
Strategy for 2021-26

December 2021

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.

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1. Chair's foreword

The challenges facing the Senedd and its Members over the coming years are far different from those of any of its predecessors.

The Senedd reform agenda is under active consideration and the constitution within which the Senedd operates continues to evolve. At the same time, Members have been undertaking their duties through the challenging circumstances presented by a global health pandemic. It has raised questions over future working arrangements for Members and the Senedd. Communities in Wales are feeling the impact of climate change and new opportunities are emerging to live our lives differently. It is clear that everyone has a role to play in reducing the carbon footprint of the country.

Each Member effectively runs a small business to represent their electorate and hold the Government to account. They have an important job to undertake and the Determination should enable them to decide how best to flex their resources to meet their own business priorities and their associated costs. It needs to be clear and simple to understand, while maintaining the safeguards needed to promote trust between the Members and the public to whom they are accountable.

Over the past year, we have considered these challenges, and what influence they may have on our strategic work programme. This document sets out our response and strategic objectives for 2021-26, which will run to the next Senedd election.

As a Board we are independent of the Senedd and the Senedd Commission. We are conscious that public confidence and trust in the Senedd is influenced by perceptions of the financial regulatory framework for Members' support and business costs, which we decide. With that in mind, we intend to engage with a wider audience than ever before.

We hope that the early publication of this strategy will enable open dialogue with those who are affected by, and who are interested in, the work of the Board.



Dr Elizabeth Haywood
Chair, Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd

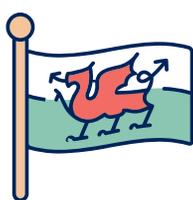
INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION BOARD OF THE SENEDD

OUR PURPOSE

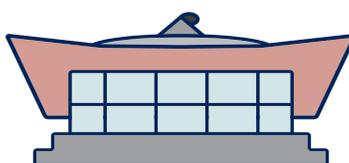
The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd makes independent decisions on the pay and direct support for Members of the Senedd to attract a wide range of capable and diverse candidates and to enable those elected as Members to do their job effectively, ensuring value for money for the Welsh public purse.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We make decisions on the system of financial support and remuneration for Members.



Our decisions should be appropriate within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances of Wales.



Our decisions should support the strategic purpose of the Senedd and facilitate the work of its Members.



Our decisions should be robust, clear, transparent, sustainable, inclusive, and represent value for money for the taxpayer.

OUR GOALS FOR THE TERM

To enable Members of the Sixth Senedd to do their parliamentary job effectively, in their locality and in the Senedd.

To prepare a package of pay and support for the Seventh Senedd.

All within a changing constitutional, social, and global context.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

A RESPONSIVE DETERMINATION: deliver a Determination which responds to Members' changing business needs, citizens' expectations and the evolving constitutional context.

A SIMPLER DETERMINATION: simplify the Determination to provide flexibility for Members to determine their own priorities with proportionate safeguards, in co-operation with the Senedd Commission.

A SUSTAINABLE DETERMINATION: deliver a sustainable model of support, which takes account of diversity needs, the climate change emergency and long-term finances in Wales.

PROMOTING TRUST AND ENGAGEMENT: engage effectively with Members and a wider range of stakeholders to enable effective reviews and promote public trust.

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE

Members trust and respect the decisions we make and view them as fair, evidence-based, and clear.

Members have confidence that our decisions enable them to do their work as elected representatives effectively.

The public has confidence that the system to provide financial support to Members delivers value for money, is transparent, and operates independently.

3. Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to set out the Board's strategic priorities over the course of the Sixth Senedd and its work in preparing a Determination for the Seventh Senedd. Its work will be shaped by the drivers and challenges set out in section 4.

The Board's guiding principles

2. The Board's guiding principles have underpinned its work and decision-making since its first term. These now form part of the Determination for the Sixth Senedd in order to aid transparency and understanding of the Board's decision making process.

3. The principles which guide the Board when making a decision are:

- *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, inclusive, and represent value for money for the taxpayer.*

Interpreting our guiding principles

4. To date, the Board has mainly focused on sustainability of resources and value for money from a people and financial perspective. The Board recognises the urgent need to decarbonise our global society in response to climate change. Given this public interest consideration, the Board is of the view that it should give this greater weight in its guiding principles.

5. The Board will therefore interpret the references to "sustainable" and "value for money" in its guiding principles to include the efficient and wise use of resources which contribute to the well-being of future generations and to Wales being a low carbon society.

6. The Board is committed to ensuring that all decisions take account of diversity needs and are inclusive and will continue to assess the equality impact of its decisions to help it meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

7. Information about the Board's statutory functions as set out in the [National Assembly for Wales \(Remuneration\) Measure 2010](#) (the Measure) can be found on its website, along with further information about the Board members.

