

Bwrdd Taliadau Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol Cymru

—
Remuneration Board of the
National Assembly for Wales

24 July 2017

Dear Assembly Member,

On 11 and 12 July 2017, the Remuneration Board met to discuss future work which will inform our thinking for the remainder of the Board's term, in particular to discuss a review of the Actuarial Valuation of the Members' Pension Scheme and the findings of the survey to Members and Support Staff on the effectiveness of the current Determination. The following is a summary of the Board's discussion and decisions, and a brief update on our work programme.

Review of the Actuarial Valuation of the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme

The Assembly Members' Pension Scheme undergoes an Actuarial Valuation every three years to assess the funding position of the scheme, and for the Scheme Actuary to confirm the level of contributions the Commission has to pay to the Scheme going forward.

The Board considered a paper on the preliminary results of the 2017 Actuarial Valuation of the Assembly Members' Pension Scheme. The Scheme's Actuary has proposed an increase in the Commission's contribution rate. The reason for the increase is that it is the view of the Scheme Actuary that investment returns will be less favourable going forward than those enjoyed by the Scheme over recent years.

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The Board confirmed they understood the need for the increase in the Commission contribution rate and agreed to inform the Scheme's Actuary of their view. There is no impact on Member's contributions, these will remain at the same level.

The rate of Commission contributions going forward will be confirmed once the Actuarial Valuation is complete.

Results of the survey to Members and Support Staff on the effectiveness of the Determination

The Board considered the results of the surveys that were issued to Members and Support Staff between 5 May and 16 June 2017. This survey follows the Board's previous decision to review the current Determination one year on into the Fifth Assembly.

The Board would like to thank everyone who responded to the survey. A total of 24 Members (40 per cent) and 67 Support Staff (27 per cent) responded to the survey. We will publish a summary of the results in the autumn term. We will ensure that Assembly Member and Support Staff representative groups are kept informed of the results and our plans for publication.

The results of the survey will be considered as part of our review into the career structure and terms and conditions of Assembly Members Support Staff and the review of the Determination.

Emerging evidence from the review into identifying barriers to and incentives for standing for election to the National Assembly for Wales

The Board previously agreed to explore the barriers to and incentives for, which are within the Board's remit, to standing for election to the National Assembly for Wales. The Wales Governance Centre was successful in an open tendering process to undertake the research and attended this meeting to provide the Board with an update of the work they had undertaken to date. They also provided an outline of the next steps in the research. The Centre has been asked to report to the Board by December 2017.

Consideration of draft Remuneration Board Annual Report for 2016-17

The Board considered the draft Remuneration Board Annual Report for 2016-17 and agreed to publish the report in due course.

Review into the career structure of and terms and conditions of Assembly Member Support Staff

The Board considered a paper outlining a possible scope for its review into support for Members, including Support Staff career structure and their terms and conditions. The purpose of undertaking the review is to gain an

insight into short and medium term improvements over the course of the current Assembly as well as informing any longer term improvements which may be necessary for the Sixth Assembly.

The Board has agreed to use a range of evidence to inform the review, including the results from its recent survey of Members and Support Staff. The Board will consider this evidence at its October meeting before agreeing the next steps of the review.

We will ensure that Members, their Support Staff and their representative groups are kept fully abreast of our progress and are involved at key stages.

General Update

New Board appointment

Following an open recruitment process, Ronnie Alexander was recently appointed as the Board's fifth member and will serve as a Board member for remainder of the Fifth Assembly. This was Ronnie's first Board meeting.

Progress of security reviews on offices

The Board considered a progress update on the security reviews of Members offices. The Board noted that every Assembly Member has now received at least one office site from a qualified officer within the Security Team. The Board would also like to remind Members of the services available to them as part of the security reviews. This includes providing necessary and reasonable security enhancements for Members in their constituency offices, residential accommodation (if applicable) and homes. Please contact the Members Business Support team for further information.

Assembly Electoral Reform

The Board received an update on the work relating to Assembly Electoral Reform. It was noted that the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform was due to report in autumn 2017. Given the Board's wider strategic objective of producing a Determination fit for the Sixth Assembly, which will reflect the evolving constitutional responsibilities of the institution, the Board will be keeping a close eye on these issues.

The Board has agreed to invite the Chair of the Expert Panel, Professor Laura McAllister, to the next Board meeting in October 2017. This is to discuss any emerging issues which may relate to the Board's work for the remainder of its term, including developing a determination which is fit for the Sixth Assembly.

Paid Internships

The Board noted the questions raised by Members to the Assembly Commission in Plenary on Wednesday 5 July 2017. The Board agreed to consider the role of paid internships as part of its wider review of support for Members.

Secretariat Update

Lleu Williams has recently been appointed as the new Clerk to the Remuneration Board. The Board thanked Dan Collier for all his work. Lleu Williams will work alongside Sian Giddins, Deputy Clerk, as the Secretariat to the Remuneration Board.

This letter will also be published on our website as is our usual practice.

If you would like to discuss any matter with me, or with one of my fellow Board members, please do not hesitate to contact me via the secretariat.

Best wishes,



**Dame Dawn Primarolo
Cadeirydd / Chair
Bwrdd Taliadau/Remuneration Board**