

1 April 2019

Dear Assembly Member

The Remuneration Board met on 21 March. The following is a summary of its discussions and decisions.

Annual review of the Determination

Following the Board's January meeting it launched its [consultation](#) on the annual review of the Determination which ran from 22 January to 12 March. The Board considered the responses received at its March meeting and its decisions are outlined below. The changes will be implemented from 1 April 2019 and a revised Determination for 2019-20 will be published shortly.

Office Costs allowance for 2019-20

The Board noted the response received which suggested that the Office Costs allowance should be increased and that a tiered system should be introduced to reflect the average office rental price across Wales. However, having considered how Members spend their allowance, the Board agreed that the Office Costs allowance for 2019-20 would remain at the current rates provided for in the Determination, as there is no evidence to suggest that an increase is required. Should new evidence come to light to suggest that an increase is required, the Board will consider this as part of its review of the Determination for the Sixth Assembly.

Residential Accommodation Expenditure for 2019-20

The Board agreed to increase the Residential Accommodation Expenditure allowance for outer area Members by 2.4 per cent in line with the CPI rate for September 2018. The Board decided 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 would be maintained at their current levels for 2019-20.

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The Board also agreed to increase the Residential Accommodation Expenditure allowance for intermediate area Member to £6,840 per annum and to extend the use of the allowance as proposed in the consultation. This Board believes these changes will address the concerns raised that the allowance no longer corresponds with the increased demands on Members' to stay overnight in Cardiff Bay. Members' Business Support can provide further advice should it be required.

The Board noted the suggestion that the boundaries for the Residential Accommodation Expenditure should be defined on the travel time from the Members main home to Cardiff Bay and not distance, as is the current practice. The Board considered this as part of its wider work in developing a Determination for the Sixth Assembly. An update on this work is provided below.

Member and support staff salaries for 2019-20

As outlined in the [Board's letter of 5 February 2019](#), support staff salaries for 2019-20 will increase by 1.2 per cent in line with the provisional figures for change in median earnings in Wales, as measured by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). The change will be implemented on 1 April 2019.

As set out in the Determination for the Fifth Assembly, the pay of Members and office holders is automatically adjusted each year by the change in median earnings in Wales, as measured by ASHE. Member and office holder salaries will increase from April, therefore, in the same way as support staff pay. Full details of the revised salaries for both Members and support staff will be published shortly in the Determination for 2019-20.

Review of the Determination for the Sixth Assembly

The Board considered the issues which fall under part one of its review, which focuses on the Residential Accommodation Expenditure, Members' travel and the Office Costs chapters of the Determination. The Board agreed to issue its consultation on this part of the review imminently. Further information will be published in due course.

The Board also considered the issues which form the second part of the review the staffing support available to individual Members and political parties. The Board will return to the issues raised at its next meeting. As outlined on the [Board's website](#), the Board anticipates issuing a consultation on the issues raised in this part of the review during the summer term.

Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill

The Board discussed the potential implications of the [Senedd and Elections \(Wales\) Bill](#) on its remit and agreed to monitor the Bill's passage through the Assembly.

Evaluation of the Senior Advisor role

As you will be aware, in November 2018, the Board commissioned Capital People to undertake an evaluation of the Senior Advisor role on its behalf. As outlined in its recent [consultation document](#) the Board agreed to evaluate how the role has progressed against the original objectives for the post. To inform the evaluation, Capital People considered the evidence which the Board had already gathered in addition to undertaking its own data collection. The Board would like to thank everyone who has participated in evaluation.

The Board has now received feedback on the evaluation from Capital People and will consider the next steps of this work, including publication of the report, at its next meeting.

Other matters

At its January meeting the Board agreed to write to all support staff of independent Members to formalise a mechanism for engaging with this group of staff. Having considered the feedback received on the process the Board has agreed to provide staff working in independent Members' offices opportunities to share any issues arising or concerns they may have ahead of Representative Group meetings.

The Board would like to take this opportunity to remind you that it's [new website](#) was launched in February, which coincided with the re-launch of its [Twitter feed](#). The Board would welcome any feedback or comments you may have on the site's content.

The Board also wish to thank Sian Giddins for her work as Deputy Clerk to the Board over the past two years. The Board is very grateful to Sian for her support and advice during her time in her role. We wish Sian well on her future endeavours.

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](#).

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Best wishes,



Dame Dawn Primarolo

Chair, Remuneration Board

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.