

Concise Minutes - Remuneration Board

Meeting Venue:

Meeting date: Thursday, 10 December 2020

Videoconference (via Microsoft Teams)

Meeting time: 09. - 13.00

Private

Attendance

Category	Names
Board members:	Dr Elizabeth Haywood (Chair) Ronnie Alexander Michael Redhouse Dame Jane Roberts Hugh Widdis
Officials:	Craig Griffiths, Legal Adviser Anna Daniel, Head of Strategic Transformation Joanna Adams, Members' Senior Business Partner Martin Jennings, Research Team Leader, Matthew Richards, Head of the Legal Service Dean Beard, Members' Business Support Deb Suller, Members' Business Support Huw Gapper, Strategic Transformation Dan Collier, Strategic Transformation Gareth Price, Head of Communications Ian Thomas, Website and Content Management project John Brassington, Website and Content Management project
Secretariat:	Lleu Williams (Clerk) David Lakin (Deputy Clerk)

1 Item for discussion: Chair's introduction

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members and officials to the meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Commission staff members Dean Beard; Deb Suller; Dan Collier; and Huw Gapper to the meeting.
- 1.3 The Board agreed the minutes of the November meeting as amended.
- 1.4 The Board noted an update on Covid-19 and agreed no further changes were required to the support provided at present.
- 1.5 The Board noted an update on the progress of legislation relating to powers to postpone the 2021 Senedd election if required. The Board inquired about the impact of a postponed election on the Determination for the Sixth Senedd and agreed to consider this further at its next meeting.
- 1.6 The Board agreed minor amendments to the Register of Interests form and agreed that members should aim to complete the form by the next meeting.
- 1.7 The Board recognised the need to appoint a new Data Protection Officer who is independent, an expert in data protection, adequately resourced, and reports to the highest management level.
- 1.8 The Board agreed to review its privacy notice to ensure it is compliant with the most recent legislation.
- 1.9 The Board agreed to consider a further update on a new website at the next meeting.
- 1.10 The Board considered its future work programme and agreed to divide future scenario planning into two separate discussions.

Actions:

- Secretariat to publish the November minutes.
- Secretariat to prepare advice to the Board on forthcoming Welsh Government legislation regarding the 2021 Senedd election for consideration at the next meeting.
- Secretariat to amend the Register of Interests and circulate to the Board.
- Secretariat to review the Board's privacy notice and advising the Board on the appointment of a Data Protection Officer.
- Secretariat to prepare scenario planning discussion papers for the next meeting.

2 Item for discussion: Annual review of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd

- 2.1 The Board agreed to postpone the discussion on support for Members' security to the next meeting. It was agreed to consider the matters as part of a wider strategic discussion on the security support provided to Members in the Sixth Senedd.
- 2.2 The Board discussed proposals for consultation on the annual review of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd. The Board agreed to propose the following:
- In light of the current economic circumstances, having frozen Members' salaries in 2019/20, the Board proposes:
 - that for 2020/21 salaries, the Board's decision to freeze salaries at the 2019/20 rate is maintained (i.e. not to apply the 4.4 per cent increase in average earnings as received by other workers in Wales for the relevant year);
 - for 2021/22 salaries, to apply to those frozen base salaries the increase in average earnings of 2.4 per cent as received by other workers in Wales for the relevant year – this means that Members' base salary for the start of the Sixth Senedd will be £69,273, rather than the £72,321 as published in June 2020;
 - introduce a maximum annual ASHE indexed increase of three per cent and rule out any decrease below zero per cent to Member and additional office holder salaries in the Sixth Senedd.
 - Not to make any changes to the Residential Accommodation Expenditure allowance for the Sixth Senedd.
 - Remove or substitute (as appropriate) all references to the European Union in the provisions in the Determination relating to Members' travel.
 - Move stationery costs in a cost-neutral way from the Senedd Commission to the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund. To reflect this, the Office and Constituent Liaison Costs allowance will be increased by £1,800 to £20,060 (or £6,712 where the Member works exclusively from Tŷ Hywel) for the start of the Sixth Senedd.
 - Returning Members will be able to claim the costs arising from changing the institution's name to Senedd, from the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund.
 - Enhance the support staff pension scheme by introducing a matching employer contribution, whereby the employer will match the contributions paid by the employee up to a maximum amount of three percent of the employee's salary.

