

Concise Minutes - Remuneration Board

Meeting Venue:

Meeting date: Thursday, 25 January 2018

Conference Room A - Tŷ Hywel

Meeting time: 09.02 - 15.53

WRB(14)

Attendance

Category	Names
Board members:	Rt Hon Dame Dawn Primarolo (Chair) Ronnie Alexander Trevor Reaney Michael Redhouse Dame Jane Roberts
Officials:	Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business Anna Daniel, Head of Strategic Transformation Matthew Richards, Head of Legal Services John Chick, Head of Members' Business Support Rebecca Hardwicke, Members' HR Business Partner Martin Jennings, Research Team Leader
Committee Staff:	Sian Giddins, Deputy Clerk
Witnesses	Dr Huw Pritchard, Wales Governance Centre

1 Chair's introduction

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members to the meeting.
- 1.2 The Board welcomed John Chick to the meeting who had returned to the Assembly. The Chair also offered the Board's thanks to Rebecca Hardwicke and Carys Rees for their work on behalf of the Board during John's absence.
- 1.3 The Board agreed the minutes of 23 November 2017 subject to minor changes.

- 1.4 The Board agree to write to the Commission to request that the legislation to change of the name of the Assembly to the Welsh Parliament also includes a provision to change the Board's name to the Independent Remuneration Board for the Welsh Parliament.
- 1.5 The Board noted that the resignation of Nathan Gill and subsequent decision that his successor Mandy Jones AM would not be a member of the UKIP group in the Assembly had no impact on the allowance for political parties.
- 1.6 The Board agreed that the membership of the Assembly Member support staff representative group membership should comprise of one support staff from each political party and one representative from each trade union.
- 1.7 The Board noted its meeting dates and the potential dates for the meetings of the Representative Groups.

Action points:

The Board to:

- write to the Assembly Commission outlining why it would like to change its name;
- write to the Assembly Member support staff Representative Group to confirm its membership.

**2 Item for discussion: Review of staffing support for Members:
Consideration of evidence**

- 2.1 The Board considered the evidence it had heard to date in relation to the terms of reference of the review.
- 2.2 The Board agreed to arrange further interviews with Members and support staff, subject to availability, to ensure its sample is representative of both groups.

Action points:

The secretariat to:

- contact the offices of Member to identify suitable interview date;
- prepare a thematic summary of all the evidence received to date for the Board's consideration at its next meeting.

3 Item for discussion: The report by the Welsh Governance Centre on the barriers to and incentives for running for election to the Assembly

- 3.1 The Chair welcomed Dr Huw Pritchard, who was representing the Wales Governance Centre, to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Dr Diana Stribu.
- 3.2 The Chair invited Dr Pritchard to provide an overview of the draft report to the Board and to respond to the points of clarification raised by the Board. Dr Pritchard agreed to respond to further points of clarification via email.
- 3.3 The Board agreed to consider how it would respond to the recommendation in the report at its March meeting.
- 3.4 Both Dr Pritchard and the Board agreed to discuss the publication and dissemination strategy at a later date.

Action point:

The secretariat to be the point of contact between the Board and the Wales Governance Centre with regards to any points of clarification raised.

4 Review of staffing support for Members: Engagement event with Support Staff

- 4.1 The Board considered the issues raised during its engagement event with support staff.

5 Item for decision: Annual review of the Determination 2018-19

Support staff salaries for 2018-19

- 5.1 The Board agreed to propose an increase in support staff salaries for 2018-19 by 2.3 per cent in line with the provisional Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) figures for 2017 which were released in October 2017
- 5.2 The Board agreed to use the ASHE figure to ensure a consistent approach with last year's pay review.

Office cost allowance for 2018-19

- 5.3 The Board considered the various factors which affect office costs for Members including location, inflation, specialist equipment and Assembly Commission policies.

- 5.4 The Board agreed to use to use the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2017, which was 3 per cent, as a base rate to uprate the allowance. This follows the same principles as last year's uprate.
- 5.5 However, to accommodate concerns raised as a result of the Commission's decision not to fund Members caseworker system centrally and the extended requirements of the Official Languages Scheme, the Board agreed to propose an increase of 5 per cent in the allowance for 2018-19.
- 5.6 The Board also considered an allowance that Members can access to meet the reasonable costs of any security enhancements and agreed to propose an uncapped allowance is created for this purpose. However, access to this fund would be subject to Members adhering to specific criteria.

Residential Accommodation Expenditure for 2018-19

- 5.7 The Board considered the Residential Accommodation Expenditure for 2018-19 and agreed that the current allowance for outer area Members of £9,200 per annum/£775 per calendar month, the maximum amount for essential repairs of £882 per annum and the maximum amount of rental costs for Members with dependents of £120 per month should be maintained

Consultation

- 5.8 The Board agreed to issue a consultation on all the above proposals. The closing date for consultation would be 2 March 2018.
- 5.9 The Board will consider the responses to the consultation at its March meeting.

Action points:

The secretariat to:

- issue and promote the consultation;
- prepare a summary of the consultation responses for consideration at the March meeting.

6 Item for discussion: The report by the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform: Creating a Parliament that Works for Wales

- 6.1 The Board considered the report by the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform, A Parliament that Works for Wales, and received an updated on the Commission's intention on taking the work forward.
- 6.2 The Board agreed to await the outcome of the public consultation and any subsequent legislation which may be introduced as a result of the consultation before considering the implications on its work.

7 Papers to note

- 7.1 The Board noted:
 - the correspondence from the Finance Committee regarding its inquiry into the Remuneration Board's Determination Underspend;
 - the report by the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform, A Parliament that works for Wales.