

# Concise Minutes - Remuneration Board

Meeting Venue:

Meeting date: Thursday, 17 January 2019

**Conference Room 4B - Tŷ Hywel**

Meeting time: 09.04 - 15.10

## WRB(20)

### Attendance

Category	Names
Board members:	Rt Hon Dame Dawn Primarolo (Chair) Ronnie Alexander Trevor Reaney Michael Redhouse Dame Jane Roberts
Officials:	Matthew Richards, Head of Legal Services Rebecca Hardwicke, Head of Members' Business Support Martin Jennings, Research Team Leader Craig Stephenson, Director of Engagement
Secretariat:	Lleu Williams, Clerk Sian Giddins, Deputy Clerk

### 1 Chair's introduction

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed the Board members to the meeting.
- 1.2. The Board agreed the minute of the meeting on 22 November 2018.
- 1.3. The Board passed on their condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Steffan Lewis, the former Assembly Member, following their loss. The Board thanked the:
  - team in Members' Business Support for the support and advice they continue to provide to Steffan's family and support staff;
  - secretariat for keeping the Board informed of the issues arising.
- 1.4. The Board noted the provisions for winding up Steffan Lewis' office.

- 1.5. The Board undertook its annual review of all applications it had previously approved for exceptional expenses and agreed, in light of the assurances from the Members their situation remains the same as when the Board first approved the additional payments, to maintain the additional payments. The Board noted, the number and amounts of exceptional payments made in 2018-19 will be published in its annual report.
- 1.6. The Board agreed to write to all support staff who work for independent Assembly Members to ask them to formalise arrangements for engaging with the Board.

**Action points:**

The secretariat to:

- publish the note of the meeting on 22 November;
- inform all Members receiving exceptional expenses of the Board's decision;
- write to support staff of independent Members to formalise arrangements for engaging with the Board.

## **2 Item for decision: Review of staffing support for Members and the review of the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures: Consideration of consultation responses**

### *Review of staffing support for Members*

- 2.1. The Board considered the responses received regarding its proposals to amend the funding arrangements for family members (proposals one and two of the consultation).
- 2.2. Following careful and open-minded consideration of the responses alongside the Board's statutory objectives, the Board agreed to amend its original proposals for the funding arrangements regarding the employment of family members.
- 2.3. The Board agreed to seek further advice before implementing any changes with regards to the funding arrangements for family member.
- 2.4. The Board considered the responses to its proposals to amend the terms and conditions of support staff (proposals three, four and five) agreed to implement the following changes from 1 April 2019:
  - adjusting support staff salaries in April of each year by the change in the ASHE survey;
  - introducing privilege days for support staff;
  - introducing a new compassionate leave policy for support staff.
- 2.5. The Board agreed the secretariat should work with the support staff representatives on its behalf to ensure the compassionate leave policy is fit for purpose.

**Action points**

The secretariat to:

- seek further advice on the Board’s decision regarding the proposed changes to proposals one and two;
- work with support staff to develop the compassionate leave policy;
- inform Members and support staff of the upcoming changes once the Board’s decision was final;
- prepare a revised Determination for publication in April 2019.

### *Review of the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures*

- 2.6. The Board considered the responses received to proposals six and seven and agreed to amend both procedures to ensure they are up to date and align with the Assembly’s Dignity and Respect policy.
- 2.7. The Board agreed the secretariat should work with the support staff representatives on its behalf to ensure the procedures are fit for purpose.

### **Action points**

The secretariat to:

- work with support staff to develop the Procedures;
- inform Members and support staff of the upcoming changes once the Board.

## **3 Item for discussion: Determination for the Sixth Assembly: Second consideration of part one**

- 3.1. The Board considered the provisions within the Residential Accommodation Expenditure, Members’ travel and the Office Costs chapters of the Determination which fall under part one of its review.
- 3.2. The Board agreed to return to the issues raised at its next meeting.

## **4 Item for discussion: Determination for the Sixth Assembly: Second consideration of part one (continued)**

- 4.1. As item 3.

## **5 Item for decision: Annual review of the Determination 2019-20**

### *Support staff salaries*

- 5.1. The Board referred to its earlier decision (item two) to adjust support staff salaries in April of each year by the change in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), gross Median Earnings for full-time employee jobs in Wales. The Board noted this would bring the indexing method for support staff salaries in line with that for Members.
- 5.2. From 1 April 2019 the salaries of Members and support staff will be increased by 1.2 per cent.

- 5.3. As the change would take effect from 1 April 2019 the Board agreed not to propose any further changes to support staff salaries for 2019-20. The revised salaries will be provided in the Determination for 2019-20.

#### *Office Costs Allowance*

- 5.4. The Board considered the various factors which affect office costs for Members.
- 5.5. The Board agreed that Members' spend on the allowance demonstrates the current allowance is adequate and as a result has decided to maintain the allowances of £18,260 and £4,912 for the 2019-20 financial year.

#### *Residential Accommodation Expenditure*

- 5.6. The Board considered the various factors which affect the Residential Accommodation Expenditure for Member.
- 5.7. The Board noted there had been no change to the outer area allowance since 2017-18.
- 5.8. The Board agreed to use the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2018, which was 2.4 per cent, as a rate to uprate the outer area allowance for the next financial year. This follows the same principles as the Board has used to uprate other allowances in previous years. The Board agreed to propose increasing the allowance by 2.4 per cent.
- 5.9. The Board agreed that 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, which is only applicable to outer area Members, should be maintained.
- 5.10. The Board noted there had been no change to intermediate area allowance since its introduction.
- 5.11. To reflect the increased demands on Members' time since the intermediate area allowance was first introduced in 2012, the Board agreed to propose increasing the allowance to £6,840 per annum.
- 5.12. The Board also agreed to propose amending the wording of the provision accordingly to reflect the multiples uses of the intermediate area allowance.

#### *Consultation*

- 5.13. The Board agreed to issue a consultation on all the above proposals. The closing date for consultation would be 12 March 2019.
- 5.14. The Board will consider the responses to the consultation at its March meeting.

#### **Action points:**

The secretariat to:

- prepare an amended Determination to reflect the changes to support staff salaries;
- issue and promote the consultation;

- prepare a summary of the consultation responses for consideration at the March meeting.

## **6 Paper(s) to note**

- 6.1. The Board noted the report by the Standards of Conduct Committee and agreed to consider the issues raised as part of its review of the Determination for the Sixth Assembly.