- In relation to Members' support staff pay in the Sixth Senedd, introduce a maximum annual ASHE indexed increase of three per cent and rule out any decrease below zero per cent.
- Remove the need for additional Board guidance on the Policy, Research and Communications Fund ("PRCF"). As with all spend under the Determination, the Accounting Officer's Rules and Guidance on the Use of Senedd Resources will apply. As a consequential amendment, the Board proposes to include in the Determination an equivalent time limit regarding policy and research under the Support for Political Parties allowance, from four months before a general election (this is currently included as a rule in the Members' PRCF but only in guidance for the Support for Political Parties allowance).
- Members may only fund the costs of printing and signage from the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund, and not the PRCF.
- In response to cost inflation demonstrated by both ASHE and CPI, to increase the Political Party Support allowance by 1.94 per cent to £1,018,500 for the start of the Sixth Senedd.
- Change the definition of 'political parties' in the 'Interpretation' section of the Determination to:
 - "Political party" means (i) a group of Members who belong to the same political party registered with the Electoral Commission or (ii) recognised as a group under Standing Order 1.3(ii), or (iii) an individual Member who has notified Members' Business Support that they are a member of a registered Political Party."

2.3 The Board agreed the timeline for the consultation.

2.4 The Board agreed to the consultation stakeholder list as discussed. Further, the Board noted its wish to engage further with the Welsh Youth Parliament in future. It was agreed to pick this up as part of its strategic discussions in future.

2.5 The Board agreed to insert a shortened version of the Privacy Notice in the consultation document with a link to the full privacy notice on its website.

2.6 The Board agreed to amendments to the draft consultation document.

2.7 The Chair agreed to review the final version of the press release of the consultation document following the meeting.

Actions:

- Secretariat to prepare a consultation document for publication.
- Secretariat to prepare consultation correspondence and media release for publication.

3 Item for discussion: Board communications and engagement

- 3.1 The Board broadly agreed its priorities for its communications and engagement over the course of its term in office.
- 3.2 The Board considered how it could improve its internal communications and agreed to consult with Members and support staff on how it conducts its consultations.
- 3.3 The Board discussed options for its external relations and communications. The Board expressed a desire to consider the use of more deliberative forms of engagement for major issues and decisions, as well as develop a more active relationship with media stakeholders.
- 3.4 The Board agreed to consider increasing its social media presence and to receive advice from Senedd Communications on how to make its work more engaging on such platforms.
- 3.5 The Board received a presentation on the new Senedd website.
- 3.6 The Board discussed the Board's pages on the new Senedd website and when they could go live. It agreed to consent to the transfer of the Board's web domain to the new Senedd website following amendments to the draft page designs.
- 3.7 It agreed to further consider its web pages at the next meeting.

Actions:

- Secretariat to prepare outline of discussions and agreed points for consideration at a future strategy planning day.
- Secretariat to discuss social media approach with Senedd Communications.
- Secretariat to edit and prepare draft web pages for consideration at next meeting.

4 AOB: McCloud judgement

- 4.1 The Board considered a letter it received from the Chair of the Pension Board.
- 4.2 The Board agreed to seek legal advice on the application of the McCloud judgment to the Members' Pension Scheme.
- 4.3 The Board agreed to consider the matter at its next meeting

Actions:

- Secretariat to explore options for commissioning advice on the application of the McCloud judgment to the Members' Pension Scheme, and to obtain approval by email before proceeding with formal instruction.