



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018 – 2019

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

**SUPPORTING THE WORK OF MEMBERS – TELEPHONE AND EMAIL
FACILITIES AND ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to consider a proposal for all elected Members to be remunerated for costs associated with the provision of home broadband.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That subject to the agreement of full Council, Elected Members receive a payment of £37 per month (before tax and national insurance deductions) as a contribution toward the cost of home broadband.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 At the Annual Meeting of the Council held on the 23rd May 2018, consideration was given to the report titled “Members’ Salaries and Allowances – Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales’ (the Panel) Tenth Annual Report. In addition to the recommendations that were agreed, the following was also agreed:-

“That the Panel’s determination that all elected Members should be provided with adequate telephone and email facilities and electronic access to appropriate information at no cost to the individual Members be referred to the Democratic Services Committee for review and following completion of such a review, report any proposals to implement this determination back to full Council”.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council considers the use of ICT equipment, internet and email to be a valuable asset that enables elected Members to fulfil their duties effectively.
- 4.2 The Council currently offers all elected Members with funded ICT equipment and software to support the delivery of their duties. This provision covers a device such as an iPad or Windows Laptop that has been installed with access to Email , Internet and Office 365 which includes `Word`, `Excel` and `PowerPoint` together with a secure drive. Printers have also been provided on request.
- 4.3 A key enabler to exploit the use of the provided ICT equipment, that includes email facilities, is the requirement to access WiFi and Broadband. When undertaking duties from home elected Members are currently required to make their own provision for access to these services at their own expense.
- 4.4 Following on, the Panel determined that the Council must ensure all its elected Members are given as much support as necessary to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively and specifically that all elected Members should be provided with adequate telephone and email facilities and electronic access to information (and should be without cost to individual Members).

5. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

- 5.1 In line with the determination of the Panel, a desk-top exercise has been undertaken by Council officers to estimate the cost of the monthly provision of a telephone line and Broadband. The exercise has estimated this to be £37 per month (taking into account appropriate tax and national insurance deductions) and is proposed the amount be paid via Payroll at the same time as elected Members receive their monthly salary. Individual elected Members would be required to make the necessary arrangements for their home broadband.
- 5.2 Moving forward, should any material changes to market prices occur it is proposed that these will be reported to the Democratic Services Committee for consideration and where relevant for onward reporting to Council.
- 5.3 With regard to the provision of mobile phones, this will be subject to a separate report in due course.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposal set out within the report is based on the principle of all elected Members being treated equally and consistently. As a result, no Equality Impact Assessment is deemed required for the purposes of this report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Subject to the Democratic Services Committee determining a proposed way forward, this will be reported to full Council for the consideration of all elected Members.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 The estimated financial implications of the proposed way forward is £33k in a full year. It is considered that if approved, this cost will be met from within existing resources in 2018/19 and built into the Council's proposed revenue budget strategy for 2019/20.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The determination of the Panel, as set out in its tenth annual report, is underpinned by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (as amended).

10. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 10.1 The provision of appropriate support and resources to elected Members is critical in ensuring the interests of local people are represented, governance of local communities is undertaken and value-for-money public services are secured for local tax-payers through effective scrutiny. The continued ability to effectively fulfil these duties will make a positive contribution to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Panel's Tenth Annual Report has determined that all elected Members should be provided with adequate telephone and email facilities and electronic access to appropriate information at no cost to individual elected Members.
- 11.2 The proposed way forward provides the opportunity for this requirement to be met and ensure the Council's elected Members continue to be provided with the appropriate support and resources to effectively fulfil their duties.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Not applicable.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

23rd July 2018

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

ITEM: SUPPORTING THE WORK OF MEMBERS - TELEPHONE AND EMAIL FACILITIES AND ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Background Papers

- 23rd May 2018 Council meeting – Report: Members' salaries and allowances - Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' tenth annual report.

