

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2013**

REPORT BY: **DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE MANAGER**

SUBJECT: **CONSULTATION BY THE INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW)**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To consider the Council's response to consultation by the IRPW on its draft annual report for 2014.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The IRPW determines the allowances payable to Members. It consults on its proposed annual report prior to issuing each year's report.

2.02 On the 1 October 2013 the Council received the IRPW draft annual report for 2014 for consultation purposes. Responses to the consultation need to be received by the IRPW no later than the 26 November 2013. A copy of the draft report has been placed in Member Services and in each of the Group Rooms.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 This year's draft report follows the IRPW visiting each of the 22 principal authorities to discuss how its determinations are working in practice and what matters it should consider for this annual report and for the future. The IRPW spent the 25 April meeting various groups of Members and officers of Flintshire.

3.02 The first proposed change the IRPW are consulting on is to increase basic allowance in 2014/15 from the current £13,175 to £13,300 p.a. In the last 3 years there has been a reduction in funding for local authorities and a freeze on public sector pay. Therefore the Panel had determined that during that period it would inappropriate to increase allowances. However, given the modest relaxation in the constraints on public sector pay this year, the Panel is proposing to increase basic allowance by less than 1% from spring 2014.

3.03 The second proposed change relates to the payments to Leader, Deputy Leader and other Cabinet members. Whilst these amounts continue to vary according to the size of population served by a

Council, this variation is proposed to be narrowed. Flintshire is in the middle of the three population groups and the Panel propose to increase the amount paid to the Leader by £500 p.a., that to the Deputy Leader by £40 p.a. and that to Cabinet members by £220 p.a. There are smaller increases for the small number of larger authorities and larger increases for those authorities with smaller populations than Flintshire. These proposed changes in differentials are rather minor.

- 3.04 The third proposed change is a more significant one in that it is giving local choice to each County Council to choose which of three salary bands to pay each individual Committee Chair. At present all Committee Chairs receive the same extra payment for their added responsibility. It is proposed that in future this will be either £8,700, £6,700 or £4,700 as determined by each individual authority for each individual Chair. At present the uplift on basic allowance amounts to £8,735 p.a.
- 3.05 The next proposed change is to increase the amount paid to the Leader of what the IRPW calls the largest 'opposition group'. It is proposed that this increase on basic salary would be £8,700 p.a. whereas at present it is only £3,745 p.a. In paragraph 3.14 of its draft report the Panel indicate that they take the view that the payment for this position is important for local democracy.
- 3.06 The Panel also proposes to introduce more flexibility and local choice for the amount paid to Civic Heads and Deputy Civic Heads. As with Committee Chairs it is proposed that Councils can choose the level of payment from three bands of payment. The middle of these bands is the nearest to our current payments and would result in an increase of £125 p.a. for the Chair but a reduction of £625 p.a. for the Vice Chair. The top band would be an increase of £2,625 p.a. for the Chair and £1,375 p.a. for the Vice Chair.
- 3.07 In the draft report the Panel makes clear that all Councillors should be provided with adequate telephone and e-mail facilities and electronic access to appropriate information without cost to the individual Member.
- 3.08 The draft report proposes to remove the current maximum reimbursement for an overnight stay in Cardiff (£120) and for all such overnight stays outside of London for the maximum to be £95. The draft report explains that this brings payable rates in line with Welsh Government rates.
- 3.09 In relation to co-opted members it is proposed that certain matters, such as preparation time, can be taken into account in deciding whether the half day or full day fee should be paid. This proposal will add further complexity to an already complex arrangement, introduce a lack of transparency and differences in payments from one co-opted

member to another. The Committee is recommended to make representations against these aspects in the draft report. The draft report proposes to widen the meetings for which co-optees will be eligible for payment to include Working Group meetings and Task & Finish Group meetings which seems sensible.

- 3.10 In relation to Town & Community Councils the draft report proposes to authorise such Councils to make a payment to each of their members up to a maximum of £100 per year for costs incurred in respect of telephone usage, information technology, consumables etc. The draft report also proposes to authorise Town & Community Councils to provide a civic allowance to the Mayor/Chair and Deputy Mayor/Chair of the Council of an amount they deem appropriate to undertake the functions of that office. The draft report also contains a number of proposals relating to reimbursement of expenditure to Town & Community Councils for travel and subsistence.
- 3.11 The draft report makes no proposals to change the limit of 18 on the number of so called 'senior salaries' which Flintshire can pay its members who have special responsibilities. This represents 25.7% of the Council membership when for other Councils it can be as high as 50%. At the consultation meeting in April representations were made to the Panel to increase this limit. The point was made that the total amount paid to all those Councillors having special responsibilities could be limited but it should be left to the local choice of individual Councils how they wish to allocate that amount subject to an overall limit on numbers of 50% of the membership.
- 3.12 To assist the Committee in its consideration of the draft proposals a draft response is attached as Appendix 1.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 For the Committee to determine how to respond to consultation on the IRPW's proposed annual report for 2014.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Can not be determined at this stage.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 None as a result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 None as a result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None as a result of this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None as a result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None as a result of this report.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None as a result of this report.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 - Draft response to the IRPW

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Draft annual report for 2014.

Contact Officer: Peter Evans
Telephone: 01352 702304
Email: peter.j.evans@flintshire.gov.uk