

# CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

**Report to:** Council

**Date of meeting:** 20 March 2025

**Title:** Schedule of Member Remuneration for 2025/2026

**Purpose of the report:** To consider the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Annual Report in relation to Members' Remuneration for 2025/2026; and to approve a Schedule of Member Remuneration for 2025/2026.

**For:** Decision

**Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:**

**Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation.**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' (IRPW) Annual Report was published in February 2025 and prescribes the level of remuneration payable to Members for 2024/2025. A copy of the report is attached for information (Appendix B).

This report covers the municipal period from the date of the Council's Annual General meeting i.e. 16 May 2025.

## **2. ISSUES RAISED IN THE IRPW REPORT**

The IRPW made very few determinations in this year's Annual Report; all other determinations are set out in the IRPW's Annual Report 2022, 2023 and 2024 remain valid and should be applied.

A summary of the applicable salaries and allowances, in line with the IRPW's determinations, is shown in the attached Schedule of Members Remuneration (Appendix A – Schedule 1).

## **3. BASIC AND SENIOR SALARIES**

The sums payable as Basic and Senior Salaries are prescribed, and the IRPW has determined that there should be an increase to the Basic Salary amounts payable for 2025/2026 to £19,771. The figures shown in Schedule 1 of Appendix A will therefore be the sums payable for 2025/2026.

The IRPW has determined that there should be an increase to all Senior Salaries (see Schedule 1 of Appendix A).

There is no change in the maximum proportion of members eligible to receive a Senior Salary, i.e. it remains at 17.

**These salaries are determined by the IRPW for all Councillors across Wales; and the Council has no discretion regarding the amounts paid to Councillors.**

#### **4. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF COUNCIL**

The IRPW has determined for 2025/2026 that (where paid) a civic head i.e. Chairman of the Council must be paid a Band 3 salary (where paid) a deputy civic head i.e. the Vice Chairman, must be paid a Band 5 salary.

The Chair and Vice Chair will be eligible to claim travelling expenses whilst undertaking their civic duties.

#### **5. REIMBURSEMENT OF THE COST OF CARE AND PERSONAL ASSISTANCE**

Members are reminded that they are entitled to claim for reimbursement of the cost of care and personal assistance.

The IRPW has determined that there will be no change to the reimbursement of the cost of care and personal assistance for 2025/2026 – see Schedule 1 for further details.

In terms of the publication of the reimbursement of the costs of care, the Panel allows authorities to decide how it publishes this information i.e.

1. To publish the details of the amounts reimbursed to named Members; or
2. To publish the total amount reimbursed by the authority during the year but not attributed to any named Member.

The Council agreed in 2017/18 and subsequent years to publish the total amount reimbursed by the authority during the year, but not attributed to any named Member and **it is therefore recommended that this practice continues for 2025/2026.**

#### **6. FAMILY ABSENCE AND LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE**

The Members' Schedule of Remuneration 2025/26, in line with the IRPW determinations (sections 8 and 9) outline the provisions that are in place for elected members for family absence (maternity, newborn, adoption and parental absences) and sickness absence for long term absence (in excess of 4 weeks but less than 26 weeks).

Where an elected member is in receipt of a senior salary, the salary holder will continue to receive their senior salary for the duration of the absence (up to maximum of 26 weeks for sickness absence).

Clarity has been sought from the IRPW regarding matters that were raised at Council, 23 January 2025, as follows:

- The permitted period for family absence is 26 weeks;
- The statutory guidance on family absence states that new-born absence concerns absence granted to the “parent” of a child other than the mother. New-born absence is designed to allow a person who satisfies the prescribed conditions to assist in the caring for the child and mother;

- The statutory guidance on family absence is silent on the matter of a Councillor being absent due to caring for a child, partner or parent due to illness. However, the guidance does provide for a Councillor who takes responsibility for the care of a child whilst the parent is temporarily unable to fulfil these responsibilities for reasons such as illness, would be entitled to a period of parental absence.

**It is therefore recommended that when family absence or long-term sickness absences occur in the future for a senior salary holder, that the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services, makes arrangements to ensure that a paid substitute is appointed for the duration of the family or long-term sickness absence. The Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services will also amend the Members' Schedule of Remuneration and inform the IRPW accordingly.**

## **7. CO-OPTEE'S FEES**

The IRPW has determined that there will be no change to the sums payable to co-optees for 2025/2026 – see Appendix B for further details. However, provision has been made to pay per hour (rather than full or half day).

The Council may decide on a maximum number of days for which Co-opted Members may be paid in any one year. The Council decided for 2014/15 - 2024/25 that a maximum would be imposed that is equivalent to 10 full days a year, for each committee to which an individual has been co-opted. **It is therefore recommended that the same maximum number of days should be imposed for 2025/2026.**

## **8. PENSION PROVISION**

The IRPW has determined that entitlement to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) shall, as previously, apply to all eligible elected Members of the Council. The Council already allows Members to join the LGPS.

