



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Democratic Services Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday, 14 October 2020 at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor L James (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J E Burtonshaw
S M Jones
B J Rowlands
L V Walton

Councillor(s)

M Durke
E T Kirchner
G J Tanner

Councillor(s)

L S Gibbard
W G Lewis
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Officer(s)

Huw Evans
Allison Lowe
Tracey Meredith

Head of Democratic Services
Democratic Services Officer
Chief Legal Officer / Monitoring Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): J A Hale

1 Election of Vice Chair for the Municipal Year 2020-2021.

Resolved that Councillor W G Lewis be elected Vice Chair for the Municipal year 2020-2021.

2 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

Councillors J E Burtonshaw, M Durke, L S Gibbard, L James, S M Jones, E T Kirchner, W G Lewis, B J Rowlands, G J Tanner, L J Tyler-Lloyd and L V Walton declared a personal interest in Minute 4 "Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report 2021-2022 – Consultation".

3 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Special Democratic Services Committee held on 6 November 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report 2021-2022 - Consultation.

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report to consult and comment on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report 2021-2022. The comments of the Democratic Services Committee would lead to a Council report on 4 November 2020 proposing a formal reply to the IRPW by their deadline of 23 November 2020.

The report set out the determinations affecting the City and County of Swansea and proposed responses as necessary.

The Head of Democratic Services highlighted the main areas of change as:

- a) Basic Salary rising by £150 to £14,368;
- b) Civic Salaries & Senior Salaries to receive a 1.06% increase;
- c) The Costs of Care element had also been amended with the removal of the £403 monthly cap.
This had been replaced with:
 - Formal (registered with Care Inspectorate Wales) care costs to be reimbursed in full.
 - Informal (unregistered) care costs to be reimbursed up to a maximum rate equivalent to the Real Living Wage at the time the costs are incurred;
- d) Co-Opted Member fee increase of £12 per day.

Many Councillors expressed concern at the Basic Salary pay increase due to others struggling financially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee were mindful that in order to attract a more diverse range of candidates at future elections, the salary might not be sufficient for many if that were their only source of income, therefore they accepted the recommendation outlined.

In relation to the Costs of Care, it was noted that take up of this allowance remained low, despite the Head of Democratic Services and Democratic Services Committee regularly promoting this with Councillors.

Whilst take up was low, the Cost of Care allowance was mostly utilised for Child Caring responsibilities, however the Head of Democratic Services emphasised that it could also be utilised for those Councillors and Co-opted Members with any other form of caring responsibility such as elderly relatives.

Resolved that the comments outlined in the report be recommended to Council as the formal response to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

Note: Councillor L V Walton supported the comments in the report but sought to abstain from voting on accepting the Basic Salary increase.

5 Work Plan 2020-2021. (Verbal)

The Head of Democratic Services sought topics to be added to the Committee's work plan. He was conscious that the past 6 months had been challenging for all and stressed that if any Councillor or Co-opted Member had any issue that they required assistance with, they should contact the Head of Democratic Services, Chair of Democratic Services or the Councillor Champion for Councillor Support and Development.

Councillors raised some questions about the Councillors ICT Allowances Policy. The Head of Democratic Services stated that Councillors spend under the Policy could be viewed at www.swansea.gov.uk/councillors

Resolved that the Work Plan 2020-2021 include:

- Regular Feedback from the Councillor Champion for Councillor Support and Development, Councillor Wendy Lewis.
- Review of Councillor Handbook;
- Councillor ICT Allowances Policy;
- eLearning;
- Promotion of Costs of Care;
- Councillor Induction Programme – May 2022 Onwards.

The meeting ended at 3.44 pm

Chair