
Review of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd: Consultation

December 2020

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd makes independent decisions on the pay and direct support for Members of the Senedd to attract a wide range of capable and diverse candidates and to enable those elected as Members to do their jobs effectively, ensuring value for money for the people of Wales. The Board was established by the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010.

Members of the Board

- Dr Elizabeth Haywood (Chair)
- Ronnie Alexander
- Mike Redhouse
- Dame Jane Roberts
- Hugh Widdis

Secretariat to the Board

- Llew Williams, Clerk
- Ruth Hatton, Deputy Clerk

Copies of this Determination can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print, audio or hard copy from:

**Clerk to the Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN**

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BWRDD TALIADAU
REMUNERATION BOARD

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How to submit a response

If you would like to submit a response to the Remuneration Board's consultation you can do so by sending your responses to the following:

Post:

Clerk to the Remuneration Board,
Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff CF99 1SN

E-mail: remuneration@senedd.wales

The closing date for submitting responses is **11 February 2021**. Any responses received after this date will not be considered.

If you need assistance in preparing your response please contact the secretariat on the details above.

Summary of our privacy policy

The statement below provides a general overview of how we will use the information you provide. Our full privacy policy is available from our website at:

<https://www.remunerationboard.wales/privacy-policy-2/>.

The Board is the data controller and will ensure information is protected and used in line with data protection legislation. We rely on the legal basis that the processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. The task is to facilitate our work and undertake our functions. We may process special category personal data because it is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.

Why we are collecting, and what we do with, information

Your submission will be used to inform our decisions on proposed changes to the Determination. Submissions will be seen in full by the Board members and the secretariat. Some information may be shared with the Senedd Commission in considering any changes and how any changes should be administered.

We may publish your submission on our website. We may also publish extracts within documents produced following the consultation. Any submissions published on our website will remain in the public domain. Please let us know if you would prefer that your submission is not published.

Responses will be retained on Senedd Commission's secure ICT systems (which includes third party cloud services provided by Microsoft) until we have completed the consultation and for no longer than six months after the consultation. Any information published into the public domain, will remain there. After the six month period, we will retain anonymised responses.

In the event of a request for information being made under access to information legislation, it may be necessary to disclose the information that you provide.

Your rights

You have a number of rights, including the right to request access to your information. You also have the right to request from us that:

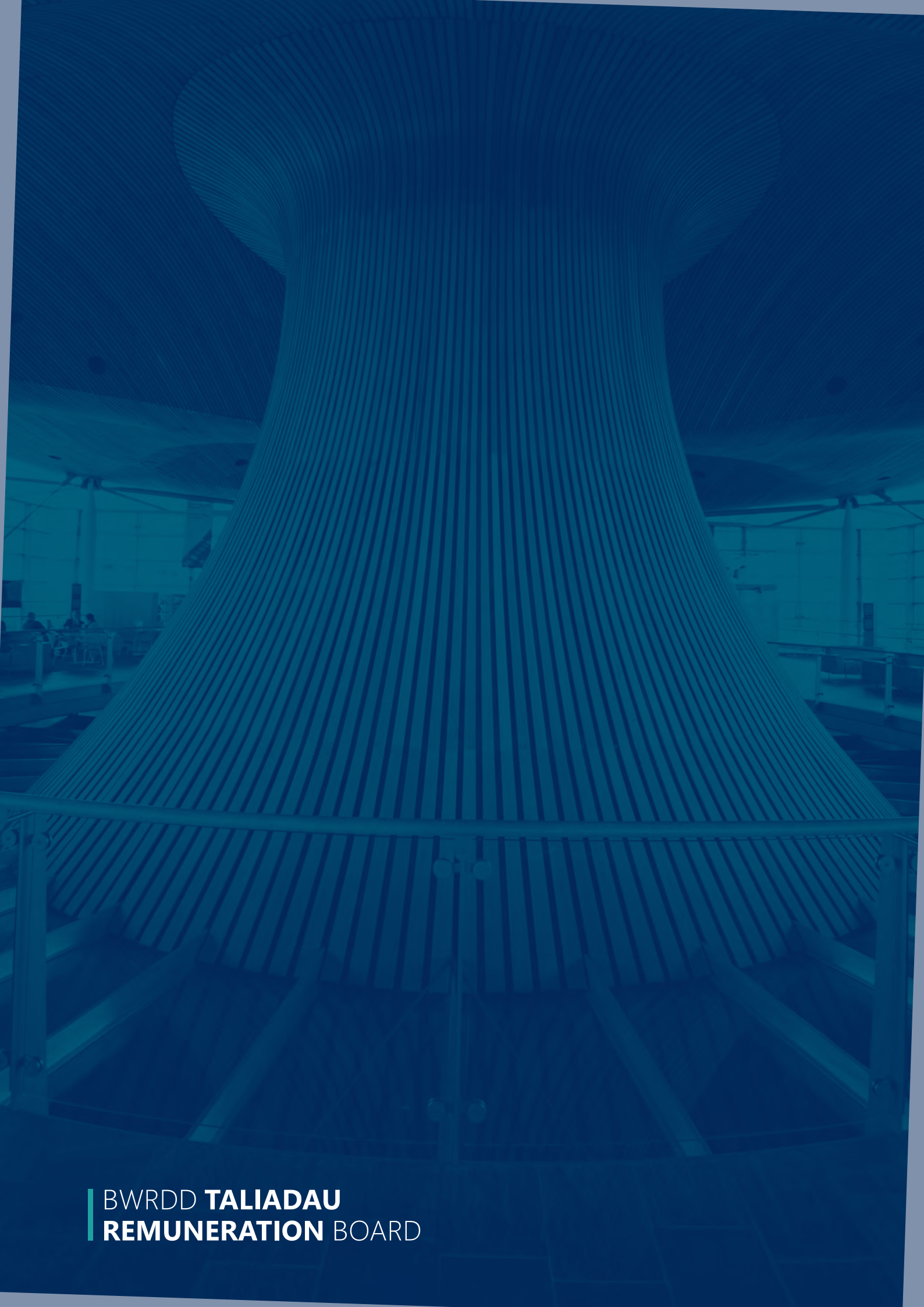
- any inaccurate information we hold about you is corrected;
- information about you is deleted (in certain circumstances);
- we stop using your information for certain purposes or circumstances; and
- your information is provided to you or a third party (in certain circumstances).

