of Democratic Services also outlined the Working Group's discussions which centred around managing expectations, effective communication, an individual's motivation levels and engagement, time management, prioritisation and ICT skills, as well as initial Member Induction topics. These specific comments and suggestions of the Working Group were set out in Appendix A to the report.

Certain Members of the Committee who had also been Members of the Working Group had supported the proposals for member development being undertaken through an Expo Event. In addition, a number of Committee Members supported the proposed suggestions set out in Appendix B to the report. However, Members of the Committee felt that certain training issues identified could be easily resolved if individual Members consulted the Council's Constitution.

The Committee endorsed the proposed way forward including the suggested discussion and learning up to speed sessions subjects contained in paragraph 11 of the report.

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the decisions and comments of the Member Development Expo Working Group, as detailed in the report, be noted.
- (2) T H A T the draft Member Competency Framework as compiled by the Member Development Expo Working Group be endorsed.
- (3) T H A T the aspects of the Event Framework, as detailed in the report, be endorsed.

Reason for the decisions

(1-3) The Democratic Services Committee is aware of the decisions and future suggestions raised by the Member Development Expo Working Group in order that they be utilised to plan the first Member Development Expo Event before the end of 2018.