



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

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Wayne Cowley,
National Assembly for Wales.

Dear Wayne,

The Conservative Group wishes to make the following observations in relation to the salaries of Assembly Members:

- (i) The salaries of AMs should continue to be linked to those of MPs with AMs receiving a percentage of the total received by their Westminster colleagues. We believe that this is a clear and straightforward system and the one most likely to attract public support;
- (ii) Given the above, care should be taken to calculate the appropriate percentage accurately. This requires periodic review and we therefore welcome the current work of the Review Panel.

A robust methodology was used to make the AM/MP calculation when the Review Body on Senior Salaries reported in 2004 (Report No. 58). The jobs of AMs and MPs were compared in Table 2.2 (page 7) and this evaluation was used in conjunction with salary comparisons contained in Table 2.1. This produced a final determination of AMs salaries at 76.5% of that of MPs. We note that this was considerably lower than the 10% difference indicated in the respective roles set out in Table 2.2.

- (iii) The nature of the AMs role has changed in the 3rd term of the Assembly but it is difficult to assess the impact of these changes at this early date in the term.

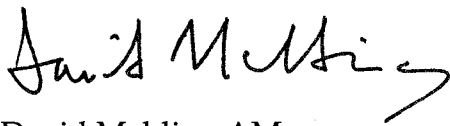
The changes are:

- (1) AMs no longer have a direct policy making role as the executive and legislative functions of the Assembly have been split. Ministers no longer sit on subject committees as a consequence of this change;
 - (2) AMs have greater responsibility in terms of their legislative functions following the introduction of the Order in Council process which can grant the Assembly 'Measure' making powers analogous to Parliamentary Bills.
- (iv) Like MPs, AMs receive a generous pension entitlement and we accept that this must be taken into account when setting pay.

We hope these observations will be of assistance to the Review Panel.

I would be happy to give oral evidence to the Review Panel to expand on the above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Melding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

David Melding AM