

CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
20 MARCH 2024

Minutes of the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Wednesday, 20 March 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor Rob Davies (Chairman)

Councillors: Gillian Brockley, Steve Copple, Ian Hodge, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Gina Maddison, Roz Mansell, Ted Palmer, Andrew Parkhurst, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Linda Thew, Arnold Woolley and Antony Wren

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Bernie Attridge (as an observer)

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Officer (Governance), Democratic Services Manager, and Democratic Services Officer

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ted Palmer declared a personal interest in agenda item 6: Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Annual Report, February 2024

29. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024 were submitted. The minutes were approved as a correct record by Councillor Ted Palmer and seconded by Councillor Mike Peers.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

30. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Forward Work Programme for consideration. He suggested that once the Schedule of Meetings had been approved by County Council at the next AGM to be held in May, a revised Forward Work Programme be brought back to the Committee in June with details of the further items proposed for consideration at meetings during the next 12 months.

The Democratic Services Manager responded to the comments and questions raised by Members.

The recommendations in the report were approved as moved by Councillor Ted Palmer and seconded by Councillor Arnold Woolley.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved;

- (b) That following approval of the Schedule of Meetings by County Council at the AGM to be held in May, a revised Forward Work Programme be brought back to Committee in June with details of further items proposed for consideration at future meetings; and
- (c) That the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

31. MEMBER WORKSHOPS BRIEFINGS AND SEMINARS UPDATE

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report. He provided background information and referred to the draft Councillor Development Plan which was appended to the report and showed the proposed list of training sessions/workshops available to Members during 2024. The Democratic Services Manager explained that the Development Planit was split into two sections: Section 1 reflected the sessions/workshops identified as 'mandatory' and Section 2 those that are 'discretionary'.

The Democratic Services Manager responded to the questions and comments raised by Members on the need for regular updates on the calendar of events, Members' attendance, and feedback on sessions.

The recommendations within the report were approved as moved by Councillor Ian Hodge and seconded by Councillor Steve Cople.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the training programme provided as Appendix 1 be noted; .
- (b) That if Members had any suggestions for future development 'topics', they contact the Democratic Services Manager to discuss them; and
- (c) That the Committee receives a quarterly report of attendance at each of the sessions delivered.

32. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) ANNUAL REPORT, FEBRUARY 2024

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report to provide details of the final annual report from the IRPW for 2024-25. He provided background information and referred to the main considerations as detailed in the report. The final Annual Report was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Democratic Services Manager advised that there were no material changes to the proposals in respect of the IRPW's determinations included in the draft report which was considered by the Committee in November 2023. This means the basic salary in 2024/25 for elected members of principal Councils will be increased with effect from 1st April 2024. Increases have also been made for

Cabinet Members, Council Leaders, and their deputies. The salary levels were summarised in Para. 1.06 of the report.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that as reported in section 1.05 of the report, the IRPW had introduced a new hourly rate of payment for co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel had determined that it is for the relevant officer at each authority to decide the appropriate rate to apply. Work will be undertaken during the coming months to better understand the implications of this change. Until this is completed there are no proposals to change the current method of remunerating Flintshire County Council co-opted members. The Chief Officer suggested that a further report be brought to the Committee to provide an opportunity to review the current arrangements around the cost of payments to co-opted members and consider if change was required or not in view of the Authority’s budget position.

The Democratic Services Manager responded to the questions raised by Councillor Ted Palmer regarding the information in paragraph 1.07 of the report that any member, or co-opted member, may give notice if they elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to a payment under the determination of the Panel for that particular year (as relating to the Authority). The Democratic Services Manager emphasised that it was an individual’s personal choice whether he/she elected to forgo any part of their entitlement to a payment and they should not be influenced by other individuals or political groups. The Democratic Services Manager responded to the further comments made by Councillor Palmer regarding peer pressure and explained the process adopted by the Authority to mitigate any pressure on Members to accept or forgo their allowances which were set by the IRPW. The Chief Officer gave advice around the current legislation and the IRPW process.

RESOLVED

That the Determinations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in their Annual Report for 2024/25 be noted.

33. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public present.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 2.40 pm)

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Chairman