Contact details

If you would like to engage any of the rights, ask a question or make a complaint, please contact the Secretariat at: remuneration@senedd.wales.

The ICO's address is:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF



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Introduction

This consultation document proposes changes to the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances for the Sixth Senedd, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Determination for the Sixth Senedd was published on 4 June 2020 and will come into force on the first day following the next Senedd election.

The Senedd has seen significant changes in its powers, responsibilities and expectations of the institution and its Members over the last two decades. In addition to meeting the demands of constitutional change, Members of the Sixth Senedd are also likely to face the challenge of representing their constituents and holding the government to account against the backdrop of a continuing global health crisis and the associated economic, environmental and social impact.

As a new Board (established in September 2020), there were several outstanding issues we needed to consider to finalise the Determination for the next Senedd term in light of the exceptional circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our proposals are intended to provide greater clarity to Members and their staff in these times of uncertainty.

The proposals in this document reflect the Board's emphasis on value for money and taking decisions which are appropriate within the context of the wider financial circumstances of Wales, while facilitating the work of Members.

The importance of fostering an effective and appropriate working relationship between the Board and Members and their staff is clear. We look forward, therefore, to developing and enhancing these relationships over the course of our term.

The Board would welcome comments you have on the proposals outlined in this document and we look forward to considering them in the new year.



Dr Elizabeth Haywood
Chair, Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd

Summary of proposals

The Board would welcome your views on the following changes it is proposing to the Determination for the Sixth Senedd:

Proposal 1. In light of the current economic circumstances, having frozen Members' salaries in 2019/20, the Board proposes:

- a. 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);
- b. 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;
- c. 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.

Proposal 2. Not to make any changes to the Residential Accommodation Expenditure allowance for the Sixth Senedd.

Proposal 3. Remove or substitute (as appropriate) all references to the European Union in the provisions in the Determination relating to Members' travel.

Proposal 4. 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.

Proposal 5. 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.

Proposal 6. 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 the employee's salary.

Proposal 7. 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.

Proposal 8. 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).

Proposal 9. Members may only fund the costs of printing and signage from the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund, and not the PRCF.

Proposal 10. 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.

Proposal 11. 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."

Equality considerations

To inform the equality impact assessment for this consultation, the Board would welcome any views you may have on:

- whether the proposals outlined in this document could have any implications for people who identify with any protected characteristics; and
- whether the issues you have raised in response to this consultation could have an impact or potential impact on people who identify with protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

1. Annual Review of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd

1.1. Background

1.1.1. The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd (the Board) is an independent body responsible for ensuring Members of the Senedd (Members) have the appropriate remuneration and resources available to them to undertake their role whilst demonstrating value for money for the public purse. Full details of the Board's functions and responsibilities are set out in the **Government of Wales Act 2006** and the **National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010**.

1.1.2. The Board's work is underpinned by a set of clearly-defined principles:

- financial support and remuneration for Members should support the strategic purpose of the Senedd and facilitate the work of its Members;
- decisions must be appropriate within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances of Wales;
- the system of financial support for Members must be robust, clear, transparent, sustainable and represent value for money for the taxpayer.

1.1.3. The Board **published** its Determination for the Sixth Senedd on 4 June 2020, approximately one year before the Welsh general election in 2021, to inform potential candidates of the salary, support and allowances to be available to them if elected.

1.1.4. The Board reviews the Determination on an annual basis to ensure that the provisions outlined continue to be relevant in changing circumstances (such as uprating of allowances for the next financial year), as well as to reflect the Board's experience gained from the operation of its decisions. This review reflects the annual process undertaken by the Board, but it also considers matters that were outstanding from the previous review for the Sixth Senedd, as outlined in that review **report**. These considerations have been further influenced by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.1.5. The following are the Terms of Reference for this review of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd:

- the suitability of the level of support provided within the Determination;
- the flexibility, prescriptiveness and accessibility of the provisions;
- the probity, accountability, reasonableness and transparency of the expenditure made available.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. To ensure that all decisions are transparent, accountable and reflect the wider financial circumstances of Wales, the Board considered particular provisions in the Determination for the Sixth Senedd on the salaries, support and allowances for Members against other sources of information including:

- Members' use of the various allowances to date during the Fifth Senedd;
- comparisons with the support made available to elected representatives in the other UK legislatures; and
- comparisons with various other measures within the Welsh public sector, and the wider economy of Wales.

1.2.2. The remainder of this document outlines the Board's consideration of such provisions and proposals for consultation.

2. Member and additional office holder salaries

2.1. Summary

Members' salaries have been frozen during the current financial year at £67,649. This was done by disapplying the ASHE index until the start of the Sixth Senedd. The Board is proposing to increase the starting salary for Members for the Sixth Senedd in line with this year's ASHE index (of 2.4 per cent) and place a cap on any annual pay changes, starting in May 2021.

2.2. Background

2.2.1. The Board is required to exercise its functions with a view to provide Members with a level of pay and allowances which:

- fairly reflect the complexity and importance of the functions which they are expected to discharge; and
- does not, on financial grounds, deter persons with the necessary commitment and ability from seeking election to the Senedd.

2.2.2. The Board may only make one decision for each five-year Senedd term on the salaries of Members, the First Minister, Welsh Ministers, Deputy Welsh Ministers and the Counsel General. A second or subsequent decision on such salaries may be made only where exceptional circumstances mean that it would be just and reasonable to do so.

2.2.3. Chapter 3 of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd sets out the salaries and pension arrangements to which Members and office holders are entitled. It also states that salaries are to be automatically adjusted in the April of each year by the change in the Annual Survey Hours and Earnings (ASHE)¹ gross median earnings for full time employee jobs in Wales. This provides

¹ ASHE means the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, conducted by the Office of National Statistics. The pay of Members, office holders and staff will be adjusted in April of each year by the change in the ASHE annual gross Median Earnings for full-time employee jobs in Wales between April and April of the previous year.

annual adjustments to Members' salaries in line with average changes in the earnings of workers in Wales.

2.2.4. Owing to uncertainty around the anticipated economic downturn caused by the pandemic, the Board made an **exceptional determination**² on 30 March 2020 which paused the adjustment of Members' salaries for a period of six months. This meant the 4.4 per cent increase (in line with ASHE) to Members' salaries that was due on 1 April 2020 was delayed to 1 October 2020.

