



Subject Board member, Committee member, Panel member and Adviser Attendance Allowance and Travel and Subsistence Policy

Purpose For Decision

From Remuneration Committee

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1. Summary

The Board member, Committee member, Panel member and Adviser Attendance Allowance and travel and subsistence are reviewed annually by the Remuneration Committee. The Committee then makes a recommendation to the Board as to whether any amendments are required.

Following the annual review, we have identified that the hourly rate for ARB's Inquirers, who provide expertise in relation to investigations, has fallen below the market rate and therefore propose an increase from £75 per hour to £120 per hour.

We have also been experiencing an increase in the number of hotels being used for overnight stays. We believe this maybe a result of a lack of detail in the Travel and Subsistence policy and therefore propose an amendment to ensure the policy remains fit for purpose and transparent ([Annex B, 5.0.1 & 5.0.2](#))

We have also taken the opportunity to make the wording clearer in relation to the purchase of advance rail tickets as we have been experiencing an increase in the number of tickets being either purchased on the day or the day before travel which are more costly ([Annex B, 4.1.2](#))

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- i. Hold the attendance, subsistence and travel allowances at the current level for 2018/19 for all **Board member, Committee member, Panel member and Adviser (excluding Inquirers)**; and
- ii. Increase the hourly rate for Inquirers from £75 per hour to £120 per hour
- iii. Amend the wording in relation to use of hotels to state
 - If you are required to leave home before 6.30am on the morning of the meeting in order to arrive for the planned start time, you may be entitled to claim for overnight accommodation. If you believe an overnight stay is

necessary to attend a meeting, please consult with the meeting organiser.

- Once approval for accommodation has been obtained from the meeting organiser, we encourage individuals to book their own accommodation however, a corporate rate has been negotiated with the Melia White House Hotel and details are available from the meeting organiser.

iv. Amend the wording in relation to purchase of advanced rail tickets to state

- Standard class rail travel should be regarded as the norm and rail travel should be booked as far in advance as possible (advance purchase fares can generally be booked up to twelve weeks before the date of travel). Advance purchase fares booked directly with the train company will usually offer the best value. It is advisable to explore both return and single tickets to secure the best price.

3. Open

4. Contribution to the Board's Purpose and Objectives

In delivering the Act, ARB's objectives are:

Protect the users and potential users of architects' services

Support architects through regulation.

An appropriate level of remuneration for Board, Committee, Panel members, Advisers and ARB's staff ensures that ARB is fair, effective and efficient and assists in supporting all of ARB's strategic objectives.

5. Background

- i. At its August 2017 meeting, the Remuneration Committee received an independent report prepared by Crowe Clarke Whitehill (CCW), the Board's appointed external auditors, on the external benchmarking of Board and Advisor pay.

Due to reviews being undertaken in the areas of ARB's disciplinary processes, prescription processes and the prescribed examination processes, the Committee agreed to postpone any decisions on the remuneration attached to each role group, until clarity has been secured on their roles and responsibilities.

These reviews are still on going so no changes are being made at this time. However, the Committee should be re-assured that we successfully appointed 14 new examiners during 2017, indicating there didn't appear to be a gap within the current market for such roles.

- ii. The Committee did however recommend a change with regards to the Board's remuneration and at its September 2017 meeting, the Board approved the following:
 - To amalgamate the Board member daily allowance and Board member

reading time to a daily rate of £375.00 (£187.00 for half day) with effect from 1 October 2017.

- Agreed that Prescription Committee members could claim for reading time over 3 hours at a rate of £50 per hour (combined attendance allowance rate includes first 3 hours of reading time).

iii. **Inquirer Remuneration**

The role of Inquirer wasn't considered as part of the 2017 CCW benchmarking report. They are currently paid £75 per hour or £250 per day for a hearing attendance.

