



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales meeting: 8 August 2023

Summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2023.

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Attendees

Frances Duffy, Chair

Saz Willey, Vice Chair

Bev Smith, Member

Dianne Bevan, Member

Kathryn Watkins, Member

Sara Rees, Secretariat

Candice Boyes, Welsh Government official (item 6a only)

Shereen Williams, Chief Executive of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission (item 6b only)

Introduction

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (“Panel”) met on Tuesday 8 August 2023.

No meeting was held in July 2023.

The aim of the August meeting was to:

- review and agree June meeting notes (full and summary), note actions and Secretariat updates
- update 2023 to 2024 workplan and budget
- discuss a review of the website
- review Issues and decisions taken by the Panel to date
- consider Evidence and Research Strategy and Communications Plan
- discuss any other business

Below summarises the Panel’s discussions and decisions:

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Actions and Secretariat update

The Panel agreed the minutes from June's meeting and signed off the Panel's Communication Strategy.

The Panel noted the budget sheet as discussed.

The Panel discussed and agreed replies to 2 queries that had been received from Principal Councils through the Secretariat. These queries asked the Panel for advice and clarification relating to substitution during sickness periods and elected members ability to join local authority workplace salary sacrifice schemes.

Website review

The Panel noted a review of the website that had been undertaken by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission ("Commission"). Much of the discussion was around an inability to make structural changes to the website, as it is hosted by Welsh Government and improve on how users can easily find information.

The Panel agreed to discuss the review with Welsh Government Communications to agree the changes that could be made.

Issues discussed by Panel and decisions to date

Secretariat to update paper with details of issues and decisions the Panel has considered since January 2023. Paper to be presented at next meeting, including:

- questions discussed for Panel's consultation, notably green travel
- research plan

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- compliance returns from principal authorities and community and town councils

Supporting Diversity in Democracy and Democratic Health Task and Finish Group

A presentation was given to the Panel on Supporting Diversity in Democracy from a Welsh Government official followed by an update from the Chief Executive of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission on the work of the Democratic Health Task and Finish Group.

Research methodology

The Panel discussed a research paper which will be used to make a determination at the next meeting regarding whether to increase the remuneration package for local authorities; and if so, by how much. The Panel agreed a further paper would be required at the next meeting, following information received on Local Government expenditure (2022 to 2023) and settlement (2023 to 2024).

Any other business

Engagement

The Chair stated the Panel are looking to engage with CTCs and the engagement day with One Voice Wales (OVW) would be to discuss how this could be achieved with a suggestion that a presentation from the Panel could be included an event organised by OVW.

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The Vice Chair reported on a meeting held earlier on the month with the Welsh Local Government Association to discuss input ahead of issuing Draft Annual Report. As a result of the meeting, the Panel are invited to attend a meeting of Local Government Heads of Democratic Services in September to discuss engagement.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales will take place on Tuesday 5 September when the Panel will discuss the payments framework for co-opted members of principal councils, Fire and Rescue Authorities and National Park Authorities; reporting requirements for Community Town Councils; evidence and research to support the Panel's Determinations for next year; consultation questions to be included in the Draft report; and consider communication.

Should you have any matters you wish to raise with the Panel, please do not hesitate to get in touch via the Secretariat by emailing IRPMailbox@gov.wales.

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