

# Concise Minutes – Remuneration Board

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Meeting Venue:

**Conference Room 4B – Tŷ Hywel**

Meeting date: Thursday, 10 December  
2015

Meeting time: 11.00 – 17.00

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## Attendance

| Category          | Names  |
|-------------------|--|
| Assembly Members: | Rt Hon Dame Dawn Primarolo (Chair)<br>Trevor Reaney<br>Michael Redhouse<br>Dame Jane Roberts<br>Roger Williams |
| Witnesses:        |  |
| Committee Staff:  | Daniel Collier (Deputy Clerk)  |

## 1 Chair's Introduction

1.1 The Chair welcomed the Board and outlined that this meeting would provide.

1.2 Jane Roberts declared an interest as a member of the Public Policy Institute of Wales.



1.3 The Chair welcomed Gwion Evans who had been appointed the new Clerk of the Remuneration Board. The Board noted that, as this was his first day in the post, he would be observing proceedings.

1.4 The Chair provided feedback from the AM Representative group meeting and a drop-in session held during Plenary the day before.

## **2 Strategic discussion: Consideration of the Board's work programme and reflections on induction**

2.1 The Board considered a paper outlining the work scheduled to be undertaken on an annual basis and forthcoming key decision points. The Board considered the work plan for the spring/summer term 2016 in this context, alongside a future longer-term strategic work programme.

2.2 The Chair invited Board members to report on their work shadowing experiences and how the induction programme had worked for them.

### **Actions:**

- The Secretariat to review dates of meetings in March and July 2016.
- The Secretariat to draft suggestions for a strategic model for its work in the Fifth Assembly to ensure that the Board can decide on a way forward.

## **3 Proposal for a Charter for the Remuneration Board**

3.1 The Board discussed the merits of having a document which would outline its core principles and ways of working. The Board considered a paper highlighting key areas for discussion. The Chair invited Board members to consider how they wished to proceed.

3.2 The Board agreed that it would consider the item further at its meeting in January and discuss the benefits of such a document as part of its strategy for the Fifth Assembly.

### **Action:**

- The Secretariat to provide the Board with a paper outlining the core principles and conventions of the Board to be considered at its meeting on 28 January 2016.

#### **4 Assembly Member Salaries for the Fifth Assembly: Impact of salary differentiation**

- 4.1 The Board reflected on whether the current flexibility which allows Members to decline a part of their salary, or where applicable, their additional office holder salary, should continue.
- 4.2 The Board agreed that Members in the Fifth Assembly will be paid their base salary, and any additional office holder salary applicable, in full.
- 4.3 The Board agreed that Members should be informed that Members' Business Support would provide advice and guidance should any Member wish to participate in the Assembly's payroll giving scheme or other such options.

#### **Actions:**

- Inform Members of the Board decision on the payment of Members' salaries in the Fifth Assembly.
- Secretariat to draft a letter to the Assembly Commission to inform them of the Board's decision so that Members' Business Support can reflect this in its arrangements and advice to Members.

#### **5 AM pensions update and next steps**

- 5.1 The Board considered an update on the work the Assembly Commission's Pensions Team are doing to implement and communicate the 2016 changes to the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme.
- 5.2 The Board discussed and agreed some outstanding issues for inclusion in the final draft of the pension scheme rules. The Board agreed a way forward and noted that final approval of the scheme will be sought from HMT early in the new year.
- 5.3 The Board noted that once the final scheme rules are approved by HMT, the Pensions Team will be writing to Members explaining the changes and how they affect them.

- 5.4 The Board discussed and agreed the approach to appointing the Chair of the new Pension Board and who should sit on the recruitment panel.
- 5.5 The Board agreed that Michael Redhouse would be its representative on the recruitment panel for the Chair of the new Pensions Board.
- 5.6 The Board noted the work the Commission's Pensions Team is doing to review the support the Assembly Member's Support staff are given to help them understand their choices regarding their pension.

#### **Actions:**

- Secretariat to contact external legal advisers to amend the draft pension scheme and subsequently seek formal approval from HMT.
- Pensions Team to share with the Board the communications to Assembly Members on the new pension scheme.
- The Secretariat to write to all those members affected by the Board's decision on pension abatement (Rule of 80) explaining the reasons for the Board's decision.
- The Secretariat to draft a letter thanking the Board of Trustees for their valuable contribution to the development of the new pension scheme rules.

## **6 AMSS salaries 2016–17: first discussion**

- 6.1 The Board discussed factors in AMSS salary and remuneration for the start of the financial year 2016–17.
- 6.2 The Board noted that provisional ASHE figures for 2015 were released in November 2015 at 1.1%, revised figures are not expected until November 2016.
- 6.3 The Board agreed to consult Assembly Members and Assembly Members' Support Staff proposing to increase AMSS salaries for 2016–17 by 1.1% in line with the provisional 2015 figures for ASHE median earnings in Wales.
- 6.4 As part of the review of AMSS terms and conditions started under the previous Board, the Board also considered whether to introduce a qualifying period before AMSS sick pay is paid.
- 6.5 The Board considered representations from support staff and from their Trade Union representatives.
- 6.6 The Board agreed that it would not be appropriate to introduce a qualifying threshold for sick pay at this time.

## **Actions:**

- Secretariat to include the proposal for an increase to AMSS salaries in the note of the meeting and invite responses by 12 February to inform deliberations at the Board meeting in March.
- Inform AMSS that the Board does not wish to introduce a qualifying threshold for sick pay at this time.

## **7 Office Costs 2016 – 17: first discussion**

- 7.1 The Board considered the office costs allowance and whether it remains appropriate for the financial year 2016–17.
- 7.2 The Board considered a number of factors, including office rental costs across Wales and inflation.
- 7.3 The Board agreed to propose an increase to the office costs allowance by 1% or by the change in the CPI in the year to April 2016, whichever is greater.

## **Actions:**

- Members' Business Support to provide further information on lease agreements and whether there are likely to be any increases in the beginning of the Fifth Assembly.
- Secretariat to consult on the Board's proposal for an increase to the office costs allowance by 1% or by the change in the CPI in the year to April 2016, whichever is greater.

## **8 Residential Allowances 2016–17: first discussion**

- 8.1 The Board had an initial discussion on whether the Residential Allowance for Members should be revised.
- 8.2 The Board agreed to consider it further at its meeting in January, when it will consult Assembly Members with proposals.

**Action:**

- Members' Business Support to provide further information on whether Members' contracts for residential accommodation include uprating mechanisms.