

Public Accounts Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date:
26 February 2013

Meeting time:
09:00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



For further information please contact:

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Committee Clerk
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Agenda

1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2. Papers to note (Pages 1 – 7)

PAC(4) 06–13 – Paper 1 – Correspondence from Chair to Presiding Officer regarding Committee timetable issues

PAC(4) 06–13 – Paper 2 – Correspondence from Presiding Officer to Chair regarding Committee timetable issues

PAC(4) 06–13 – Paper 3 – Response to action points from Cabinet Office

PAC(4) 05–13 – Mins – Minutes of previous meeting

3. Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

Items 4 and 5.

4. Consideration of Committee timetable issues (9:05 – 9:15)

5. Consideration of draft Committee report The Welsh Government's acquisition and action to dispose of the former River Lodge Hotel, Llangollen (9:15 – 11:00) (Pages 8 – 90)

Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus Public Accounts Committee

Rosemary Butler AM
Presiding Officer
Chair, Business Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

18 February 2013

Dear Presiding Officer

Thank you for your recent correspondence of 30 January, regarding a potential revision to the Committee timetable. As you are aware, in my previous correspondence of 14 February, I indicated that I would provide you with correspondence outlining the views of the Committee as a whole on the potential revision of the Committee timetable. I have detailed these below.

Members appreciate that revising the timetable as detailed in Presiding Officer's correspondence would have significant implications for other committees. On balance, Members' do not consider that the additional time the timetable revision would make available to the Public Accounts Committee merit these implications.

Members were concerned that the Public Accounts Committee should have adequate timetabled meeting slots to effectively conduct its business, and that it should be treated with equality to other scrutiny committees.

Members are grateful to the Business Committee for previously seeking to accommodate it with additional time on Monday afternoons. Without this intervention, the Public Accounts Committee would have experienced significant difficulties in managing its workload during the 2012 autumn term. During this term, the Committee considered the Public Audit Wales Bill, the Auditor General's budgetary estimates for 2013-2014, the Auditor General's accounts, and conducted a number of high profile inquiries into issues raised by Wales Audit Office reports. However, this arrangement has inevitably had practical implications for Members' constituency business, and Members do not consider it to be a practical long term solution.

Members are aware that in response to the Presiding Officer's correspondence, the Finance Committee has suggested that the Public

Accounts Committee could utilise its spare Thursday meeting slots (i.e. those outside budget periods).

Members note that this proposal would currently cause one membership clash between it and the Health and Social Care committee. Accepting this drawback, Members consider that it would be valuable for it to accept the Finance Committee's gracious offer on a trial basis. This would enable the Public Accounts Committee (and indeed the Finance Committee) to gain a better understanding of the ramifications of such an arrangement.

The Public Accounts Committee would therefore be grateful if Business Committee could make provision for it to be able to:

- **continue to meet every week on a Tuesday morning; and**
- **on a trial basis, to meet fortnightly on a Thursday, using the Finance Committee's spare slots.**

Members also discussed that if other Committees determined that they did not require all of their available slots in a particular term (for example some Wednesday mornings), then ad-hoc dialogue could take place between Chairs to enable such slots to be offered to the Public Accounts Committee.

I am very grateful to all Members of the Public Accounts Committee for their contributions to this correspondence.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Millar', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darren Millar AM
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee



Darren Millar AM
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Your ref:
Our ref: PO418&422/RB/AD

20 February 2013

Dear Darren

Thank you for your letters of 14 and 18 February regarding the Committee timetable. The Business Committee considered your response, alongside that of the other committees at its meeting on 19 February.

Having taken into account the responses received from all committees, we agreed that the Public Accounts Committee should continue to be allocated time to meet every week on a Tuesday morning and on alternate Thursdays, using the slots allocated to the Finance Committee which they will not require for the summer term. We are pleased to note that you and the Committee supported this approach on a trial basis.

Rosemary

Rosemary Butler AM, Presiding Officer

Bae Caerdydd
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Darren Miller AM
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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19 February 2013

Dear Mr Miller,

Re: Civil Emergencies in Wales

I was grateful for the chance to appear before the Public Accounts Committee yesterday afternoon to give evidence on behalf of the Cabinet Office on Civil Emergencies in Wales. You will recall that I promised to write to the Committee on the question of whether statutory guidance proscribed Category 2 responders, or indeed those with no duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), from chairing working groups of the Local Resilience Forum. I know this is a subject you returned to later in the day and you were assured by Gavin Macho and Anne Evans that there was no such restriction. They were indeed correct.

