

19 October 2018

Dear Assembly Member,

The Remuneration Board met on 11 October. The following is a summary of its discussions and decisions.

### ***Determination for the Sixth Assembly***

The Board considered its forward work plan for reviewing its Determination for the Sixth Assembly. The Board agreed a programme of work that will ensure it meets its initial objective of producing a Determination for May 2020, one year before the next election. The Board noted that the Assembly's reform programme could impact the timeframe for this review. The Board will write to you again with details on how it plans to proceed with this programme of work and the opportunities available for you to share your views on the matters under consideration.

### ***Review of staffing support for Members***

The Board considered the remaining issues arising from its review. The Board agreed that there were some issues it would consult upon as part of this review and some which it would consider as part of its review of the Determination for the Sixth Assembly. The Board will publish the final consultation of its review soon.

The Board also considered the responses it had received following the second consultation arising from this review on the flexibility of the allowances surrounding the Support for Political Parties Allowance. The Board's decisions on each proposal are outlined below.

#### ***Budgeting staffing costs for Political Parties at actual cost***

The Board considered the responses it had received on its proposal to calculate the remaining balance of Support for Political Party Allowance at actual cost. As all the responses received were in favour of the change the Board agreed to implement this decision which will take effect from 1 April 2019. This change will take place at the same time as the Board's previous decision to calculate the remaining balance available of the Staffing Allowance at actual cost.

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The Board noted the concerns that were raised with regards to this change in that it may encourage the use of temporary staff as Party Groups may choose to appoint these individuals at lower salary bands which in turn would increase the amount of funding available to that Party. The Board agreed to review these changes at six and 12 months following its implementation.

### *Viring between budgets*

The Board received two responses to this proposal, one of which agreed with the Board's proposals and one which objected to the proposal. Having considered both responses, the Board decided to remove the provision within the Determination which allows for virement of funds from a Member's Staffing Allowance to the Support for Political Parties Allowance and for this change to take effect from the date of this letter. This decision was taken in order to maintain the original purpose of both allowances. The Board agreed to allow those virements already in place to continue until the dissolution of the Fifth Assembly.

### *Publication of expenditure made against the Support for Political Parties Allowance*

All the responses received on this issue were in favour of publishing the expenditure each party makes against the allowance. The Board noted the concerns raised by respondents who sought assurances that personal data of support staff would not be able to be identified from any published data. The Board agreed to implement safeguards to ensure that support staff could not be identified by the published information.

The Board has decided to implement this decision effective immediately and the first data will be published at the end of current financial year in April 2019. This information will be published to the Assembly's website as is the current practice for other allowances.

Please note that a revised Determination will be published soon to reflect these changes.

### ***Governance Group of the National Assembly for Wales Assembly Members' support staff Pension Scheme***

Following the decision at its [July meeting](#) to establish a designated body that would be responsible for making decisions on the support staff pension scheme the Board agreed the terms of reference for the new governance group. The Board agreed that Mike Redhouse would represent the Board on the group alongside the Commission's Head of Pensions and its Director of Finance, Nia Morgan, who is the Assembly Commission nominee.

***Dignity and Respect Policy***

Following the publication of the new Dignity and Respect Policy the Board agreed to undertake some further work on the policies it is responsible for, namely the support staff Disciplinary Procedure and Grievance Procedure. The Board considered the initial feedback received on the procedures and agreed to consult on proposed amendments to these two procedures and will issue details on this in due course.

The Board discussed the recommendations arising from the Standards of Conduct Committee's recent report and agreed to work with the Assembly Commission on addressing the issues raised in relation to Independent Members' offices. The Board also agreed to wait until the review of the Members' Code of Conduct is complete before considering making any changes to the support staff Code of Conduct to ensure a consistent approach where necessary.

**Other matters**

The Board noted the changes to the leadership of three of the parties represented in the Assembly and congratulated the new leaders on their new roles. The Board wishes to thank the previous leaders for their work and looks forward to working with the new leaders over the remainder of this Assembly.

The Board noted the findings arising from the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee [inquiry into pregnancy, maternity and work in Wales](#). The Board agreed to consider the relevant findings as part of its review of the Determination for the Sixth Assembly.

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**

**Chair, Remuneration Board**

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.