

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (GOVERNANCE)**

SUBJECT: **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16 OF THE IRPW**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 For Council to determine its response to consultation on the draft annual report for 2015/16 of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW).

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The IRPW determines on an annual basis the rates of payments that are made to Members and co-opted members of County Councils in Wales. Section 147 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the IRPW to send a draft of its annual report to County Councils and to take into account the representations it receives about the draft before issuing the final version of its annual report.

2.02 On the 2 October 2014 the IRPW sent its draft annual report for 2015/16 to County Councils seeking any comments no later than the 27 November 2014. Copies of the draft annual report have been deposited in the group rooms and Member Services and are available to the members of the public as a background document to this report.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The IRPW is proposing that for 2015/16 the levels of payments made to Members should be frozen, including no change to the levels of reimbursement of expenses. In view of the current budgetary pressures on the County Council Members may wish to endorse this proposal.

3.02 In the draft report the IRPW expresses concern about the wide variation and inconsistency of support provided to Members in Wales to enable them to discharge their functions effectively. The draft report makes clear that all elected Members should be provided with adequate telephone and e-mail facilities, and electronic access to appropriate information without cost to the individual Member. This supports Flintshire's approach of rolling out to all Members iPads at no cost to individual Members. This initiative will also result in budget

savings in the cost of printing and postage of agendas and reports for formal meetings.

- 3.03 The draft report draws attention to a recently introduced procedure whereby Councils can make application for additional “senior salaries” for posts that do not fall within the current remuneration framework or which could not be accommodated within the maximum number of “senior salaries” relating to the authority. Whilst this procedure is welcomed in the current financial climate Council may consider it inappropriate to make any such applications at the present time.
- 3.04 Section 63 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 gave the IRPW new powers in relation to changes in the salary of the Head of Paid Service. Unless the change is in-keeping with changes applied to other officers, the IRPW must be consulted on the proposed change. The Panel’s approach to its use of this power is set out in Section 11 of the draft report and accords with the guidance issued to the IRPW by the Welsh Government that can be found at Annex 5 of the draft report. This is for Members information as there is no intention to change the salary of Flintshire’s Head Of Paid Service.
- 3.05 On a technical point paragraph 3.26 of the draft report indicates that the UK government has determined that a Councillor’s place of work is his/her home and that there is no tax liability on expenses paid by local authorities for travel between home and Council offices. In short Members will not have to pay tax on travel expenses. The paragraph refers to Annex 6 of the draft report which is the HM Treasury written ministerial statement of the 22 July 2014. That statement however, is an announcement of an intention to introduce legislation rather than changing the existing legislation. This point has been raised with the Secretariat to the IRPW who have indicated that the Council may wish to include this in any official response it makes to consultation. Whilst the government’s announced intention is to be welcomed the draft report is premature in describing it as being in place.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 To respond to consultation on the draft report by making the points in paragraphs 3.01 and 3.05 above.
- 4.02 For Council to note the procedure in paragraph 3.03.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Any successful application to pay an additional “senior salary” at committee Chair level would cost £8,700.

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 political Group Leaders and Deputies.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

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

Draft Annual Report 2015/16 of the IRPW

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