

Dear Assembly Members,

The Remuneration Board held its second meeting of 2015 on 20 February. I am writing to keep you abreast of progress towards a Determination for the Fifth Assembly.

Determination for 2015-16

The Board noted the one formal response to our consultation and the feedback received from the representative groups. We will now publish our final Determination for 2015-16 as close to the start of April as practical.

AMSS salaries 2015-16

The Board considered the broadly positive responses to the proposed pay increase for AMSS. The Board agreed to increase AMSS salaries for 2015-16 by 1% or the March 2015 figures for ASHE median earnings in Wales – whichever is the greater.

The consultation also raised questions in relation to the improved redundancy arrangements and death-in-service payments for Support Staff – both of which have been welcomed. We will write to AMSS representatives clarifying our proposals in this area.

We also noted the concerns of Support Staff around decisions for 2016-17 (and beyond). While these will be a matter for the new Remuneration Board which will be appointed later this year, we agreed to recommend that our successors give this issue urgent consideration.

Determination for the Fifth Assembly

The Board discussed a range of outstanding issues and will now finalise a draft text for consultation. We intend to publish the Draft Determination for the Fifth Assembly, and the accompanying report on 6 March. The Consultation will run until 8 April.

While most of the areas of change have already been subject to consultation, we will also be bringing forward a new proposal to change the way the Assembly provides support to groups.

We also spent some time giving further consideration to the consultation responses on AM Salaries and agree our view in readiness for the consultation.

Pensions

The Board heard a progress update on the new pensions scheme. The Board is due to receive comments from the Pension Trustees on the draft scheme soon. While the Board remains on target to publish its Draft Determination for the Fifth Assembly in May, it has become clear that we are unlikely to have the new pension scheme cleared by HM Treasury by that date.

In order to give the clearest picture to potential candidates for the Fifth Assembly, the Board agreed it would nonetheless publish the key features of its proposed scheme as part of the Determination, with the caveat that it was awaiting official Treasury approval as necessary under the Public Services Pensions Act.

Miscellaneous issues

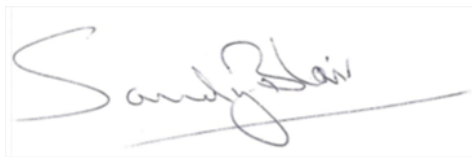
The Board agreed that it will recommend that the Commission offer an **outsourcing** service to assist defeated AMs and their staff (and relevant group staff).

Next steps

As usual, I intend to make this letter publicly available through our website once Members have had a chance to read it.

As always, I am happy to meet with individual AMs or party groups to discuss any aspects of the Board's work. If you would like to meet, please contact the Board's clerk Gareth Price remuneration@wales.gov.uk to make arrangements.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Blair', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sandy Blair CBE

Cadeirydd / Chair

Bwrdd Taliadau/Remuneration Board