

The Assembly Commission

Meeting Venue: **Presiding Officer's office, 4th floor - Ty Hywel**

Meeting date: **Thursday, 17 October 2013**

Meeting time: **12:45 - 13:45**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(4)2013(14)

Committee Members:

Rosemary Butler (Chair)
Peter Black
Angela Burns
Sandy Mewies
Rhodri Glyn Thomas

Officials present:

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly (Official)
Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business (Official)
Christopher Warner, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service (Official)
Gareth Price (Official)
Nicola Callow, Head of Finance (Official)
Craig Stephenson, Principal Private Secretary to the Presiding Officer (Official)
Carys Evans, Principal Commission Secretary (Official)

Others in attendance:

David Melding, Deputy Presiding Officer
Mair Barnes, Independent Adviser
Helena Feltham, Independent Adviser

1 Introduction

1(i) Introduction and apologies

No apologies had been received.

1(ii) Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1(iii) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed.

2 Youth engagement consultation

In May 2013 Commissioners agreed that a steering group would be established and tasked with developing ideas for new ways of engaging young people with the work of the Assembly. It was agreed that this work would be driven by young people, who would shape the work and identify the best ways of ensuring that a diverse range of individuals could get involved. This approach would ensure that the process was led by young people and that it would encourage wide participation.

The steering group, made up of organisations representing young people, had met twice.

A consultation was launched online on 18 September, targeting young people and encouraging them to put forward proposals and ideas for the Assembly's work on youth engagement. The aim was for the ideas generated by the consultation to be discussed by regional focus groups comprising young people.

The evidence gathered and proposals arising from this extensive exercise would be discussed by the steering group who would then make recommendations to the Commission for consideration in the new year.

Commissioners welcomed the approach that had been adopted and were encouraged by the number of participants in the consultation so far. It was felt that greater efforts could be made to engage Assembly Members in the process, particularly in helping to identify harder to reach groups in their local areas.

3 National Assembly for Wales future events

Each year the Assembly participates in a number of events including annual corporate events, roadshows, summer events, initiatives led by the Presiding Officer, partnership and business-related events.

Commissioners discussed occasions that would provide opportunities to take forward the Commission's strategic priorities and raise the profile of the Assembly and Presiding Officer.

A number of significant national occasions and high profile events would be taking place over the next two years. Commissioners discussed whether the Assembly should aim to be involved in these, alongside the established annual corporate events programme. It was felt that participating in activities such as the Womex festival, which would be held in Cardiff the following week, was extremely important as they would provide opportunities to engage with wide audiences and increase understanding of the work of the Assembly.

The Women in Public Life campaign had attracted high profile speakers and brought a lot of attention to both the role of the Presiding Officer and the Assembly, and was entirely in keeping with the Commission's aims.

The Commission discussed ways of encouraging more Assembly Members to support and participate in events on the estate and in their constituencies or regions. It was felt that planning such activities far in advance and giving Members sufficient notice would help to encourage greater participation.

Given that this work played a significant part in meeting the Commission's strategic aims it was agreed that officials would revisit the budget allocated to this activity. Business cases could also be made to the Investment Board for funds from the investment budget.

Action: Officials were asked to work closely with partner organisations to ensure the Assembly is involved in the planning of major occasions. The Presiding Officer would continue to be involved in the development of this work. An events proposal would be presented annually to the Commission for approval.

4 Draft Budget - Finance Committee Report

The Commission's budget for 2014-15 was laid for consideration by the Assembly at the end of September.

Commissioners had agreed that the budget should be based on the £50.598m sum, as set out in the previous two years' approved budget documents, which were scrutinised by the Assembly's Finance Committee in October 2011 and 2012.

2014-15 would be the final year of the Commission's three-year investment plan for the budget. The budget proposal for 2014-15 was precisely in line with that set out in the previous two years' approved budgets.

Angela Burns AM, Claire Clancy and Nicola Callow had given evidence to the Assembly's Finance Committee on 3 October.

The Finance Committee's report, which had been produced in response to the draft budget and evidence, had:

- been generally supportive of the Commission's draft budget proposals; welcomed the Commission's approach to reporting on performance through Key Performance Indicators;
- expressed some concerns about the Commission's ability to achieve some of its aims in relation to Official Languages, the ICT strategy and its carbon reduction targets;
- recommended that individual Members of the Committee be assigned to work closely with and scrutinise the Commission's work on ICT and Official Languages.

Commissioners discussed the report. It was agreed that additional information regarding the ICT strategy would be included in the draft budget document. The Commission would respond to the Committee:

- highlighting the fact that the Commission would be targeting resources towards its priority areas for innovation and investment (official languages, ICT and engaging with young people);
- emphasising the responsibilities of the Commission under the Government of Wales Act 2006 and the strong governance arrangements that are in place to ensure probity, accountability and value for money, and to hold the Commission to account;

- suggesting that the involvement of Finance Committee Members in monitoring individual strands of work would cut across proper lines of accountability and the responsibilities of the Commission under the Government of Wales Act 2006;
- proposing that Commissioners would be happy to give evidence to the Committee during the year on any matter of particular interest, which would give opportunities for further scrutiny of Commission activities and expenditure.

Changes would be made to the draft budget document to reflect the Commission's response to the Committee's recommendations. The response would be sent to the Chair of the Committee the following week. The budget would be laid before the Assembly in November, with the debate and vote on this expected later in November.

The next meeting would be held on 11 November when the Commission would be considering the support available to the Assembly's Committees.

5 Any other business

Secretariat

October 2013