

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT
FINANCIAL REVIEW PANEL AT 10AM ON FRIDAY 2
OCTOBER 2014
IN ROOM 24 PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Pat McCartan, Chairman
Dr Etta Campbell

Apologies: Alan McQuillan

In attendance: Dr Robert Barry, RAISE
Tony Logue, Secretary

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr Alan McQuillan

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 No interests were declared

3 MINUTES OF IFRP MEETING OF 1 August 2014

3.1 These were approved without amendment.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Consultation re Constituency Offices

The Panel noted the responses that had been received.

4.2 Response from Pension Trustees

It was noted that a response to the Panel's letter was received on 23 September 2014. Further meeting to be arranged with Louise Anderson to discuss.

5 CONSULTATION RE CONSTITUENCY OFFICES

5.1 Responses to date

The Panel noted the responses which had been received. These will be considered further with any others which arrive after the deadline of 19 September 2014.

ACTION: SECRETARY TO RESUBMIT THESE WITH ANY OTHER COMMENTS RECEIVED

6 MLA STAFF – AUTO ENROLMENT

- 6.1 It was agreed that it would be useful for the Panel to discuss this matter with Ms McClintock and Ms Anderson. THE Secretary confirmed that he had held discussions with Ms Mc Clintock and Ms Anderson and that he expected correspondence from the Director of Resources on this issue.

ACTION: SECRETARY TO ARRANGE PAULA MCCLINTOCK AND LOUISE ANDERSON TO ATTEND AN EARLY PANEL MEETING

7 CONSULTATION ON ASSEMBLY MEMBERS' STAFF

- 7.1 Dr Robert Barry, RAISE, attended the meeting. He provided the Panel with a detailed analysis of the data provided by Finance on the salaries of constituency office support staff. He confirmed that difficulties of providing a more refined analysis, given the diverse range of job titles ie 84. Dr Barry further provided data on the process for developing job descriptions in other legislatures. The Panel welcomed the opportunity to consider the analysis. It was agreed that further research would be helpful in relation to the existing job descriptions of support staff. The Chair confirmed that he would welcome further work on the assimilation of the diverse range of posts down to a maximum of 3 per constituency office.

Merit Principle

Further discussions ensued on the inclusion of the merit principle in the main text of the consultation document. The Secretary agreed to further refine the document to include this.

ACTION: SECRETARY TO ARRANGE A FURTHER MEETING WITH DR BARRY AND UPDATE DRAFT 2 OF THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT.

8 BENCHMARKING EXERCISE

- 8.1** The Secretary confirmed that one bid had been received to date in response to the benchmarking exercise on Members' salaries.

ACTION: SECRETARY TO FOLLOW UP

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 National Assembly for Wales: Correspondence Re: Continuous service of Assembly members Support Staff Pension Scheme Consultation**

This was noted. It was agreed that a holding was necessary.

10 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Meeting to be arranged with Alistair Ross, Chair of the Committee for Standards and Privileges.

Meeting with staff in Houses of the Oireachtas regarding Members attendance and related issues.