2.2.5. Subsequently, as the economic uncertainty continued into the autumn, the Board disapplied the increase in Members' salaries due on 1 October by means of another **exceptional determination** made on 29 September 2020. This was done by deleting the ASHE index increase discussed in paragraph 2.3 from the Determination. This means that Members' salaries have been frozen for the year 2020-21 and will not be subject to any increases before the start of the Sixth Senedd.

2.2.6. The Board's decisions not to increase Members' salaries were guided by the principle that its decisions "must be appropriate within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances which affect Wales."

2.2.7. In June 2020, the previous Board had already published its Determination for the Sixth Senedd which did not take account of the subsequent freeze in salaries during this year. The salary of a Member was therefore due to be £72,321 at the start of the Sixth Senedd (which accounts for the ASHE indices for 2019 and 2020).

2.3. Consideration of evidence

2.3.1. The Board considered whether exceptional circumstances exist which make it just and reasonable to make a decision on Members' salaries that will take effect for the start of the Sixth Senedd. As part of this, the Board considered the continued uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact, particularly the economic context, and the volatility of the ASHE index.

² This means the Board is able to take extraordinary decisions in certain circumstances where it believes it is reasonable and justified to do so. If the Board takes such a decision it must communicate it to the Senedd Commission at the same time as when it takes effect.

2.3.2. Prior to taking any decisions on salaries for the Sixth Senedd, the Board considered the principles underpinning its decisions on salaries. The previous Board ensured that their decisions (including those on salaries) were “appropriate within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances which affect Wales.” This was also further reinforced by the current Board in its recent exceptional determination on 29 September 2020. The Board considered that this has been a mainstay guiding principle for the Board.

2.3.3. Finally, the Board considered the level at which it would be appropriate to set the base salary for the start of the Sixth Senedd, and how salaries should be indexed in the next Senedd term. This included evaluating the benefits and risks of different indexing methods available, including ASHE (and other variations of ASHE) as well as other national statistics such as Average Weekly Earnings³.

2.4. Conclusions

2.4.1. Within the context of the current economic uncertainty in Wales caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and a situation which would have seen Members’ pay gain a 6.9 per cent⁴ increase between March 2020 and May 2021 had salaries not been frozen during that period, the Board has concluded that exceptional circumstances exist which make it just and reasonable for the Board to make a decision on Members’ salaries for the Sixth Senedd. Should the Board decide to implement the proposals outlined after the consultation, it will do so as an exceptional determination.

2.4.2. When the Board made its previous decisions during 2020, it did so in circumstances which required it to act urgently. As such, the Board concluded that it was not feasible to consult at those times. The Board is not faced with the same urgency now. If adopted, the Board’s proposals would come into force at the start of the Sixth Senedd. As such, the Board is consulting on its proposals for the Sixth Senedd.

2.4.3. As salaries have been frozen for 2020-21, the current base salary for Members’ is £67,649 (as it was in 2019-20). The Board noted that if salaries were not frozen for the current

³ The **average weekly earnings** (AWE) is a dataset gathered by the Office for National Statistics and is an indicator of short-term changes in earnings in the UK. AWE is widely used as a measure of wages growth.

⁴ Due to the compound increase in ASHE of 2.4 per cent for 2021-22 on top of an increase of 4.4 per cent 2020-21.

period then the base salary due to Members at the start of the Sixth Senedd would have been £72,321. This is because the base salary would have increased by the ASHE indexation of 4.4 per cent in April 2020 and a further 2.4 per cent in April 2021. On the basis that Members' and officer holders' salaries have been frozen during 2020-2021 (constituting a slightly decreased salary in real terms taking into account inflation cost increases), and that their pay must fairly reflect the complexity of the role undertaken, the Board has concluded that the salaries should be adjusted for the start of the Sixth Senedd. The Board considered that continuing to freeze pay could lead to a position where salaries will no longer fairly reflect the role and this could result in the need for a significant increase in salaries in the future.

2.4.4. The Board considers that the ASHE index, which reflects general trends in salary changes in Wales, provides the most appropriate mechanism available for adjusting Members' salaries in future. This is because ASHE provides Welsh specific data whilst UK Average Weekly Earnings do not, and basing decisions on the economic circumstances of Wales is a key guiding principle for the Board. However, the ASHE index figures, which are based on salary trends in the previous financial year, should be considered in the context of current economic conditions. The Board is also mindful that salary adjustments in accordance with the ASHE index, as it relates to Welsh salaries, can be volatile.

2.4.5. In light of these considerations, the Board is proposing to reapply the annual indexing of Members' salaries by the ASHE index. This would mean that the base salary of Members continues to be linked to the average earnings for workers in Wales. The Board is therefore proposing that this year's ASHE index of 2.4 per cent is applied to the current (frozen) base salary of £67,649. Therefore, the Members' base salary for the start of the Sixth Senedd will be £69,273 per annum, and will continue to be linked to ASHE every year thereafter.

2.4.6. An illustration of how this index would apply to additional office holder salaries is outlined in the table below:

Table 1: Proposed additional office holder salaries in the Sixth Senedd

Additional office holder salaries	2021-22 Base Salary	2021-22 Additional Salary	2021-22 Total salary
First Minister	£69,273	£82,262	£151,535
Welsh Minister	£69,273	£38,965	£108,238
Counsel General ⁵	£69,273	£38,965	£108,238
Deputy Minister	£69,273	£22,730	£92,003
Presiding Officer	£69,273	£44,378	£113,651
Deputy Presiding Officer	£69,273	£22,730	£92,003
Senedd Commissioner	£69,273	£14,071	£83,344
Committee chair (higher)	£69,273	£14,071	£83,344
Committee chair (lower)	£69,273	£9,374	£78,647
Business Committee Member	£69,273	£9,374	£78,647
Leader of a Political Group not in Government. ⁶	£69,273	£14,071 + £1,082 per Member up to £38,957	Range from £86,590 - £108,230 ⁷

2.4.7. As noted, the Board is also mindful that salary adjustments in accordance with ASHE, as it relates to Welsh salaries, can be volatile. It is likely that the Welsh data within ASHE is more prone to annual fluctuations due to the smaller sample size of the data. The Board agrees that using the ASHE index is the best indicator of Welsh salary trends and that this is more important than the impact of any possible annual fluctuations.

⁵ See 3.1.7 of the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances for a Counsel General who is not a Member

⁶ Political Group is defined in the Senedd's Standing Orders

⁷ The salary of a Leader of a Political Group not in Government is capped at the salary payable to a Welsh Minister

2.4.8. However, to address the risk of big fluctuations in the index in uncertain economic times, as seen over the past two years, the Board is proposing to introduce a further measure to limit the impact of any volatility.

