

**Chair of Labour Group:** I am writing on behalf of the National Assembly Labour Party in response to your consultation letter of 13th July regarding additional salaries for Committee Chairs and Residential Accommodation Expenditure. We would like to make the following responses to your proposals.

### ***Residential Accommodation Expenditure***

The Labour Group vehemently opposes the Board's proposal that Members who reside outside of Wales should be eligible for Residential Accommodation Expenditure.

Accommodation allowances of this nature should, in our view, be subject to clear limits in order to protect the public purse and the integrity of our institution.

In our view, the Outer Area should reflect the territorial reach of the National Assembly's powers and should therefore only extend to the Welsh border. We believe that this is appropriate, fair and consistent with the expectations of our constituents.

All Members should have made themselves aware of the arrangements in place for accommodation expenses before deciding to stand for election to the National Assembly.

If an Assembly Member chooses to have their home outside of Wales, that is a matter for them but they should not expect the taxpayer to pick up the cost of that decision.

We do not believe that restricting residential accommodation expenditure to the whole of Wales would in any way deter a Member from carrying out their work effectively.

The Labour Group is also seeking an assurance from the Board that any Members who reside outside Wales are not able to claim for travel to or from that home beyond travel to the Welsh border. This would reflect the territorial reach of the National Assembly's powers and would be consistent with the practice pursued by many other organisations in Wales.

We hope that our views will help to formulate the Board's approach to these matters and we look forward to your response in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Blythyn AM

Chair, National Assembly Labour Party