Emergency Preparedness, the statutory guidance supporting the Act, is clear that the governance of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and the membership of its groups and sub-groups is a matter for agreement by the Chief Officer Group of the forum and Regulation 4(4) states that cooperation "shall take such form as may be agreed between the relevant responders". Indeed, the regulations were amended in April 2012 to enable a greater degree of flexibility in the ways in which responders might work together to ensure that Category 2 responders, in particular, were able to fulfil their duties in the most efficient and effective way.

Members of the LRF can agree their own means of facilitating communication at the right level. Most cooperation will be informal, routine, day-to-day liaison. Working groups are, however, an important part of the LRF, and these more formal methods of co-operation and information-sharing can be agreed at local level and may be supported by protocols which may or may not be legally binding, depending on the precise nature of the agreement.

I hope you will find this information useful. I should, of course, be pleased to provide any further information you may need.

A copy of this letter goes to June Milligan, Director General for Local Government and Communities at the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely,

Christina Scott
Director

Public Accounts Committee

Meeting Venue: **Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

Meeting date: **Monday, 18 February 2013**

Meeting time: **14: – 18:00**

This meeting can be viewed on Senedd TV at:
[<insert link here>](#)

Cynulliad
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Wales



Concise Minutes:

Assembly Members:

Darren Millar (Chair)
Mike Hedges
Julie Morgan
Gwyn Price
Aled Roberts
Jocelyn Davies

Witnesses:

Milligan, Welsh Government
Alyson Francis, Welsh Government
Wyn Price, Welsh Government
Christina Scott, Cabinet Office
Simon Wilkinson, Welsh Local Government Association
Gavin Macho, Welsh Local Government Association
Anne Evans, North Wales Resilience Forum Secretariat
Superintendent Claire Parmenter, Joint Emergency Services Group
Rhodri Jones, St John Cymru Wales
James Shaughnessy, St John Cymru Wales

Committee Staff:

Tom Jackson (Clerk)
Daniel Collier (Deputy Clerk)
Joanest Jackson (Legal Advisor)

1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Members and members of the public to the meeting
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Mohammad Asghar.
- 1.3 The Chair had also received apologies from the Auditor General for Wales.

2. Civil Emergencies in Wales – Evidence from the Welsh Government and Cabinet Office

2.1 The Chair welcomed June Milligan, Director General, Local Government and Communities, Welsh Government; Alyson Francis, Deputy Head of Community Safety, Welsh Government; Wyn Price, Head of Emergencies, Welsh Government; and Christina Scott, Director, Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office.

2.2 Members questioned the witnesses.

Action points:

The Welsh Government and Cabinet Office agreed to provide:

- A note outlining details of financial reimbursements made to local authorities to meet the costs of major emergencies, including reimbursements made to Swansea Council following the Fforestfach tyre fire.
- Further information on whether there are fixed rules in the Civil Contingencies Act which prevents Category Two responders or voluntary agencies from chairing working groups.

3. Civil Emergencies in Wales – Evidence on the local position

3.1 The Chair welcomed Simon Wilkinson, Regulatory Services Policy Officer, Welsh Local Government Association; Gavin Macho, Emergency Planning Manager, Cardiff County Council; Anne Evans, Local Resilience Coordinator, North Wales Resilience Forum

Secretariat; and Superintendent Claire Parmenter, Emergency Services Civil Contingencies Coordinator Wales, Joint Emergency Services Group.

3.2 Members questioned the witnesses.

4. Civil Emergencies in Wales – Evidence from the Voluntary Sector

4.1 The Chair welcomed Rhodri Jones, Operations Adviser, St John Cymru Wales, and James Shaughnessy, Director of Operations, St John Cymru Wales.

4.2 The Committee questioned the witnesses.

5. Papers to note

5.1 Members noted the minutes of the previous meeting.

6. Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

7. Consideration of evidence on Civil Emergencies in Wales

7.1 The Committee discussed the evidence they had taken on Civil Emergencies in Wales and instructed the Clerk to prepare a draft report on the basis of their discussion.

7.2 The Committee also discussed its work programme and timetabling, and agreed to write to the Presiding Officer in relation to its timetabling.

TRANSCRIPT

View the [meeting transcript](#).

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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