2.4.9. To this end, the Board is also proposing that in future Members' salaries will not increase above a maximum of three per cent nor decrease below zero per cent. This will avoid the risk of salary increases being applied in future that are disproportionate in the context of the economic conditions at the time. In the Board's view, this is fair both to Members and to the Welsh taxpayer. The Board also agreed that it was important for Members to have some certainty as to the minimum salary that would be paid during the Senedd term, and therefore avoid the risk of salary reductions being applied in future.

2.4.10. To implement these proposals, the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances in the Sixth Senedd would be amended as follows:

- all references to the Member and office holder salaries contained in Chapter 3 would be amended as set out in paragraph 2.16 and table 1; and
- the following text would be inserted as a new paragraph 3.2.2:

The adjustment made by paragraph 3.2.1 will be no lower than zero per cent and no higher than three per cent.

Proposal 1. In light of the current economic circumstances, having frozen Members' salaries in 2019/20, the Board proposes:

- a. 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);**
- b. 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;**
- c. 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.**

3. Residential Accommodation Allowance

3.1. Summary

The Board is not proposing to make any changes to the rates outlined in the Residential Accommodation Allowance in the Determination for the Sixth Senedd.

3.2. Background

3.2.1. Chapter 4 of the Determination outlines the support available to Members which they necessarily incur as a result of staying away from their main homes in connection with their role as Members.

3.2.2. A Member's main home is placed into one of three categories (based on location); these are the inner, intermediate and outer areas (as outlined in Sections 4.2-4.4 of the Determination). For each area there is a corresponding level of support for overnight accommodation in Cardiff. The Board reviews the value of the allowances available for each area on an annual basis to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

3.2.3. Chapter 4 also outlines the level of support available to Members in the case of overnight stays outside Cardiff, should it be required, in the performance of their duties as an elected Member.

3.3. Considerations

3.3.1. As noted, Chapter 4 provides support to Members with the additional costs of staying overnight away from their main homes when on Senedd business. "Outer area" Members can claim up to £9,720 per annum (£810 per calendar month) while "intermediate area" Members can claim up to £6,840 per annum (£570 per calendar month). It also includes other forms of support such as a "Carer's Allowance" and costs for "Essential Repairs".

3.3.2. The Board discussed Members' usage of the allowances outlined above and the costs incurred against of them. The Board also reviewed different uprating mechanisms that could be applied to the allowances provided.

3.4. Conclusions

3.4.1. Members' current expenditure against their allowances show that they are generally sufficient for their needs. Analysis provided to the Board also showed that there has not been enough of a shift in the changes to rental and hotel costs in Cardiff that would justify an increase to current allowances. As such, the Board decided that the current rates provided were sufficient for the start of the Sixth Senedd.

Proposal 2. The Board proposes not to make any changes to the Residential Accommodation Expenditure allowance for the Sixth Senedd.

4. Provisions in the Determination relating to travel to the European Union

4.1. Summary

As the transition period for the UK's departure from the European Union is due to end on 31 December 2020, the Board is proposing to make some consequential changes to reflect this position in the Determination for the Sixth Senedd.

4.2. Background

4.2.1. Chapter 5 of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd sets out allowances available to Members to cover travel costs incurred in the exercise of their duties as Members of the Senedd.

4.2.2. Four types of travel are provided for in the Determination:

- travel within Wales (referred to as "normal travel");
- travel elsewhere in the UK but outside of Wales (referred to as "extended travel");
- travel within the European Union but outside of the UK as a member state (referred to as "travel within the European Union");
- travel outside the European Union (referred to as "international travel").

4.2.3. The Determination provides that in any financial year, each Member is entitled to make up to four return journeys between Wales and any other member state, or region, of the European Union on Senedd related business. In accordance with these provisions Members' may claim the costs of travel and overnight stays up to a maximum of two nights. The Determination requires a Member, in advance of a journey, to send a statement of the visit's purpose, location and duration and the persons or organisations to be met, to the Members' Business Support Team.

4.2.4. The Determination also provides for a Member to apply to the Chief Executive and Clerk for permission to form a delegation to visit a regional parliament, regional council or regional assembly within the European Union.

4.2.5. Provisions on travel outside the European Union state that a Member may apply to the Members' Business Support Team to travel to a country which falls outside the European Union. In accordance with these provisions Members' may claim the costs of travel and overnight stays up to a maximum of five nights.

4.2.6. The UK formally left the European Union on 1 January 2020 and the transition period following exit ends on 31 December 2020. Provisions in the Determination on Members' travel within the European Union have been retained in the Determination for 2020-21 to allow for any business travel requirements during the transition period.

4.2.7. As the UK no longer had MEPs at the time of the publication of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd in June 2020, any such references have already been removed.

4.3. Consideration of evidence

4.3.1. The Board noted that the transition period for the UK's departure from the European Union will have ended before the establishment of the Sixth Senedd.

4.3.2. Further, it was noted the provisions concerning international travel could be applied to travel within the European Union.

4.3.3. It was considered that there did not appear to be any reasons to retain a distinction between travel within and outside the European Union following the UK's departure.

4.4. Conclusions

4.4.1. As the UK is no longer a member state of the European Union and as the transition period will have ended before the start of the Sixth Senedd, the Board sees no grounds for retaining a distinct provision in the Determination of allowances for travel within the European Union. The Board is proposing to remove all references to the European Union in the provisions relating to Members' travel within the Determination.

4.4.2. Under this proposal, travel by Members to European Union member states would be governed by the international travel provisions that currently apply to countries that are not European Union member states.

4.4.3. To implement this proposal, the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances in the Sixth Senedd would be amended as follows:

- Delete the third point in paragraph 5.1.1;
- Substitute the wording "European Union" in the fourth point in paragraph 5.1.1 with "UK";
- Delete the references to paragraphs 5.12.1 and 5.14.1;
- Substitute the heading "Travel within the European Union" with "Travel outside the UK";
- Delete Sections 5.12 to 5.14;
- Substitute the wording "European Union" in paragraph 5.15.1 with "UK"; and
- Delete the wording "Any visit made under this Paragraph may be in place of a visit that might otherwise be made under Paragraphs 5.12.1 or 5.14.1." from paragraph 5.15.1.

