



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales meeting: 5 September 2023

Summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 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
Shan Whitby, Secretariat

External stakeholders attending the meeting

Shereen Williams, CEO, Local Democracy and Boundary Commission
Robert Ashton Winter, Transition Manager, Local Democracy and Boundary Commission
Lisa James, Deputy Director, Local Government, Policy, Welsh Government

Introduction

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (“Panel”) met on Tuesday 5 September 2023.

The aim of the September meeting was to:

- review and agree August meeting notes (full and summary), note actions and Secretariat updates
- update 2023 to 2024 workplan and budget
- discuss a review of the issues log decisions taken by the Panel to date
- consider Evidence and Research Plan

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- discuss consultation questions
- discuss annual report, including timetable for drafting and communications and engagement
- discuss engagement with Welsh Government, update on transition and legislation
- discuss any other business

Below summarises the Panel's discussions and decisions:

Actions and Secretariat update

The Panel agreed the minutes from August'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 two queries that had been received from Principal Councils through the Secretariat. These queries asked the Panel for advice and clarification relating to recovery of funds in relation to allowance for consumables for principal councillors and remuneration of members of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs).

The Panel discussed the evidence and research report to support the Panel's Determinations for 2024 to 2025; consultation questions, the timetable for drafting the Draft Annual report; and communication and Engagement Plan, received an update on engagement with Welsh Government on transition and legislation. The Panel also considered the payments framework for co-opted members of principal councils, Fire and Rescue Authorities and National Park Authorities, reporting requirements for Community Town Councils.

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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, however changes to web content can be made and improve on how users can easily find information.

Research and data paper

The Panel discussed research paper IRP(23)396 which provided evidence and data to support and enable the Panel to consider and make Determinations for 2024 to 25 financial year. The Panel discussed areas such as inflation rates, affordability and comparators of the Councillor Remuneration in Scotland. The Panel requested to invite Welsh Government Knowledge and Analytical Services representatives to October meeting to review methodology before agreeing determinations.

Consultation questions

The Panel discussed consultation questions for inclusion in the draft annual report.

Draft annual report

The Panel considered the timetable for writing the draft annual report, considering whether to include the research paper in the methodology. The Panel confirmed it would review the draft annual report once returned from Translation and prior to the October meeting.

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Communications and engagement

The Panel reviewed the communications plan and discussed timescales for consultation period.

The Chair stated the Panel will attend an engagement day with One Voice Wales (OVW) and Society of Local Community Clerks SLCC on 30 September.

Meetings with Leaders of Principal Councils and other stakeholders to be scheduled during consultation period.

Engagement with Welsh Government, update on transition and legislation

Lisa James, Deputy Director, Local Government, Policy, Welsh Government gave an update on legislation regarding the Panel's transition to the new body, replacing the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, in 2025.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales will take place on 10 October when the Panel will review and discuss the responses to the questions following the end of consultation period.

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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