## **9. TRAVELLING, SUBSISTENCE AND OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCES**

There are no proposed changes to travelling, subsistence and overnight accommodation allowances.

**It is therefore recommended that the allowances rates, as shown in Schedule 3 of Appendix A are approved by the Council for 2025/2026.**

## **10. SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS**

The Panel has determined that each authority, through its Democratic Services Committee, must ensure that all its members are given as much support as is necessary to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively. Deductions must not be made from members' salaries by the respective authority as a contribution towards the cost of support which the authority has decided necessary for the effectiveness and or efficiency of members.

In 2018/19, the Council approved the introduction of an opt-in monthly allowance scheme of £10 is implemented to cover telephone, broadband and postage costs for Members. **It is recommended that this opt-in scheme be continued in 2025/2026.**

It should also be noted that since 2018/19, the Council's Counselling Service has also been made available to Members. This includes 24/7 telephone support, face to face and virtual counselling, self-help workshops, debt advice, Ask Bill, practical domestic abuse support and 'Your Care' health management platform. These are all confidential.

## **11. SCHEDULE OF MEMBERS' REMUNERATION**

The Council must produce annually a schedule of payments it intends to make to its named Members and Co-opted Members. The schedule must be produced no later than four weeks following the Annual Meeting of the Authority. The applicable schedule for 2025/2026 is shown in Schedule 1, and this will need to be updated following the Annual Meeting on 16 May 2025. The amounts shown in the schedule of payments for 2025/2026 will reflect the rates as referred to above.

Any changes made following Council and the AGM on 16 May 2025 will be reflected prior to publication and submission to the IRPW.

## **12. DISCRETION**

When the IRPW's Annual Report is issued, principal councils must comply with the statutory requirements and apply all the relevant determinations. **There are currently no options relating to levels of remuneration by principal councils that require a decision by Council. Levels of payments to which Members are entitled cannot be varied by a vote of a principal council.**

Only an individual Member may communicate in writing to the Proper Officer (Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services) if, as an individual, they wish to decline all or part of the payment to which they are entitled.

### **Wellbeing of Future Generations:**

**Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.**

Not required – not a service change.

### **Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:**

<b>Long term:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Collaboration:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Involvement:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Prevention:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Integration:</b>	Not applicable

**Recommendations:**

The Council is recommended to approve the following:

1. Continuation of the current practice of not making payments for travelling expenses whilst undertaking Ward duties;
2. That travelling, subsistence, overnight accommodation and car parking are paid at the levels proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel;
3. To continue with the opt-in monthly allowance scheme of a maximum of £10 to cover telephone, broadband and postage costs;
4. To reflect the opt-in of this allowance in the Statement of Payments made to Members annually;
5. That when family absence or long-term sickness absences occur for a senior salary holder, that the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services, makes arrangements to ensure that a paid substitute is appointed for the duration of the family or long-term sickness absence. The Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services will also amend the Members' Schedule of Remuneration and inform the IRPW accordingly.
6. Co-opted Members to be paid fees subject to a maximum equivalent to 10 full days for each committee to which an individual has been co-opted;
7. To continue to publish the total amount reimbursed by the authority during the year but not attributed to any named Member in respect of the reimbursement of care;
8. The 2025/2026 Schedule of Member Remuneration, subject to incorporating any amendments determined by the Council at this meeting; and
9. To authorise the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services to incorporate any such amendments prior to publication and submission to the IRPW, after the Annual Meeting to be held 16 May 2025.

**Reasons for decision:**

To approve a Schedule of Member Remuneration for 2025/2026, as required by legislation.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

Not applicable.

**Policy Framework:**

- Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Determinations;
- Council's Constitution.

**Corporate Well-being Objectives:**

Not applicable.

**Finance and Procurement implications:**

Additional budget implications for 2025/2026 due to increase in the basic and senior salaries and the impact of the increase to employers' National Insurance contributions, which have been incorporated into the Council's budget, approved 3 March 2025.

**Legal Implications:**

None.

**Staffing implications:**

None.

**Property / asset implications:**

None.

**Risk(s):**

None.

**Statutory Powers:**

- Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013;
- Local Government Wales Measure 2011 and as amended by Sections 62 to 67 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013;
- The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Regulations;
- The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report dated February 2023;
- Local Government and Elections Act 2021
- Absence from local authority meetings: family absence.

**Background Papers:**

- The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report dated February 2025;
- Report to Council 23 January 2025.

**Appendices:**

- Appendix A – Members' Schedule of Remuneration 2025/2026;
- Appendix B - The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report dated February 2025.

**Corporate Lead Officer:**

Lowri Edwards

Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services (Head of Democratic Services)

**Reporting Officer:** Lowri Edwards

**Date:** 3 March 2025