Proposal 3. The Board proposes to remove or substitute (as appropriate) all references to the European Union in the provisions in the Determination relating to Members' travel.

5. Office and Constituent Liaison Fund

5.1. Summary

Stationery services currently provided by the Senedd Commission will be funded from the Determination in the Sixth Senedd. As such, the Board is proposing to make provisions based on the current total stationery spend by Members, which means the proposal outlined is cost-neutral. Members will have some flexibility on how to spend this within the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund.

5.2. Background

5.2.1. Provisions in Chapter 6 of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd entitle Members to claim reimbursement of all reasonable costs relating to the running of a constituency or regional office and engaging with constituents, known as an Office and Constituent Liaison Fund.

5.2.2. The Determination for the Sixth Senedd sets out that a Member may claim an amount from the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund not exceeding the following in the year commencing 1 April 2021:

- a.** £18,260 where the Member maintains an office in the Member's constituency or region, or
- b.** £4,912 where the Member undertakes constituency or regional duties exclusively from the office facilities in Tŷ Hywel, Cardiff Bay.

5.2.3. As well as being able to use the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund to meet the costs of stationery, Members may use centrally funded resources, such as stationery under a centrally held contract or bulk mailing and printing services, to engage with the public or constituents. Such services are currently provided by the Senedd Commission. The total of such costs incurred by Members during the financial year 2019-20 was £107,325 meaning an average total cost per Member of £1,789.

5.2.4. The Board has agreed with the Senedd Commission that Members' stationery costs (as outlined in the paragraph above) should be met by the Board in the Sixth Senedd, via the

Determination. This will provide greater transparency on the expenditure made by Members on such provisions.

5.2.5. Under the current arrangements whereby Members' stationery is funded by the Senedd Commission, Members must procure stationery from the Senedd Commission's approved supplier of office equipment and stationery only.

5.2.6. On 6 April 2020, the Senedd's name changed from Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales to Senedd Cymru / the Welsh Parliament. It is now commonly referred to as the Senedd. The Board decided not to allow an extra allowance for changes to Members' office items in order to reflect the name change prior to the next Senedd election scheduled for May 2021, for example office signage, web domains and headed paper. Rather, to ensure value for money, the Board thinks it is reasonable that Members of the Fifth Senedd would use existing stationery supplies during the remainder of the Fifth Senedd. Stationery will need to be updated following the next Senedd election to reflect the name change. During the preparation of the legislation which led to changing the name of the Senedd it was estimated that the costs of updating office items would total £292,700, at a total cost of £4,878 per Member.

5.2.7. Members beginning a third (or greater) consecutive Senedd in office are entitled to a £1,000 allowance to refresh some of their office furniture during the first year of a new Senedd, which can include signage.

5.3. Consideration of evidence

5.3.1. The Board considered whether the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund should be increased from the beginning of the next Senedd to reflect the additional costs to this Fund resulting from the name change and transfer of the office costs budget from the Senedd Commission to the Determination.

5.3.2. A review of Members' use of their Office Costs Allowances during the Fifth Senedd found significant underspend by the majority of Members.

5.3.3. Members are currently permitted to include political party logos and branding on communications with the public or constituents which is funded by the Senedd Commission. The Board's view is that in future, the use of such logos on publicly funded communications should be considered so as to avoid the risk of public funds being used for political party purposes. The Scottish Parliament and UK Parliament do not allow for the use of logos on such

communications. As responsibility for funding Members' stationery costs transfers from the Senedd Commission to the Board the Board will keep this situation under review.

5.3.4. Some Members have expressed frustration at having to procure stationery from the Senedd Commission's approved supplier only, and their inability to procure such from Members' local suppliers. As the budget for Members' stationery costs transfers from the Senedd Commission to the Determination, the requirement to procure stationery from the Commission's approved supplier only need no longer apply.

5.4. Conclusions

5.4.1. On the basis of the current underspend of this Fund and the allowance available to Members at the beginning of a new Senedd, the Board is agreed that the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund should not be increased from the beginning of the Sixth Senedd to accommodate additional costs resulting from the name change.

5.4.2. The Board proposes to increase the Members' Office and Constituent Liaison Fund for the next Senedd term to reflect payment of Members' stationery costs from this Fund, and the end of the provision under the current arrangements as funded by the Senedd Commission. The flexibility provided for within the Fund means that returning Members can claim for any changes required as a result of the institution changing its name from Assembly to Senedd.

5.4.3. This cost-neutral proposal, if implemented, would mean that the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund will be increased by £1,800 per Member. This increase reflects the total spend currently budgeted by the Senedd Commission for centrally funded stationery costs divided by 60 Members. The figure is rounded up to £1,800. As the amount is equal to what is currently budgeted for by the Senedd Commission, it will not result in an additional cost to the taxpayer, rather the budget will be transferred from the Senedd Commission to the Board's Determination.

5.4.4. The sum of £1,800 will be added to the existing office cost allowance of £18,260 (or £4,912 where the Member works exclusively from Tŷ Hywel) per Member. This will make the total allowance per Member £20,060 or £6,712, for the start of the Sixth Senedd, depending on whether or not a Member rents office accommodation in their constituency or region. The cost to the taxpayer will therefore remain the same from this financial year to the next.

5.4.5. To implement this proposal, the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances in the Sixth Senedd would be amended to substitute the allowances contained in Chapter 6 with those set out in paragraph 6.1.2.

Proposal 4. The Board is proposing to 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.

Proposal 5. The Board is proposing that 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.

6. Members of the Senedd Support Staff Salaries and Pension Scheme

6.1. Summary

The Board is proposing to introduce a maximum and minimum limit by which support staff's pay is adjusted annually in accordance with the ASHE index, of 3 per cent and 0 per cent respectively. The Board is also proposing to make additional funding available to provide a matching employer contribution to the support staff pension scheme, whereby the employing Member will be able to match the contributions paid by their support staff, up to a maximum amount of three percent of the employee's salary.

6.2. Background

6.2.1. Chapter 7 of the Determination outlines the staffing support provision available to Members. This includes the salaries payable to support staff, their pension arrangements and the Policy, Research and Communications Fund.

6.2.2. Members' support staff are employed on one of four salary bands – Senior Advisor, Band 1, Band 2 or Band 3 - and must be appointed and employed in line with the Board's Recruitment Policy as issued by the Members' Business Support Team. A Member is entitled to claim staffing expenditure costs, up to a maximum of £104,835, for persons employed by them where those costs are wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred to enable the performance of the Member's duties. Chapter 8 of the Determination outlines the pay scales for political parties, which provide for employment on one of five salary bands – Chief of Staff and four bands which match those of Members' support staff outlined above.

