

Dear Members,

cc Group and Support Staff

SUMMARY OF THE REMUNERATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2023

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd met on Thursday 12 October, following drop-in sessions with Members and meetings with the Members and Support Staff Representative Groups on 11 October.

Once again, I would like to thank the Members and staff who met the Board, in particular the Members and Staff whom we have met during constituency office visits in recent weeks; these discussions and feedback have provided valuable Member and staff perspectives on several matters for the Board to consider.

This letter provides a summary of the Board's key decisions and discussions. Information relating to previous Board meetings is available [here](#).

Economic Update, Cost of Living and Salaries

The Board has committed to considering the wider cost of living pressures on staff and the implications for Members' support staff salaries for 2024-25. The Board will have further discussions in November's Board meeting, before proposals are consulted upon. The Board considered the latest evidence in its October meeting to develop options for consideration .

The Board's discussion was informed by an Economic Update provided by the Research Service and valuable feedback from the Member and Staff representative groups in advance of the meeting, in which the implications of the anticipated review to the Real Living Wage was noted.

The Board's preference was to address any longer-term cost of living pressures through the decision on Support Staff pay for 2024-25, but were conscious of the immediate, ongoing financial pressures being faced particularly by lower paid staff currently. The Board also noted that any decisions would need to be set in the context of the wider budgetary constraints facing the Commission.

Annual Review of the Determination

The Board discussed its approach to the Annual Review, which will be considered in more detail at November's Board meeting.

The Board agreed the timetable for consultation on the Annual Review, with the Board finalising proposals at its meeting on 30 November, consultation between 15 December-26 January followed by a discussion on the responses at the Board meeting on 22 February, with any changes to the Determination being agreed on 14 March 2024.

The Board's Secretariat will arrange a meeting with Chiefs of Staff following the Board's meeting on 30 November, to provide a clear steer on proposed changes to the Determination, in order to provide Members with as much time as possible to discuss proposed changes and prepare responses to the consultation. As the Board takes its decisions in February and March, the Board's secretariat will continue to share information with Chiefs of Staff so that Members have an early signal of changes agreed by the Board, prior to the new Determination taking effect on 1 April 2024.

Remuneration of the Chair of the Reform Bill Committee and Co-Chairs of the Wales Covid-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee

The Board agreed that chairs of the newly established committees, that is the Co-Chairs of the Covid Committee and the Chair of the Reform Bill Committee, would each be remunerated at the higher chair rate. The Board received information about the Committees' work programme and co-chairs' responsibilities and noted that these were co-chair roles rather than 'job share' roles. The Board also noted that the Covid Committee work will be complex, unprecedented and of significant public interest.

This decision will apply from the date of their election as chairs. The Board noted that two of the Chairs were already in receipt of an additional office holder salary and that, in accordance with the Determination, they would not be entitled to the chair's salary in addition.

Pensions Scheme Matters

The Board received an update from the Actuary of the Members' Pension Scheme and considered proposed changes to the Commission contribution rate given the performance of the Scheme. The Actuary will inform and consult the Commission and Trustees of the Scheme of the proposal.

The Actuary also provided an initial view on the impact of Senedd reform on the pension scheme, following scrutiny of the Bill in Finance Committee. A letter has been sent to the Chair of the Finance Committee in response.

The Board also received an update on the ongoing tax implications for Members' pensions following the McCloud judgment and that remedial options were continuing to be explored by Commission officials and IPSA (who are seeking to address the same issues for MPs). The Board will receive an update in future meetings and Members will be kept informed by the Pension Board.

Thematic Reviews and Other Updates

The Board received updates on the progress of thematic reviews. The review of the PPSA (Support for Political Parties Allowance) is proceeding, and meetings have commenced with senior Group Members and Chiefs of Staff. Member and Staffing engagement in the Staff pay and grading review will commence in the coming weeks, to include interviews with a cross-section of Members, Group and Support Staff, followed by focus group work and a survey to

ensure all Members and staff have an opportunity to contribute. The Board has written (24 October) to all Members and staff on this review.

Further information about the Board's thematic reviews and strategic work programme for the remainder of this term is available [here](#).

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 by emailing remuneration@senedd.wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr Elizabeth Haywood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Elizabeth Haywood

Chair, Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.