4. Future challenges

8. In developing its strategy, the Board has discussed challenges and opportunities which could influence its work over the course of its term in office. There are several significant drivers that are likely to have an impact on the work of the Board:

- a. **Senedd reform** – the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform will seek to establish cross-party consensus on increasing the size of the institution and amending the electoral system and should report by May 2022;
- b. **Broader UK and Welsh constitutional change** – the constitutional context in which Members undertake their role continues to evolve and has implications for Members' responsibilities, the complexity of their role and their casework and scrutiny workloads;
- c. **COVID-19** – the continuing uncertainty of the trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic and its unknown longer term economic and social impact, including the impact on how Members and their staff may choose to work in future;
- d. **Climate change** – the need to take steps to decarbonise the global economy is a shared priority for all now;
- e. **Public perceptions** – changing levels of trust in democratic institutions, societal attitudes towards elected representatives and in particular the increase in threatening and intimidating behaviour and the importance of keeping Members and their staff safe;
- f. **Changing digital world** – the way in which Members consume and manage information and communicate with the electorate is evolving at a fast pace.

5. Strategic objectives 2021-26

9. This Board is committed to regularly reviewing the provisions of the Determination to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. The following are the priority areas of strategic importance that the Board has identified in response to the challenges set out in section 4. The Board will remain responsive to any unanticipated challenges.

Our goal for our term is to:

- enable Members and party groups of the Sixth Senedd to do their parliamentary job effectively, ensuring value for money for the people of Wales; and
- prepare a package of remuneration and support for the Seventh Senedd,

all within a changing constitutional, social and global context.

Objective 1: A Determination responsive to evolving context.

The Board will seek to deliver a Determination which responds to Members' changing business needs, citizens' expectations and the evolving constitutional context.

Members' remuneration should fairly reflect the changing constitutional responsibilities of Members and Ministers, and be appropriate to the Welsh context.

Members and Groups should have an effective and appropriate level of support which reflects the evolving capacity needs of the Senedd and enables Members to attract and retain skilled staff.

The Determination should enable Members of the Senedd to engage productively with citizens.

In the event of Senedd Reform, the Determination will be subject to a comprehensive review to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Objective 2: Simplify the Determination with proportionate safeguards

The Board will seek to simplify the Determination, including more flexibility for Members to determine their own priorities with proportionate safeguards, in co-operation with the Senedd Commission.

The Determination should be simple, clear and transparent for Members and the public, with the right level of checks and balances to maintain the confidence of the public.

It will provide flexibility for Members to decide their own small business model and priorities with an emphasis on Members' accountability to the public.

The provision for Members through the Determination and the services the Commission provides will complement each other in effectively supporting Members in their work.

Objective 3: A sustainable Determination

The Board will seek to deliver a sustainable model of support, which takes account of diversity needs, the climate change emergency and long-term finances in Wales.

The Determination should support Members in the sustainable use of resources that provide value for money to protect the interest of future generations.

It should enable Members and their staff to play their part in reducing their carbon footprint.

It should enable Members to meet changing business costs and the diversity needs of Members, their staff and constituents and allow for inclusive and safe working arrangements.

Objective 4: Promoting trust and engagement

The Board will seek to engage with a wide range of stakeholders to enable effective reviews and promote public trust.

The Board will use a range of engagement and communication approaches notably on issues that are likely to prove contentious.

The Board will continue to seek effective working relations with Members and their staff across Wales. It will engage virtually and more regularly to inform its reviews.

The Board will commission expert independent input when additional evidence is needed.

The Board will seek to raise the profile of its work to help promote public trust that the Board is a guardian of the public purse and serves the interests of Welsh democracy, by engaging with civic organisations and the media in Wales.

6. The Board's approach to delivering its priorities

10. The Board will begin work in autumn 2021 to undertake the first annual review of the Determination during the Sixth Senedd. This term, our annual reviews may need to be more substantive to reflect the changing assumptions about how Members organise their business which underpin the current Determination for the Sixth Senedd. Annual reviews will also consider the operation of new provisions one year after their introduction. This is to ensure that they function as the Board intended, and if not, how can they be amended for the better.

11. The Board will benchmark its proposals against other comparable legislatures and continue to engage in inter-legislature learning to support the effectiveness of its work.

12. The Board will aim to publish a Determination for the Seventh Senedd by the end of its five-year term (i.e. July 2025). The Board aspires to publish its Determination one year in advance of the election. However, given the uncertainty about potential changes for the next Senedd, it does not feel able to give such a firm commitment this time. As the constitutional agenda evolves and becomes clearer, the Board will revisit this matter.

13. As a public body itself, the Board is committed to operating in a sustainable way and using its resources wisely. It will maintain under review the resources it requires from the Senedd Commission, as provided in the Measure, to discharge its functions and deliver its strategy. It will also review the effectiveness of its working arrangements from time to time.

Measuring our effectiveness

We will know that we have succeeded when:

- *Members trust and respect the decisions we make and view them as fair, evidence-based, and clear.*
- *Members have confidence that our decisions enable them to do their work as elected representatives effectively.*
- *The public has confidence that the system to provide financial support to Members delivers value for money, is transparent, and operates independently.*