6.2.3. The salary bands for Members' and Parties' support staff for the financial year 2021-22 are set out in Sections 7.1.5 and 8.2.6 of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd. Such salaries are adjusted annually in line with the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), estimated gross Median Earnings for full-time employee jobs in Wales between April and April of the previous year. This means the salaries outlined will be adjusted in April 2021 ahead of the Sixth Senedd.

6.2.4. Section 7.11 of Chapter 7 of the Determination sets out the pension provisions for Members' support staff. A Member is entitled to claim an allowance in respect of the cost to them of contributions made to the personal pension plan of any staff paid from:

- Staffing Expenditure Allowance, or
- Office and Constituent Liaison Fund in respect of directly employed cleaning staff.⁸

6.2.5. The maximum amount payable is 10 per cent of the actual salary paid to the relevant member of staff. This allowance is paid from central funds and does not count against the Staffing Expenditure Allowance.

6.2.6. Section 8.8 of Chapter 8 of the Determination sets out the pension provisions for Members' support staff employed by a Political Party (as defined under the Determination). A claim can be made for reimbursement of the cost of contributions made to the personal pension plan of any staff member of the Political Party.

6.2.7. The maximum amount payable is 10 per cent of the actual salary paid to the relevant member of staff. This allowance is paid from central funds and does not count against the Support for Political Parties Allowance.

6.2.8. The Board has previously committed to consider further options to enhance the support staff pension scheme in light of feedback previously raised by support staff during the review of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd.

6.3. Consideration of evidence

6.3.1. Members' support staff salaries are adjusted annually in accordance with the same index as is used to adjust Members' salaries i.e. ASHE. As the Board is proposing to introduce a maximum and minimum annual ASHE indexed increase for Members' salaries in the Sixth Senedd it considered whether support staff salaries should be subject to the same limits. It also recognised that different considerations apply to Members' salaries who hold an elected office and Support Staff salaries.

⁸ Chapter 7 of the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances in the Sixth Senedd, June 2020

6.3.2. The Board's proposal to place limits on annual increases to Members' salaries is intended to avoid the potential for very significant changes to salaries from one year to the next resulting from the volatility of ASHE index figures. See Chapter 2 of this document for a full explanation of the reasons for the proposal in respect of Members' salaries.

6.3.3. Support staff were given a 4.4 per cent increase in salaries for the current financial year in accordance with the ASHE figure for the previous financial year. The Board believes this constitutes a generous salary increase compared with salary trends elsewhere during the same period.

6.3.4. At the same time the Board is conscious that if current economic conditions persist the ASHE index figures could be very low in future, perhaps even falling below the rate of inflation and possibly return a negative value. The reason for this is that the ASHE index is retrospective and therefore any economic impact on wages will not influence support staff salaries until much later.

6.3.5. On support staff pensions, the Board considered options to enhance the offer available within the pension scheme. These included matching contributions and death in service benefits.

6.3.6. The Board noted that support staff are automatically enrolled onto a defined contribution scheme. This means that the amount of money available at retirement will depend on how much has been paid into the scheme, the charges that apply, and the investment returns.

6.3.7. Further the Board noted that support staff do not have to make a contribution to their pension themselves to qualify for an employer contribution.

6.3.8. The Board also noted that the level of pension provided to support staff in the Senedd was directly comparable to the pension provided to support staff in the House of Commons and the Scottish Parliament.

6.4. Conclusions

6.4.1. In relation to support staff salary adjustments the Board's view, as outlined in Chapter 2 of this document, is that the ASHE index remains the most appropriate method for adjusting salaries within the Welsh context. As a consequence, the Board has no plans to amend the usage of the ASHE index for support staff salaries. However, the Board feels the need to address the volatility in Welsh salary trends reported by ASHE is relevant to support staff salaries as it is to Members' salaries. Regardless of the levels of the salary received, significant salary

fluctuations from one year to the next, outside reasonable limits, should be avoided in the Board's view.

6.4.2. The Board therefore proposes to introduce a maximum annual ASHE indexed increase of three per cent and protect against any negative adjustment by ruling out any decrease below zero per cent to Member's support staff salaries in the Sixth Senedd. These are the same limits as are proposed for adjustments to Members' salaries.

6.4.3. If introduced, in light of this consultation, the Board will keep under review the effectiveness of the maximum and minimum limits on adjustments to support staff salaries and reconsider such limits if necessary.

6.4.4. The Board recognises that it should take steps to further assist support staff with saving for their retirement, should they wish to do so. The Board has discounted introducing death in service benefit to the pension scheme as this is already provided for within the Determination (Sections paragraphs 7.7 and 8.7 respectively). However, the Board is proposing to introduce a matching contribution provision to the support staff pension scheme.

6.4.5. With effect from the start of the Sixth Senedd, the Board proposes that if a member of support staff elects to pay a pension contribution themselves, this will be matched by a further employer contribution up to a maximum of three per cent of salary. For example, if a member of support staff contributes two per cent of their salary, this would be matched by an extra two per cent from the employer. If the member of support staff contributes five per cent of salary, this would be matched by an extra three per cent from the employer as the additional matching employer contribution is limited to three per cent of the salary.

6.4.6. The Board's intention with the introduction of a matching employer contribution is that it will act as an incentive for support staff to make a contribution to their pension scheme themselves to help increase their retirement savings.

6.4.7. The Board has estimated the additional cost of this would be up to c.£100,000 per annum if up to half of support staff chose to pay a contribution of three per cent or more. However, it is uncertain at this point how many support staff would choose to make a contribution themselves. Currently around 18 per cent of staff choose to make a contribution to their pension.

6.4.8. To implement this proposal, the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances in the Sixth Senedd would be amended to insert the following as new paragraphs 7.11.3 and 8.8.3:

In addition to the 10 per cent employer pension contribution currently paid, where a member of staff chooses to make a personal contribution to their pension, those personal contributions will be matched by an employer contribution up to a maximum of three per cent of actual salary paid. This cost is paid from central funds.

Proposal 6. The Board is proposing to 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 the employee's salary.

Proposal 7. 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.

