

# Remuneration Board

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**Meeting Venue:** Ty Hywel

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**Meeting date:** Thursday, 16 October 2014

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**Meeting time:** 09.00 - 17.00

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



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## Concise Minutes:

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### Assembly Members:

**Sandy Blair CBE DL (Chair)**  
**Mary Carter**  
**Stuart Castledine**  
**Professor Monojit Chatterji**  
**Professor Laura McAllister**

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### Witnesses:

**John Chick, National Assembly for Wales**  
**Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business**  
**Anna Daniel, Head of Strategic Transformation**  
**Matthew Richards**

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### Committee Staff:

**Gareth Price (Clerk)**  
**Daniel Collier (Deputy Clerk)**

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## 1 Chair's introduction

1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members to the meeting.

1.2 The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting on 29 August 2014.

1.3 The Chair declared that he was no longer Chair of the Bevan Foundation.

1.4 The Board noted that Stuart Castledine had met with Julie Morgan AM to discuss her thoughts on being a current AM and former MP. He also met former Assembly Member, Jonathan Morgan, to seek his views on how he managed the transition between being an AM and losing his seat in an election.

1.5 The Board also noted that the Chair had a brief discussion with David Davies (a former AM, currently and MP).

1.6 The Board noted that it was unable to secure a copy of the 'remit letter' of the Counsel General from the Welsh Government, therefore it would make decisions on the Counsel General's salary based on the evidence that had been provided.

1.7 The Board briefly touched upon the approach to AMSS Continuous Service in the Scottish Parliament, John Chick agreed to conduct further research into the system they use to pool MSP Support Staff to ensure continuity of service.

**Action points:**

- The Board agreed to share the report provided by Wragge & Co on AM pension arrangements with the Board of Trustees of the Pension Board.
- Staff to conduct further research into how the Scottish Parliament pools MSP Support Staff.

## **2 Assembly Member salaries**

2.1 The Board discussed issues around Assembly Member salaries for the Fifth Assembly.

2.2 The Board felt that it had been consistent in its approach to the total remuneration package, rather than focusing specifically on AM salaries and individual strands of work and that it would maintain this approach.

2.3 The Board considered the recommendations of report by the HayGroup and Bangor University to come to conclusions on AM salaries.

2.4 The Board felt that it needed to consider the increase in responsibility for Assembly Members and that the role was now on a par with Members of the Scottish parliament.

2.5 The Board agreed that this was not a case of reviewing the current value of total remuneration, but looking at the package as a blank piece of paper and conducting a wholesale review.

2.6 The Board discussed potential equality issues and agreed that the EIA issues log should be updated.

2.7 The Board agreed that the consultation should be published in November, with the responses being considered at the meeting on 16 January 2015.

**Action point:**

- The Secretariat would prepare a consultation document for publication in November.

### **3 Assembly Member Allowances**

#### **Residential Accommodation**

3.1 The Board discussed the Residential Accommodation Allowances and agreed that the consultation should include firm proposals. However, flexibility would be applied in many situations, particularly in case of emergencies.

3.2 The principle for claims should be at the front of the Determination and the onus should be on the AM to make the correct decision on whether to claim or not.

#### **Carers provision**

3.4 The Board discussed areas around provision for carers in the existing Determination and agreed proposals for inclusion in the consultation document.

#### **Action point:**

- The Secretariat to ask Diverse Cymru for their view on carers allowances and whether the existing system is appropriate.

#### **Members and AMSS travel**

3.5 The Board Discussed proposals for inclusion in the consultation document on Members and AMSS travel

#### **Office Costs and Virements**

3.6 The Board agreed that the consultation proposals should include an element of flexibility on office costs and virements.

#### **Members leaving office**

3.7 The Board noted that All Members elected since 2011 are paid a resettlement grant, so long as they are defeated at an election, as one calendar month's salary for each completed year of service subject to a maximum payment equal to six months' salary; in addition, Office Holders are entitled to three months' salary for their additional duties paid at the relevant rate from when they were an Additional Office Holder.

3.8 The Board agreed that its proposals should include a level of support for AMs who unexpectedly leave office.

#### **Action point:**

- The secretariat would prepare a consultation document, which would be published in October, with responses considered at the meeting on 16 January 2014.

### **4 Chair's introduction**

4.1 The Chair welcomed the Board members to the second day of the meeting.

## **5 Assembly Member staffing and Assembly Members Support Staff pay**

### **Senior Advisor**

5.1 After careful consideration of the responses to the consultation, the Board agreed that it would proceed with its proposal to introduce a Senior Advisor role into the staffing structure.

### **Policy and Research Fund**

5.2 The Board agreed that provision for the Policy and Research Fund was critical for engagement purposes.

5.3 The Board agreed that they would use the first year of the PRF as a pilot, with the possibility of increasing the fund after reviewing the first year.

### **Apprentice scheme**

5.4 The Board agreed to discuss practical points of proceeding with the Apprenticeships Scheme with the Assembly Commission.

### **Level of support for political groups**

5.5 The Board agreed to consider the level of support for political groups at a later date.

### **Pensions and Death in Service benefit**

5.6 The Board agreed that this benefit would be introduced at the earliest possible opportunity rather than wait for the Fifth Assembly.

### **AMSS Salaries**

5.7 The Board agreed that it would make proposals on AMSS pay following careful consideration of the responses to proposals for AM salaries. Proposals for AMSS pay could be included in a consultation on the total remuneration package.

### **Redundancy arrangements**

5.8 It was noted that AMSS indicated that they would prefer double statutory redundancy payments, as offered by IPSA in Westminster, and that this should replace the current 1.5\* statutory redundancy offered to Support Staff in the Assembly.

5.9 The Board agreed that a period of notice 1.5\* statutory is sufficient. However, the Board acknowledged that where support staff lose a job as a result of their Member suffering an election defeat – for example – redundancy can come out of the blue. The Board acknowledged that this can be a traumatic experience. Consequently the Board agreed to propose to pay 2\*statutory for those AMSS who lose their jobs in this way.

The Board agreed that this would be introduced in advance of the forthcoming election in May 2016 so support staff whose Member is defeated would receive payment at the higher level.

### **Support staff standard contract and notice period**

5.10 The Board agreed that extending the initial longer notice period for employee and employer to one month would be beneficial.

5.11 The Board agreed that there should be a review of the handbook and code of conduct prior to the beginning of the Fifth Assembly.

**Action:** Secretariat to arrange an AMSS Representative Group meeting in early November.

## **6 Assembly Member Pensions: Best governance in implementing the pension scheme**

6.1 The Board discussed the make-up of a future Pension Board and the key aspects of the role of an Independent Chair.

## **7 Preparation for meeting with the Assembly Commission**

7.1 The Board discussed the forthcoming meeting with the Assembly Commission and they key issues which needed to be discussed at that meeting.

7.2 The Board received apologies from Mary Carter and Stuart Castledine who would be unable to make that meeting.

## **8 Papers to Note:**

8.1 The Board noted the Northern Ireland Assembly Independent Financial Review Panel Annual report 2013/14 and the correspondence on Residential Accommodation Expenditure.