

# Concise Minutes – Remuneration Board

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Meeting Venue:

Conference Room 4B – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: Wednesday 16 and

Thursday 17 November 2016

## WRB (07)

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### Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	Rt Hon Dame Dawn Primarolo (Chair) Michael Redhouse Dame Jane Roberts
Officials:	Rebecca Hardwicke, Members' Business Support Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business Anna Daniel, Head of Strategic Transformation Matthew Richards, Senior Legal Adviser Martin Jennings, Research Service  Professor Laura McAllister, Wales Governance Centre, Cardiff University
Committee Staff:	Daniel Collier, Acting Clerk



**Wednesday 16 November**

## **1 Chair's introduction**

1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members to the meeting.

1.2 The Chair received apologies from Trevor Reaney, who had commented on each item via email.

1.3 The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting on 5–6 July and 15–16 September 2016.

1.4 The Board considered and agreed its draft work programme, including a timeline of key stages of the Board's work over the course of the Fifth Assembly.

1.5 The Chair informed the Board that Laura McAllister was attending the item to consider the Board's strategy for 2016–2021 to provide the Board with assurance about the strategy's fit with the challenges ahead for the Assembly in Wales.

## **2 Consideration of the Board's strategy for 2016–2021**

2.1 Board members discussed the outcome of the strategy day in Colwyn Bay and the visits to AM constituency offices in North Wales.

2.2 At the strategy meeting, the Board agreed to develop a strategy document which outlined its key objectives and strategic priorities for the Fifth Assembly, in preparation for developing a Determination fit for the Sixth Assembly.

2.3 The Board considered and agreed its draft strategy document for 2016–2021, subject to some minor amendments. The Board agreed that the document should be published at the beginning of the spring term to be transparent about its work and to enable productive dialogue with Members and those who take an interest in its work and the future capacity of Wales' democracy.

2.4 The Board received an update from Adrian Crompton on the Commission's announcement that it intends to explore the future capacity of the Assembly.

2.5 The Board discussed how its strategy would flex to respond to the priorities and objectives in the Assembly Commission's announcement, in particular in meeting the challenges posed by anticipated changes to the constitution, such as the increase in numbers of Assembly Members.

2.6 The Board agreed that one of its immediate priorities would be to gain an understanding of aspects within its remit that may deter individuals from standing for election to the Assembly and aspects that attract people to the job.

2.7 In line with its commitment to constantly review the performance of the Board and the impact of its decisions, the Board agreed to conduct reviews into the existing provisions which were put into the Determination for the Fifth Assembly and whether the existing principles underpinning the Determination are fit for purpose.

**Action point:**

- Publish strategy document and circulate to key stakeholders in the spring term.

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### **3 Consideration of latest issues raised with Members' Business Support**

3.1 The Board considered a paper outlining some of the issues that have arisen in applying the determination since the start of the Assembly's autumn term.

3.2 The Board also discussed some of the issues that have arisen from Members' discussions with Members Business Support (MBS) and others were raised more formally with the Chair of the Board during her drop in session.

3.3 The issues raised included the flexibility of the staffing structures, residential allowances and the progress of the security review of Member's constituency offices. This will inform the Board's strategic discussions for creating a Determination fit for the Sixth Assembly and the annual review of the Determination and the review of the effectiveness of the Determination in 2017.

### **4 Item for decision: Consider responses to consultation on Residential Accommodation Expenditure**

4.1 The Board considered the matter of the Residential Accommodation Expenditure and the responses to its consultation on whether to amend the Determination so that Members whose main home is outside Wales are eligible for residential accommodation expenditure.

4.2 In coming to its decision, the Board was guided by its remit and duties under the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010 to ensure that no Member is impeded from undertaking the role they have been elected to do by putting in place a system of financial support that enables them to carry out their work effectively.

4.3 The Board noted that it had received 41 consultation responses. The Board also noted that there was significant opposition to the proposal by the Board to amend the Determination.

4.4 The Board agreed that it was a matter for the legislature in setting eligibility requirements for candidates to be an AM, and a matter of judgement for the electorate in deciding whom to elect. It would therefore not be a matter over which the Board has authority. The Board agreed that its functions were to set reasonable allowances for those who have been elected to the National Assembly for Wales.

4.5 Taking into account the responses to the consultation, the Board concluded that it would not change the Determination.

4.6 The Board agreed to exercise its discretion to deal with the exceptional circumstances of a Member whose main home is outside Wales on a case by case basis by paying for any expenses necessarily incurred in connection with the performance of their role as a Member.

4.7 The Board agreed to maintain the existing arrangements to reimburse hotel accommodation where necessarily incurred in connection with Assembly duties in Cardiff, which had been working satisfactorily to date. The Board agreed that well established controls were in place to ensure that such claims are reasonable and provide value for money.

**Action points:**

- The Board agreed to write to the Members concerned directly to inform him of its decision.
- The Board to write to all Assembly Members informing them of its decision and publish the letter on its web site.

## **5 Item for discussion: Consider scope for Research into identifying barriers to entering the National Assembly for Wales**

5.1 The Board considered a paper which outlined the proposed scope of the exercise to conduct research in 2017 into identifying barriers and incentives to entering the National Assembly for Wales to inform the Board's decisions for the Determination in the Sixth Assembly.

5.2 At its strategy day, the Board nominated Jane Roberts to lead on this strand of work. The Chair invited her to introduce the scoping paper.

5.3 The Board agreed the scope of its work, taking account of the remit of the Board, and agreed to commission an external provider to conduct the research.

5.4 The Board would consider a paper outlining the parameters of the tender exercise for consideration at its meeting in January.

### **Action point:**

- The Secretariat to prepare a paper outlining the parameters of the research into barriers and incentives for running for election to the National Assembly for Wales.

## **6 Item for discussion: Consider scope for review of the underpinning principles and effectiveness of the Determination**

6.1 The Board discussed two strands of work relating to the overall support provided to Assembly Members: a review of the effectiveness of the Determination and its impact in the first year of the Fifth Assembly, and the principles underlying the provision of financial support, in particular whether the current approach is too prescriptive.

6.2 At its strategy day, the Board nominated Mike Redhouse to take the lead on this strand of work. The Chair invited him to introduce the scoping paper.

6.3 The Board considered the terms of references for both reviews and discussed how they related to each other;

6.4 The Board discussed the extent to which the Board should carry out consultations for both reviews, including the timescales and the key stakeholders to consult;

6.5 The Board agreed that the annual AM survey, which would be released by the Assembly Commission in February 2017, should inform the Board's review.

6.6 This review will be conducted over the course of 2017 and will inform the Board's decisions for the Determination in the Sixth Assembly.

**Action point:**

- The Secretariat to prepare a paper outlining the parameters of the reviews into the effectiveness of the Determination and the underpinning principles of the Determination.