7. Policy, Research and Communications Fund

7.1. Summary

The Board is proposing to remove the need for Board guidance for the use of the Policy, Research and Communications Fund (“PRCF”) and instead rely on the Accounting Officer’s Rules on the Use of Senedd Resources, and remove the ability of Members to fund printing and signage costs from the PRCF.

7.2. Background

7.2.1. Section 7.14 of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd outlines the provisions for a Member’s PRCF. A Member may claim up to a maximum of £2,500 per annum (inclusive of VAT) towards the cost of obtaining specific policy expertise, to deliver a piece of research or for engaging with constituents.

7.2.2. When the Board published its Determination for the Sixth Senedd in June 2020, it made changes to the rules governing PRCF for the Sixth Senedd which are outlined in Section 7.14 of the Determination. The pertinent rules which were previously in guidance are now included in the Determination. The Determination provides that the fund may be used for research into policy development, exploration of issues of significance to constituents and scrutiny of policy and legislation. A Member may also use the fund for procuring external pieces of work to create content for engagement with constituents including newsletters. The PRCF may not be used for party political engagement. It may not be used to cover the cost of dissemination of the content.

7.2.3. It also states that Members must abide by the Rules and Guidance on the use of the Policy, Research and Communication Fund (paragraph 7.14.8). The current Rules and Guidance were agreed by the Board.

7.2.4. Political parties may also use the remaining balance of their party support allowance to fund policy and research (see Section 8.7A). The current PRCF Rules and Guidance apply to any use by parties for policy and research purposes.

7.3. Considerations

7.3.1. The Board discussed the wider rules and guidance which underpin the operation of the PRCF and whether separate guidance was needed given the changes made to the Determination in June 2020. The current rules and guidance are largely focused on operational matters such as how to apply. It also includes rules on the use of logos in any publications or communications with constituents.

7.3.2. The Board also noted the Senedd Commission's Accounting Officer **Rules and Guidance on the Use of Senedd Resources**. These have recently been updated and also include rules on the use of logos.

7.3.3. The Board also considered whether there were any possible implications arising for the PRCF as result of its proposal on the transfer of centrally funded stationery costs (as outlined in Chapter 6 of this consultation). This consideration included the ability of Members to fund the costs of printing and signage from both the PRCF and the new Office and Constituent Liaison Fund.

7.4. Conclusions

7.4.1. The Board has concluded that it is not necessary to have separate Board guidance on the use of the PRCF given the changes made to the Determination. It is of the view that it will be simpler and clearer for Members for only one set of rules to govern the use of Senedd resources including the PRCF. Accordingly, the Board proposes to remove the reference to separate PRCF guidance in the Determination. Instead, Members and parties will be expected to abide by the Rules and Guidance on the Use of Senedd Resources when making use of the PRCF (or, in the case of political parties, use of its remaining balance for policy and research purpose).

7.4.2. There is also a general provision in the Determination for MBS to issue additional operational guidance if needed (paragraph 1.5.1). Should the Board feel that any further changes are needed to the rules relating to the PRCF, it will set these out in the Determination.

7.4.3. The Board's intention therefore is to delete paragraph 7.14.8. The Rules on the Use of Senedd Resources apply to the whole Determination, therefore no additional reference to it is needed in relation to PRCF specifically. As a result, the Board also proposes to specify in the Determination (after paragraph 8.7A.4) a limitation on parties' ability to use their remaining

balance during the 4 months before a general election, mirroring the rule which applies to Members' PRCF (paragraph 7.14.6).

7.4.4. Further, the Board noted that with the inclusion of centrally funded stationery in the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund, Members will be able to fund printing and signage costs from both that fund and the PRCF. This would be an unintended consequence of the Board's proposals for changes to the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund outlined in Chapter 6 of this document. In order to provide clarity to Members that the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund is to be used to cover printing and signage costs, the Board is proposing to insert the following wording in Section 7.14.3 of the Determination (PRCF):

The Fund may not be used for the costs of printing and signage.

Proposal 8. The Board is proposing to 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).

Proposal 9. The Board is proposing that Members may only fund the costs of printing and signage from the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund, and not the PRCF.

8. Political Party Support Allowance

8.1. Summary

The Board is proposing to increase the total value of the allowance to reflect increasing salary and resource costs for the start of the Sixth Senedd.

8.2. Background

8.2.1. Chapter 8 of the Determination provides financial support for Political Parties to assist in the discharge of their work in the Senedd. The expenditure available under this allowance may be used for employing staff to undertake either research or administrative work as well as the costs of acquiring office equipment.

8.2.2. Support for Political Parties is in place to assist Members who belong to the same registered political party and individual Members who wish to be regarded as a Political Party to help them discharge their duties in the Senedd. The definition of 'political party' set out in the 'Interpretation' Section of the Determination⁹ determines eligibility for the Political Party Support Allowance:

"Political party" means (i) a group of Members who belong to the same registered political party, or (ii) an individual Member who has notified Members' Business Support that they wish to be regarded as a Political Party."

8.2.3. The level of support available is set out in Chapter 8 of the Determination and is dependent on the number of members in a Political Party and whether they are in Government or not. Any Political Party not represented in the Welsh Government, with three or more Members, will be entitled to a core administration allowance of £54,870. Any political party or parties represented in Welsh Government receive a core administration allowance of £10,980 per Member up to a maximum of £164,600. The remaining Support for Political Parties Allowance is allocated on a per capita basis among all Members whose parties are not represented in the Welsh Government.

⁹ Independent Remuneration Board for the Senedd, Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances in the Sixth Senedd, June 2020, page 4

8.2.4. The Senedd's Standing Orders (1.3) provides a definition of political groups in the Senedd. This definition is for the purposes of the Government of Wales Act 2006:

For the purposes of the Act, a political group is:

(i) a group of Members belonging to the same registered political party having at least three Members in the Senedd; or

(ii) three or more Members who, not being members of a registered political party included in Standing Order 1.3(i), have notified the Presiding Officer of their wish to be regarded as a political group.

8.2.5. These definitions of political party and political groups, intended for different but related purposes, are similar but not the same. The Board's definition is more narrow in that it does not recognise a political group falling under Standing Order 1.3(ii).

8.3. Consideration of evidence

8.3.1. The total value of the Political Party Support Allowance is adjusted annually to reflect increasing costs, the majority of which relate to staff salaries. In previous years, it has been adjusted annually by the same index as used for support staff salaries.¹⁰ This was to ensure that increased salary costs were reflected in the value of this allowance. However, the allowance is not exclusively used to fund group support staff salaries; it is also used to fund other staffing costs such as travel, office equipment and materials.

