

To: All Members

Cc: All support staff

19 November 2020

Dear Member,

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd met on 5 November. The following is a summary of its discussions and decisions.

Covid-19

The Board noted that Welsh regulations and guidance concerning Covid-19 restrictions would be amended as Wales came out of the 'firebreak' lockdown period. The Board noted that from the week of 9 November the Senedd will revert to hybrid ways of working.

The Board reviewed the impacts on existing budgets and take up of the Home Working Allowance that the Board has decided will remain in place until Dissolution. The Board agreed to keep a watching brief on Members' office costs allowance towards the end of year to identify any potential issues. The Board will keep the situation and the support available to Members related to Covid-19 under review and will receive another update at its next meeting in December. As ever, the Board stands ready to support Members in these exceptional and uncertain times.

Review of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd, 2021-22

The Board considered a number of issues as part of its annual review of the Determination and the package of support for Members, including issues identified by the previous Board so that they may be addressed ahead of the Sixth Senedd including:

- Members' pay;
- Office costs (which will become the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund);
- Residential accommodation expenditure;
- Removing provisions that are no longer relevant following the UK's departure from the EU;
- Political Parties Support Allowance;
- Centrally funded stationery costs;

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- Support staff pension scheme.

The Board will consider these matters in further detail at its meeting on 10 December with the intention of agreeing and publishing a consultation document setting out any proposed changes as soon as possible after its meeting (16 December tbc).

You may be aware that Representative Group meetings have been arranged for Friday 11 December ahead of issuing the consultation before the Christmas recess.

The Board is mindful of the pressures on Members at this current time and would therefore like to encourage Members to speak to their Representative in order to feed in responses to the consultation if they are not able to respond individually.

Support staff contract

The Board considered an update from Members' Business Support on the current work underway to update the support staff contract and the staff handbook. The Board agreed that MBS will lead consultation with Members and support staff on the new look contract and that the Board will consider the matter further at its March meeting ahead of the start of the Sixth Senedd.

Forward work programme and strategy

The Board considered its work programme for the next few months. The Board is keen to meet with as many of you as possible ahead of dissolution and will be looking at working with the Representative Groups to facilitate virtual meetings with Members' offices going forward.

Meeting with you will provide the Board with an invaluable understanding of how Members and support staff are working in these unprecedented times and also to explore your potential future needs as we move closer to the Sixth Senedd.

The previous Board published its strategy in 2016 which runs until 2021. Between now and the 2021 summer recess, the Board will take time to consider its strategic approach to its work during the Sixth Senedd taking into consideration external factors such as the impact of Brexit, Covid-19 and any potential constitutional reform. The continued engagement with the Representative Groups and individual meetings will help inform this consideration.

I hope you have found this update useful. As noted in our letter on 29 September, it is our intention to continue providing such updates following meetings and to make this letter

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publicly available through our website. Should you have any feedback on any of the matters above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I am conscious that I have taken up the role of Chair of the Board at a time where it is difficult to meet in person. I am of course, always happy to meet individual Members and I hope to meet as many of you as I can in due course, remotely or otherwise. If you would like to discuss anything with me, please contact the Board's secretariat on remuneration@senedd.wales to make arrangements.

Best wishes and stay safe,



Dr Elizabeth Haywood

Chair, Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.