

To: Members of the Senedd
Cc: All support staff

4 April 2023

Dear Members,

SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2023

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd met on Thursday 16 March. The focus of the meeting was:

- Review of the Determination for 2023-24;
- Guidance for Members on the recruitment of staff;
- The Board's thematic review of staffing support;
- The Board's simplification review;
- The mid-term review of the Board's effectiveness;
- The Board's Strategic Work Programme.

This letter provides a summary of the Board's discussions and decisions. It will be published on the Board's website along with [summaries of previous meetings](#).

In-person Representative Group meetings due to be held on 15 March were instead held virtually on 14 March, due to the industrial action taking place on 15 March.

1. Review of the Determination for 2023-24

The Board considered its proposed changes to the Determination for 2023-24 in light of the responses received to the consultation recently conducted, and formally agreed its Determination for 2023-24. Agreed changes to the Determination reflect the proposals [consulted](#) on earlier this year, with two exceptions:

- Members will be required to provide three written quotations for any expenditure on goods or services with an estimated value above £1,500. The proposed

threshold was £1,000. Members will be able to seek approval from the Members' Business Support Team in exceptional cases to disapply the requirement to obtain three quotations.

- Senedd support staff in post on 1 April 2023 will receive a flat rate cost of living payment of £600 instead of the proposed £400, as well as a 3 per cent pay increase for 2023-24. Support staff will receive the flat rate payment as a lump sum unless they either request to receive it in instalments or decline the payment.

The **Determination for 2023-24** was laid on 30 March 2023. A **decision letter** outlining the changes to the Determination was also published and issued to Members on 30 March. All respondents to the consultation will then receive a letter addressing the points raised in their responses.

The Board would like to thank all those who engaged in this consultation. The responses were very helpful in helping to inform the Board's decisions and we appreciate the time and effort that it took to produce them.

2. Guidance for Members on the recruitment of staff

As noted in the update letter issued following the Board's meeting in February, if staff costs are to be claimed under the determination, paragraph 7.1.4 of the Determination states that Members' Support Staff must be appointed and employed in line with the Recruitment Policy issued by the Members' Business Support Team (MBS). The current version of the Recruitment Policy is available on the **Members' intranet** (as noted on the intranet the policy is currently under review).

The Board agreed to change the reference in the determination from 'policy' to 'guidance' and noted changes to the guidance to reflect recent changes to the Determination, Employment Handbook and Standardised Contract. The revised guidance is a Commission document rather than a Board one and will be published on the Members' intranet at the end of March / beginning of April, following the publication of the Determination for 2023-24.

3. The Board's thematic review of staffing support

The Board agreed the scope and objectives of the next phase of the review of the staffing support for Members set out in the Determination. The Board's Secretariat will work with the Commission's Procurement Team to prepare a specification for commissioning this review, using external suppliers. Further information will be shared with Members and staff on the objectives of the review in due course. The views of Members and support staff on the existing pay and grading framework, as well as the rules on the application of the framework, will be sought as part of the review. It is intended that the review will be completed during 2023-24 with any changes required to the framework to be determined following the review.

4. The Board's simplification review

One of the Board's strategic objectives is to deliver a simpler Determination to provide flexibility for Members to determine their own priorities with proportionate safeguards. The importance of simplicity and clarity was highlighted in the Member engagement exercise during the autumn term in respect of their preferred ways of working.

The Board discussed and agreed its approach to simplifying the Determination. Initially, the work will focus on reducing unnecessary controls on Member's expenditure and reviewing the drafting of the Determination to make it easier for Members and staff to navigate.

. The Board also recognises that its determination is only one part of a system also involving for example the Commission, the Accounting Officer and MBS agreed to discuss with the Commission any aspects of the wider claims system that might benefit from review.

5. The mid-term review of the Board's effectiveness

The Board agreed its response to the Mid-Term Review of Effectiveness report, prepared by the Commission's Head of Internal Audit, and agreed to publish the report and response separately, but at the same time, in April.

6. The Board's Strategic Work Programme

The Board reviewed its Strategic Work Programme for the remainder of the Board's term in office, and until the end of the Sixth Senedd, and agreed on Board leads for each aspect of the Programme.

These updates will be provided to you following each meeting of the Board. In the meantime, should you have any matters you wish to raise with me or the Board, please do not hesitate to get in touch via the Clerk to the Board, Huw Gapper, by emailing remuneration@senedd.wales.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Elizabeth Haywood

Chair, Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.