8.3.2. Therefore in 2020, the previous Board agreed to adjust the average proportion spent on salaries (80.2 per cent) by the ASHE index, and the remainder of the allowance by the CPI rate.¹¹ This gave an overall increase of 3.86 per cent (while salaries were increased by 4.4 per cent as per the ASHE index for this year).

8.3.3. The current mechanism used to calculate the distribution of the allowance was introduced by the first Board ahead of the Fifth Senedd. The mechanism is based on having a

¹⁰ The pay of Members, office holders and support staff are adjusted in April of each year by the change in the ASHE annual gross Median Earnings for full-time employee jobs in Wales between April and April of the previous year.

¹¹ Chapter 8 of the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances for the Sixth Senedd, June 2020

total fixed sum allocated to supporting all groups/parties and individual Members, with the amount apportioned depending on the number of Members in the same party and whether they are a party in government or opposition.

8.3.4. The mechanism has been tested extensively during the current term as Political Party groups have been formed and disbanded, which has meant changing the distribution of the allowance on numerous occasions. The mechanism used to calculate the allowances available to each Political Party and individual Member has worked as intended in maintaining an overall cap on the amount spent on supporting political party groups and enables funding to be concentrated in support of opposition parties to help hold the Government to account.

8.3.5. The unprecedented frequency of the emergence and disbanding of different political parties and groups in the Fifth Senedd (including for the first time the forming of a group under Standing Order 1.3(ii), of three Members which have no affiliation to a registered political party) led the Board to consider the definition of 'political party' set out in the Determination. In particular the Board considered whether better consistency between the definition of 'political parties' in the Determination and 'political groups' in the Senedd's Standing Orders would provide greater clarity to Members and the general public on the meaning of the references in the Determination.

8.3.6. The Board also noted that the Senedd Commission has confirmed recently the importance of being clear how the political affiliations of Members of the Senedd are described and the importance of political parties being registered with the Electoral Commission in order to be recognised as such, although this is not necessary when it comes to group descriptions for the purposes of Standing Order 1.3(ii).

8.4. Conclusions

8.4.1. The Board is satisfied the principles underpinning the Support for Political Parties allowance and the operation of the mechanism to adjust the allowance are clear.

8.4.2. The Board is proposing to adopt the same methodology as used by the previous Board last year for increasing the total value of the allowance. Therefore, the Board is proposing that the proportion of the total amount that is spent on salaries (which is circa. 76 per cent of the total allowance in the past financial year) is increased by the ASHE index of 2.4 per cent, and that the remainder of the allowance (24 per cent) is adjusted by the CPI rate for September 2020, which is 0.5 per cent. The Board believes that implementing the same methodology provides an equitable increase to the allowance. which would enable Political Parties to meet

the costs of the support staff salary increases, without unnecessarily increasing the overall sum of the allowance.

8.4.3. The Board's proposal means that the total value of the allowance for 2020-21 of £999,070 will be increased by 1.94 per cent to £1,018,500 for the start of the Sixth Senedd.

8.4.4. To implement this proposal, the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances in the Sixth Senedd would be amended to substitute the total Support for Political Parties' Allowance contained in Chapter 8 with the increased total set out in paragraph 8.4.3 of this document.

8.4.5. The previous Board was mindful of the total value of the allowance as it approached the £1m milestone, which would be significantly higher than in other devolved parliamentary institutions. The current Board is also mindful of this point, however given that one of the main purposes of the allowances is to assist Political Parties with holding the government of the day to account, it considered that there was not currently a strong enough justification for reforming the total value of the allowance at this time. However the Board is of the view that the costs and operation of the whole allowance should be considered as part of any possible future work arising from increasing the size of the institution, if such proposals materialise during the next Senedd term.

8.4.6. The Board will review annually the mechanism used to adjust the total value of the Support for Political Parties' Allowance. The maximum and minimum limits proposed for annual adjustments to Members' and support staff salaries outlined in this document, if introduced in light of this consultation, will apply to annual adjustments to the proportion of the Support for Political Parties' Allowance available for the payment of salary costs.

8.4.7. In order to provide greater clarity on the meaning of 'political party' in the Determination which references 'political groups', the Board proposes the definition in the Determination should be amended to make reference to the definition of 'political group' in the Senedd's Standing Orders and bring greater consistency. This should provide greater clarity on eligibility for the Political Party Support Allowance. The Board is also persuaded by the argument that only political parties registered with the Electoral Commission should be recognised as such in the Senedd.

8.4.8. Such a change to the definition of 'political party' in the Determination, if implemented in light of this consultation, would not affect the eligibility for the Political Party Support Allowance of political party groups in the Senedd as currently constituted. The proposed change would mean that the definition of a political party in the Determination will include reference to

the definition of the same in the Senedd's Standing Orders. Any change to the definition in the Standing Orders would therefore apply to the definition in the Determination.

8.4.9. It does not, however, affect the criteria for opposition parties' receipt of core administrative funding. Any registered political party with three or more Members will receive core administrative funding (or if not Members of a registered political party, they must be a group as defined by Standing Orders).

Proposal 10. In response to cost inflation demonstrated by both ASHE and CPI, the Board proposes to increase the Political Party Support allowance by 1.94 per cent to £1,018,500 for the start of the Sixth Senedd.

Proposal 11. 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."

9. Equality

9.1.1. The Board has introduced changes to the Determination for the Sixth Senedd which are aimed at ensuring that the support and remuneration offered to Members do not deter people from standing for election to the Senedd. These include:

- an allowance for Members to help meet costs incurred in relation to a disability or disabilities;
- additional resources to help with a Member's workload during their period of parental leave; and
- a contribution towards care costs for children and / or dependants when Members are required to work beyond family friendly hours, reflecting similar arrangements that are in place for local authority members in Wales.

9.1.2. Understanding incentives for, and barriers to, standing for election continues to be a priority for the Board. As such the Board wants to ensure that the Determination enables and supports as diverse a range of candidates as possible to become Members.

9.1.3. To inform the equality impact assessment for this consultation, the Board would welcome any views you may have on:

- whether the proposals outlined in this document could have any implications for people who identify with any protected characteristics;
- whether the issues you have raised in response to this consultation could have an impact or potential impact on people who identify with protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

9.1.4. Please note the protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.