

Concise Minutes - Remuneration Board

Meeting Venue: Hybrid – Digital/Conference
Room A

Meeting time: 09:00 - 12:00

Hybrid - Digital

Meeting date: Thursday, 6 July 2023

IRB(05-23)

Attendance

Category	Names
Board Members:	Dr Elizabeth Haywood (Chair) Sir David Hanson Michael Redhouse Dame Jane Roberts Hugh Widdis
Secretariat:	Daniel Hurford, Clerk Huw Gapper, Clerk Martha Da Gama Howells, Second Clerk Beth Hales, Deputy Clerk Ruth Hatton, Deputy Clerk Megan Jones, Support to the Board
Officials Present:	Siwan Davies, Director of Senedd Business Matthew Richards, Acting Senior Adviser to the Board Kevin Davies, Head of Public Engagement Laura Williams, Head of Communications Kate Rabaiotti, Legal Adviser to the Board Craig Griffiths, Head of Members' Business Support Martin Jennings, Research Team Leader, Financial Scrutiny Unit

1 Chair's introduction (9.00 - 9.10)

- The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Anna Daniel, Senior Advisor to the Board.
- The Board welcomed new members of the Secretariat - Beth Hales, Deputy Clerk and Megan Jones, Team Support.
- The Chair noted the positive feedback from support staff who attended the engagement event on the Board's Annual Report, held on 5 July.
- The Board also reflected on the meetings held the day before, including meetings with individual Members and the Chair's meeting with the Chief Executive and Clerk.
- The minutes of the meeting on 18 May were agreed.

Action:

Publish the minutes of 18 May meeting.

2 Remuneration of Chair of Covid Committee - Advice on Co-Chairs (9.10 - 9.30)

- The Board received an update from Siwan Davies, Director of Senedd Business, on the establishment of the Committee and Business Committee's deliberations on the procedural implications of co-chairs for the Committee, a novel arrangement for Senedd committees.
- The Board considered the decision it is required to make on the additional salary to be paid to the co-chairs. The Board noted that an Exceptional Determination may need to be made should the Board decide on salary arrangements other than those currently provided for by the Determination, as well as noting that the payment of committee chair salaries would be backdated following the Board's decision on the salary level.
- The Board agreed that further information on the co-chairing protocol in development and the Committee's work programme was required in order to inform the Board's decision on the additional salaries to be paid to the co-chairs.
- The Board noted that one of the Covid Committee's co-chairs is already in receipt of an additional salary as a Senedd Commissioner, at the higher of the two salary rates payable to a committee chair as set out in the Determination, and would not therefore receive any additional salary for co-chairing the Covid Committee.

- The Board also noted the Senedd's intention to establish a new committee to scrutinise Senedd reform legislation, and that a decision on the salary of the chair of that committee would need to be taken in due course.

Action:

- The Board agreed to write to the Covid Committee to ask for more information on the co-chairing protocol and Committee work programme.
- The Board agreed to consider the decision on the additional salaries of the Covid Committee Co-Chairs following the receipt of further information, and at the same time consider the additional salary to be paid to the Chair of the Reform Legislation Committee.

3 Strategic Work Programme & Budget Planning 2024-25 (9.30 - 9.50)

- Board members presented an update of the thematic reviews being undertaken as part of the Board's Strategic Work Programme. The timescales for engaging with Members and support staff on these various workstreams were noted.
- The Board considered the funding required to support its Strategic Work Programme in the next financial year and agreed to inform the Commission of such funding requirements as soon as possible, to help inform the Commission's budget planning for 2024-25.

Action:

- The Board to inform the Senedd Commission of its funding requirements for 2024-25 via the Commission's budget planning process.

4 Communication & Engagement (9.50 - 10.40)

- The Board considered a paper on its communications and engagement strategy and received oral input from Laura Williams (Head of Communications) and Kevin Davies (Head of Engagement). The paper in the main focused on internal stakeholder engagement.
- The Board agreed that it is broadly content with its current engagement activity. The Board considered ways in which to reach out further to support staff outside of the Cardiff area and how to improve its use of social media.

- The Board noted the need to take account of the Senedd Commission's engagement activity on Senedd reform as it plans its own engagement and consultation activity.

Action:

- The Secretariat to liaise with Chiefs of Staff on how best to achieve the aim of increasing geographical representation at Representative Group meetings.
- The Secretariat to review the Board's current use of social media and work with the Communications and Engagement Team to develop the social media strategy.

5 Support for Political Parties' Allowance Thematic Review - Approach and Scope (10.50 - 11.20)

- Jane Roberts (the Board lead on this thematic review), provided an update on the history and purpose of the Support for Political Parties Allowance (known as the PPSA), and comparisons with the funding provided to parties / groups in other legislatures.
- The Board considered and agreed the scope of its thematic review of the PPSA and the approach to this work, to include engagement with Political Groups in the Senedd during the autumn.
- The Board agreed to review the principles and purpose of the PPSA at a future meeting and to also consider the balance of the support available to Members through their own individual offices, Group Offices and the Senedd Commission. The Board noted that the Chair had recently written to the Llywydd to initiate dialogue on the balance of the services provided to Members in the future by the Board and Commission.

6 Economic forecasting (11.20 - 11.50)

- The Board received an oral update by the Research Team's Head of Financial Scrutiny on the current economic climate and forecasts including public sector pay awards in Wales. The Board considered the potential implications of such for its Determination on Pay and Allowances.
- As inflation is anticipated to remain high, the Board agreed to review the cap and collar mechanism set out in the Determination to limit annual adjustments to Support Staff salaries.

Action:

- The Board agreed to consider an updated economic forecast at the next meeting.

7 Board Governance - Update of Board Charter (11.50 - 12.10)

- The Board considered and agreed changes to its Charter on 'Governance Principles and Guidance on the Conduct of Business' in light of the recommendations of the recent mid-term review of the Board's effectiveness.

Action:

- The Secretariat to share the revised Charter with the Chief Executive and Clerk to the Senedd for feedback prior to publication.

8 Update paper (12.10 - 12.30)

- The Board noted updates on various matters relevant to its work and also its forward work programme.
- The Board noted an update on the anticipated introduction of legislation on Senedd Reform in the autumn term and considered the possibility that the Board may be invited to provide evidence to Committees scrutinising the Bill.
- The Board noted an update on the recruitment of a new Chair of the Pension Board and agreed to seek a meeting with the new Chair once appointed.
- The Board received an update from the Members' Business Support Team on issues arising including increased hotel costs in Cardiff when major events are held in the city and the impact of this on the affordability of hotel stays for Members who live in the Intermediate Area. This matter will be explored as part of the Board's thematic review of Members' Remuneration and Personal Support, to be commenced later this year.
- The Board considered correspondence received from the Chief Executive and Clerk relating to the Commission's review of the Dignity and Respect Policy. The Board agreed to consider the implications of the findings of the review of the Dignity and Respect Policy on its own policies, in light of information on the work to be undertaken by the Standards Committee in respect of this Policy.

Action:

- The Secretariat to seek information on the timetable for scrutiny of the anticipated Senedd reform legislation.
- The Secretariat to arrange a meeting for the Board with the new Chair of the Pension Board following their appointment.
- The Board to liaise with the Standards Committee on the work it intends to carry out in respect of the Dignity and Respect Policy.

Any Other Business

- The Board agreed to review the process for administering Exceptional Expense claims made under 2.5 of the Determination, to ensure Members are clear on the process and that the Board receives sufficient information to be able to determine claims.