- iv. Inquirers are architects appointed by the Board to produce reports for the Investigations Panel and give expert evidence at Professional Conduct Committee hearings. A lack of appropriately competent and experienced Inquirers will put at risk ARB's ability to fulfil its statutory obligations to investigate allegations of misconduct and incompetence against architects.
- v. In 2010, at the same time as the Board agreed to reduce its own attendance allowance from £275 to £250 in order to reduce costs during the economic downturn, the Inquirers also reduced their hourly rate from £100 to £75.
- vi. During 2017, a number of Inquirers raised concerns with the Head of Professional Standards that the rates ARB pays were no longer commercially viable for them to accept instructions, even taking into account their willingness to assist the regulator. Whilst the number of times Inquirers are appointed remains low, it has become an increasing challenge to engage them in recent years.
- vii. In 2017, a survey was conducted among expert witnesses by JS Publishing (further details about the survey can be found in Annex A), including their fees. The average hourly rate for an expert witness within the surveying and building specialism was £157 - £215 ([Annex A, Table 3](#)).
- viii. On reviewing the terms of reference for our Inquirers (whose role can include Expert Witness responsibilities) we have taken into account that ARB as a public body does not generally pay commercial rates. Feedback from Inquirers is that they want to support the profession by undertaking work for ARB, but it has become increasingly unviable to do so at the rates offered. We consider that a rate of £120 per hour should allow us to remain competitive within the market and attract the calibre of Inquirer needed for the investigations. We feel that the rate of £250 for attendance at a hearing is sufficient within the current market; only a small percentage of Inquirers' work is undertaken at this stage.
- ix. The annual spend on Inquirers varies year on year, with the average over the last 5 years being c£7k, the highest spend being in 2016 when it was £15k. The budget for 2018 is £15k and so depending on demand it is likely we can cover the increase within the existing budget.

- x. The role of the Inquirers is currently under review as part of the Section 14 Review, and it is likely that a new recruitment exercise will need to be undertaken in 2019. For that recruitment to be successful, ARB will need to be offering a sufficiently competitive rate to attract competent candidates. It may well be, depending on the outcome of that Review, that Inquirers need to be paid at different rates depending on the type of work they are undertaking. In the meantime the proposed pay increase should be sufficient to support the delivery of ARB's current statutory responsibilities.
- xi. **Carers Allowance**
The Remuneration Committee asked the Head of Finance and Resources to explore how schemes run in other organisations and bring further information back to the Committee at its next meeting. Following further conversations with CCW about their conversations with the benchmarked bodies, there remains a vagueness around this topic with no one seeming to be able to locate an actual policy, have any guidelines and do not actively promote it. Their comments are that if they received a request they would look at it on its own merits.

Given the work to date on this subject, the Committee believe that no further work should be progressed and any individual requests for assistance should be considered on a case by case basis.

- xii. **Travel & Subsistence**
We keep under review the policy on Travel and Subsistence ([Attached as Annex B](#)) which sets out what can be claimed and the amount claimable. There have been a few teething problems but things are settling down with the exception of use of hotels and pre-booked rail fares.

During the last 12 months, we have experienced an increase in the number of requests for a hotel and the purchase of rail ticket either on the day of travel or the day before, which we believe is potentially down to the wording of the policy.

Please refer to the tracked changes in [Annex B, 4.1.2, 5.0.1 & 5.0.2](#)

Resource implications

6. The above recommendations can be implemented within the existing budget. The administrative burden of managing expectations around overnight stays and purchasing rail tickets is likely to reduce.

Risk Implications

7. It is important that we continue to attract and retain high quality individuals who deliver key roles, in the most efficient and effective manner.

Communication

8. The Board needs to ensure that its policies for payment of attendance allowances, reading times and travel and subsistence are set at a level where it attracts the skills and expertise required by the Board.

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. These are considered as part of the preparation of this paper and when being discussed by the committee. The attendance allowance must ensure that all appropriately qualified people can participate whatever their income or circumstances. Those with caring responsibilities may, for example, face an additional burden in seeking to contribute to ARB's work; however, ARB continues to pay an attendance allowance to assist those wishing to participate and would consider a carer's allowance on a case by case basis if an individual requests for assistance was received.

Further Actions

10. To continue to review attendance allowance rates as part of the various reviews identified under section 5 (i) above.