

Dear Members,

cc Group and Support Staff

## **SUMMARY OF THE REMUNERATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13-14 MARCH 2024**

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd met on Wednesday and Thursday 13 and 14 March.

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

The Board also met with several Members during Drop-Ins at the Cwrt and had helpful and informative discussions with the Members Representative Group and Staff Representative Group on 13 March. I would like to thank Members, staff and union representatives for taking the time to meet with the Board and providing valuable information and views which help inform our ongoing work ahead of the Seventh Senedd.

### **Annual review of the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances for 2024-25**

The Board agreed its Determination for 2024-25, taking into account feedback received through the consultation process. The Board agreed changes reflected in the consultation (including the increase of most business costs by the January CPI rate of 4%), with two exceptions: a change to the wording around payment of claims submitted after three months and the retention of the 'home working allowance'.

Fuller details and the Board's rationale will be included in a Decision letter which will be circulated to all Members and published alongside a revised Determination laid by the end of March. The Board will also publish a tracked change version of the Determination and a table of Members' Business Costs on the intranet for clarity and to aid transparency.

### **Thematic Review Planning and Timetabling**

The Board considered emerging themes which are shaping its approach ahead of producing a Determination for the Seventh Senedd. These themes have been informed through evidence gathering and engagement with Members, and include:

- the balance between flexibility and prescription in the Determination for the Seventh Senedd, providing sufficient discretion and flexibility for Members whilst providing a proportionate framework of accountability and transparency;
- the balance of individual and collective support for Members in the next Senedd; and

- the balance and relationship between resources and support provided to Members via the Determination and by the Senedd Commission.

The Board also reviewed timetabling ahead of planned publication of a Determination for the Seventh Senedd in the Summer of 2025, noting several challenges and constraints including Senedd Reform and the Commission's budget timetabling.

## **Staffing Pay and Grading Review**

The Board received a presentation and draft report from Beamans, the consultancy who have been undertaking the Phase 1 review of Members' staff pay and grading. Thank you to all the Members and group and support staff who contributed to this work and who participated through interviews, focus groups or completed the online surveys .

Beamans' draft report provides a review of the current staff pay and grading framework and outlines options for improvements as part of a proposed Phase 2; it does not include benchmarking of pay, which would be part of Phase 2. The Board will consider the report, its response and next steps at the Board meeting in May 2024, following which the report and the Board's response will be published and provided to Members and support staff.

## **Members' Remuneration and Personal Support Review**

The Board finalised the Terms of Reference for the Members' Remuneration and Personal Support thematic review (available [here](#)) following the recent consultation and I would like to thank Members for their views during recent discussions.

The Board considered an outline specification ahead of commissioning an external, independent job evaluation and pay benchmarking exercise to inform the Board's decisions in setting Members' salaries for the Seventh Senedd. This external review will consider Members' and additional office holders' roles and responsibilities, how they have changed and may change for the Seventh Senedd, as well as a pay benchmarking exercise.

It is anticipated that this work will be procured during the coming months with work undertaken during the Summer and early Autumn. This evidence gathering will require engagement, involvement and interviews with Members.

The Board will therefore provide further information shortly and looks forward to seeking the views of Members in the coming months.

## **Ways of Working Thematic Review**

The Board considered research into the features of multi-member constituencies in other parliaments and a summary of representations made to the Board by Members and staff on current Office and Constituent Liaison Fund (OCLF) provisions, including the valuable views provided to Sir David Hanson and myself during our visits to several constituency offices during the autumn and in recent weeks.

Further data analysis of patterns of office, communications and engagement expenditure is being undertaken and the Board will begin modelling options in the coming months which will

be subject to consultation in due course. This work will be shaped by planned dialogue between the Board and the Senedd Commission given the shared interest and as each enable Members to access elements of resources or support around constituency offices.

## **Next Board Meetings**

The Board will next be meeting on 15-16 May and, as usual, would welcome opportunities to meet with and seek views from Members through informal meetings or Drop-Ins around these meetings.

In the meantime, should you have any matters you wish to raise with me or the Board or would like to discuss any matter further, please do not hesitate to get in touch by emailing [remuneration@senedd.wales](mailto: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