

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 30 APRIL 2014

REPORT BY: HEAD OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT
REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW)

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To inform Members of the contents of the Annual Report issued by the IRPW concerning the payment of Members' Allowances for the Council year 2014/15

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 1st October 2013 the Council received the IRPW draft Annual Report for 2014/15 for consultation purposes. At its meeting on the 12th of November 2013 the Council determined its response to that Consultation which led to the response in Appendix 1 being sent.

2.03 On the 12th of February the IRPW issued the final version of its Annual Report. A copy that report has been placed in the Members' Library and in the Group rooms. The new payments will take effect at the Council's Annual Meeting when a further report will be submitted.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Annual 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 25th of April 2013 meeting various groups of Members and Officers of Flintshire.

3.02 The first change contained in the Annual Report is to increase basic allowance from the current £13,175 p.a. to £13,300 p.a. The IRPW had not increased the overall amount of payments since it established the current levels in its 2011 Annual Report. Given the modest relaxation in the constraints on public sector pay this year the Panel has decided to increase the basic allowance by less than 1% from spring 2014.

- 3.03 In relation to what the IRPW describes as “Senior Salaries” it has decided that the differentials between different sized authorities should be narrowed. For Flintshire this will mean the following changes:-
- Leader – increase of £500 p.a.
 - Deputy Leader – increase of £40 p.a.
 - Cabinet Members – increase of £220 p.a.
 - Committee Chairs – increase of £90 p.a.
 - Leader of largest Opposition Group – increase of £90 p.a.
- This would be an overall increase of £2,760 p.a.
- 3.04 In its draft report which was the subject of consultation the IRPW was proposing that more local choice is given to each County Council to choose which of three annual payments to make to each individual Committee Chair. The response the IRPW received to this proposal was overwhelmingly against such greater flexibility and it has therefore not been introduced in relation to Committee Chairs.
- 3.05 Notwithstanding the response received to Consultation the IRPW has decided to implement the proposal to give more local flexibility in relation to payments to the Civic Head and Deputy. The final report leaves it to the local choice of Councils as to which of three bands it wishes to apply. The middle band is the nearest to Flintshire’s existing payments and would lead to an increase of £125 for the Chair but a decrease of £625 for the Vice Chair. The highest band would lead to an increase for the Chair of £2625 p.a. and an increase for the Vice Chair of £1375 p.a. If the Council was to decide at its Annual Meeting to pay the lowest band this would lead to the Chair’s payment going down by £2375 p.a. and the Vice Chair going down by £2625 p.a.
- 3.06 Despite the representations Flintshire made in response to Consultation the Annual Report does not increase the number of Councillors who can be paid for having special responsibilities. This continues to be limited to 18 (excluding the Civic Chair and Vice Chair).
- 3.07 The IRPW’s report makes clear that all Members should be provided with adequate telephone and email facilities and electronic access to appropriate information without cost to the individual member.
- 3.08 The only change to travel and subsistence allowances is to remove the previous maximum for an overnight stay in Cardiff (previously £120) so that for everywhere except London the maximum is now £95 per night. The report recommends that overnight accommodation should usually be reserved and paid for on behalf of Members by the relevant authority and this is reflected in Flintshire’s existing Schedule of Member Remuneration

3.09 In accordance with Flintshire's normal practice a report will be submitted to the Annual Meeting in May for it to agree the revised schedule of Member Remuneration for the Council Year 2014/15.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 For Council to note the Annual Report of the IRPW.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The minimum impact on the budget of these changes in allowances is £6,510, with the maximum impact standing at £15,510 and either of these increases could be accommodated within the existing budget provision for Members Allowances. This budget currently accommodates a mileage allowance for Members which is rarely utilised in full and in year underspends in 2013/14 have been declared in the monthly budget monitoring report.

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

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 With Group Leaders

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Response to the IRPW Annual Report

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

None

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