



## **Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission**

### **NAFWC 2007 (Paper 1)**

**Date:** 17 October 2007

**Time:** 8.30-9.30

**Venue:** 4B

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### **PARTY WHIPS' SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES**

#### **Purpose and summary of issues**

1. This paper provides background information on the possible establishment of salaries or allowances for Party Whips.

#### **Recommendations (including priority deadline)**

2. That the possible introduction of a salary or allowance for Party Whips should be dealt with as part of the review of Assembly Members' Pay and Allowances

#### **Discussion**

3. The First Minister has written to the Presiding Officer (Annex A) asking that the remuneration of Party Whips be considered by the Commission.
4. The House of Commons currently pays salaries to Government Whips and Opposition Whips as follows:

• Government Chief Whip	£76,904
• Government Deputy Chief Whip	£39,893
• Government Whip	£25,673
• Assistant Government Whip	£25,673
• Opposition Chief Whip	£39,893
• Deputy Opposition Chief Whip	£25,673



5. Neither the Scottish Parliament nor the Northern Ireland Assembly pay salaries to Government Whips and/or Opposition Whips.
6. However, in the Northern Ireland Assembly, a party with 3 or more Members receives an allowance to help fund the admin costs incurred in running their Whips' offices. Parties with 3-10 members receive £15,000 pa, those with 11-20 Members receive £22,500 and those with greater than 20 Members receive £30,000. Eligible parties also receive £500 per Member under this element of the financial support given to political parties. In addition, Parties receive a payment based on their strength within the Assembly to support the work of the Members of that party in their Assembly function. The two elements together form the equivalent of the Party Leader's Allowance in the National Assembly for Wales
7. The introduction of either salaries or allowances payable to or for the support of the Whips would be a new departure for the Assembly. Payment of a salary to all Party Whips would be outside UK practice, although some Whips receive salaries in the House of Commons. Given that a review of all pay and allowances is about to commence with a view to reporting in time to allow salaries to be backdated to the May 2007 election, then it would seem appropriate to refer the matter to that review, when the issue can be examined as part of the whole picture.

## **Governance Matters**

### **Financial implications**

8. Provision for the payment of salaries and allowances at the current levels has been included in the Commission's budget previously approved by the Assembly.
9. There are likely to be additional costs associated with a review of Members' salaries and allowances of which any salary or allowance in respect of Party Whips would be one element. However, if it were decided to pay an allowance or salary in advance of the review, this could be included in the Supplementary Budget Motion due for submission in late October.

### **Risk Assessment**

10. The main risks of making a decision in advance of the review would appear to be a reputational risk in that the public perception of the Assembly could be damaged by negative media reporting of the awarding of a salary without an independent recommendation. There is a financial risk in setting any salary at a level higher than that which might eventually be recommended by a review.



### **Compliance**

11. Section 20(6) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) allows the Assembly to give the Commission the responsibility for setting the levels of salaries and allowances for Assembly Members.
12. Standing Order 1.7 confers the responsibilities outlined in paragraph 11 on the Commission.
13. There is no direct impact on the Assembly's statutory duties in relation to race equality or sustainable development.

### **Publication**

14. This paper is suitable for publication.

**October 2007**

Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AC/AM  
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister for Wales



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Rt Hon Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM  
Presiding Officer  
The National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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CF99 1NA

19 September 2007

Annwyl Dafydd

#### PAYMENT OF PARTY WHIPS

During the summer recess, discussions took place between the parties about the implications of the Government of Wales Act 2008 in terms of inter party relations and in particular the role of party whips in facilitating Assembly business.

The consensus view emerged that the work of the whips should be more formally recognised and appropriately remunerated. A suggested approach that I believe gained general endorsement was that the respective whips should be paid on the basis of party representation so that the Labour whip would be paid £25k, the Plaid Cymru whip £15k and so on.

This is of course a matter for the Commission to determine. However the Welsh Assembly Government is of the view that a development on these lines would assist inter party relations and generally help the smooth running of Assembly business.

*Y ddiffuant*

*Rhodri*

