

# Concise Minutes – Remuneration Board

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Meeting Venue:

**Video Conference via Teams**

Meeting date: Thursday, 4 March 2021

Meeting time: 09.30 – 14.30

**Private**

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## Attendance

Category	Names
Members of the Senedd:	Dr Elizabeth Haywood (Chair) Ronnie Alexander Michael Redhouse Dame Jane Roberts Hugh Widdis
Committee Staff:	Lleu Williams (Clerk)

## 1 Chair's Introduction

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members and officials to the meeting.
- 1.2 The Board noted that, should the Chair need to excuse herself from the meeting, the meeting would be Chaired by Mike Redhouse in her absence.
- 1.3 The Board agreed the minutes of the January meeting as amended.
- 1.4 The Board discussed a request for exceptional circumstances regarding staffing costs to cover a Member's support staff undertaking jury service. The Board



agreed that Members who wish to employ temporary staff to cover a period of public service duties, such as jury service, should utilise existing provisions under 7.15 of the Determination to vire funds from office costs to cover staffing expense.

- 1.5 The Board discussed an exceptional circumstance to issue staffing notices before the end of the Fifth Senedd. The Board requested more information on the specific redundancy notices issues and agreed to consider further at its meeting on 27 May.
- 1.6 The Board noted correspondence from a GMB Union representative requesting that staff should have the opportunity to claim accrued annual leave as a payment before the end of their contract. The Board agreed to decline the request stating that, as an employer, it is the responsibility of the Member to manage issues relating to annual leave. The Board also agreed to encourage the Member and member of staff to take the accrued leave before the election.
- 1.7 The Board noted feedback from recent virtual visits and agreed that, although further visits should be gently pursued, there should be an understanding of the workload of Members and staff leading up to the election, which might restrict options for further visits. The Board agreed to arrange visits at the beginning of the Sixth Senedd.
- 1.8 The Board agreed to appoint Nick Ramsay MS, as the Member nomination, to the vacant Member trustee position on the Pension Board.
- 1.9 The Board noted and agreed the design of its new web site, which would be published by the beginning of the Sixth Senedd.

1.10 The Board agreed its work programme up to November 2021. The Board agreed to consider any matters of urgency leading up to the elections accordingly.

1.11 The Board reviewed the continuing impact of Covid-19 on Members and their offices. The Board agreed that the current support in place will continue at the start of the Sixth Senedd.

## **2 Review of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd**

2.1 The Chair invited the Clerk to present a paper summarising responses received to the Board's consultation on changes to the Determination for the Sixth Senedd. The Clerk also presented the Determination and Draft report on the review of the Determination to the Board for its approval.

2.2 The Chair excused herself from the second half of proceedings for this item. The Board agreed that Mike Redhouse would continue to Chair the meeting in her absence.

2.3 The Board considered and agreed proposed changes to the Determination for the Sixth Senedd, which included the following changes:

- The Board agreed to use the 2020-21 frozen salary as the base salary for Sixth Senedd;
- The Board agreed to apply the ASHE indexed increase of 2.4 per cent to that base salary, from the start of the Sixth Senedd;
- The Board agreed to introduce a 'cap and collar' mechanism to the indexing of Members' salaries. This would introduce a maximum annual ASHE indexed increase of three per cent and rule out any decrease below zero per cent to Member and additional office holder salaries in the Sixth Senedd;

- The Board agreed that the current arrangements for residential accommodation expenditure were sufficient;
- The Board agreed to remove references to Brussels in provisions relating to travel to the European Union;
- The Board agreed proposals for the transfer of stationery costs and would allow Members to claim back the costs arising from changing the institution's name from this allowance;
- The Board agreed to remove additional PRCF guidance and include the time limit regarding such use in Chapter 8 of the Determination (support for parties). The Board also agreed to insert a paragraph into the Determination making clear that the PRCF may not be used to pay the costs of printing and signage;
- The Board agreed proposals to introduce matching employer contributions into the support staff pension scheme and to encourage staff to take advantage of the new provision;
- The Board agreed proposals to amend the definition of political party;
- The Board agreed to insert new paragraphs into the Determination to enable support staff to take time off to undertake public duties, such as Jury Service.

2.4 The Board considered and agreed, subject to the above amendments, the Determination for the Sixth Senedd and the accompanying report.

2.5 The Board agreed its publication and communication strategy for the Determination for the Sixth Senedd and the accompanying report.

2.6 The Board considered responses to the consultation on the support staff contract. The Chair invited Joanna Adams to present outstanding issues for resolution.

2.7 The Board discussed proposed changes to the support staff contract and agreed to issue a letter to all Members and staff outlining changes to the contract, including how and when they will take effect.

### **3 Welsh Elections (Coronavirus) Bill implications for the Determination**

3.1 The Board invited Anna Daniel, Head of Strategic Transformation Service, Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Services and Craig Griffiths, Legal Adviser to the Board to present the item.

3.2 The Board considered a paper outlining the implications arising from the Welsh Elections (Coronavirus) Bill on the Board's work and the Determination, in particular specific provisions on the shortening of dissolution and the potential for postponing the date of the election.

3.3 The Board resolved that, with regard to matters impacted by the postponement of the Senedd election, it would consider related issues only in the event of the election being moved.

3.4 The Board agreed that the use of resources provided through the Determination during the pre-dissolution period should be restricted to supporting Members to undertake the activities within the parameters set by Business Committee and aligned with the Senedd Commission decisions.

3.5 The Board considered the use of offices during the pre-dissolution period and agreed that Members should continue to be able to use their offices solely for undertaking their duties as a Member. The Board also agreed to permit Members to use the office for personal use during this period, provided the Member does not claim for any costs associated with the office. These details will be published by the Senedd Commission to ensure transparency and clarity.

3.6 The Board also agreed that Members will not be able to claim for any engagement activities, including for surgeries or surgery notices, during the pre-dissolution period.

3.7 The Board agreed to provide Members with an update on its considerations of the impact of the Welsh Elections (Coronavirus) Bill on its work and the Determination and decisions relating to the pre-dissolution period regarding use of offices.

#### **4 Board strategy planning**

4.1 The Board agreed that, owing to the absence of the Chair, it would postpone this item to a later date.