



Mr Richard Penn
Chairman
Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

3 October 2011

Dear Richard

I am writing on behalf of SOLACE Wales in response to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales draft report. SOLACE Wales is providing a professional perspective with the interests of sound governance of councils in mind. We do not seek to protect the status quo for its own sake

SOLACE Wales is of a collective view that these proposals are likely to further constrain local democracy and decision making, thereby devaluing the role of councillors, especially when considered alongside the Local Government Measure 2011 and other moves to centrally prescribe or intervene in the local democratic process.

The proposed limit to the number of senior salaries seems arbitrary and will be an unnecessary restriction over appropriate governance arrangements for local circumstances. For many authorities it may well require significant structural change for scrutiny or cabinet arrangements, or both. The proposals would have a disproportionate impact with smaller councils having greater numbers of SRAs relative to the larger councils. The proposals would undermine the status of the overview and scrutiny function in direct contradiction to the political, regulatory and public expectation that scrutiny will be a strong counter-force to the executive in the current democratic model favoured by most councils.

The restrictions on local choice are further compounded by the introduction of several new qualifying positions for senior salaries through recent legislation and the IRP's own report. Although the Panel's rationale for change is to 'do more with less' there does not appear to be any notable financial benefit overall and for some authorities the costs of democracy would increase.



In summary, SOLACE Wales is concerned at the risks to good governance posed by the proposals, the undermining of local democratic choice, and the further devaluing of the roles and standing of elected councillors.

Yours sincerely

Colin Everett
Chair, SOLACE Wales