

Assembly Commission

Venue: **Conference Room 4B - Tŷ Hywel**

Date: **Monday, 23 September 2019**

Time: **12.30 - 14.30**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru
National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(5)2019(6)

Commission
Members:

Elin Jones AM (Chair)
Suzy Davies AM
Siân Gwenllïan AM
Joyce Watson AM

Officials present:

Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly
Siwan Davies, Director of Assembly Business
Arwyn Jones, Director of Communications and Engagement
Dave Tosh, Director of Resources
Nia Morgan, Director of Finance
Anna Daniel, Head of Strategic Transformation
Carys Evans, Head of Member Liaison and Professional Development
Kathryn Potter, Head of Research Service
Kevin Davies, Head of Public Engagement
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support
Gwion Evans, Head of the Llywydd's Private Office
Elin Roberts, Policy Adviser to the Llywydd

Others in
attendance:

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and apologies

No apologies had been received.

Arwyn Jones, Director of Communication and Engagement, was welcomed to his first meeting.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 15 July were agreed.

2 Draft Commission Budget 20-21

Commissioners gave further consideration to their proposed draft budget 2020-21 in preparation for laying it no later than 1 October.

They discussed changes in the operational and overall budget along with project fund priorities. They also noted amendments required to account for the new International Financial Accounting Standard (IFRS) 16 – Leases and a letter sent from the Finance Minister to the Chair of the Finance Committee.

Commissioners discussed and approved the 2020-21 Draft Budget, subject to some minor narrative adjustments.

3 Ty Hywel Window Replacement

Commissioners considered proposals for the replacement of windows in Tŷ Hywel, which are nearing the end of their operational life and we are seeing an increasing level of faults and defects that cannot be repaired.

Commissioners agreed that a feasibility study to establish a plan for replacement should be undertaken, and that the outcome be reported back in due course.

4 Assembly Reform update

4A - Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill update - Electoral Commission

Commissioners received an update on proposals relating to the proposed amendments to the financing and accountability of the Electoral Commission in the Bill and an update to the legislative timetable.

They discussed the Counsel General's proposed model for funding the Electoral Commission and the implications of different approaches as set out in his correspondence to Finance Committee. They also noted that the proposed amendments would require UK Government Minister of the Crown consent and that it would need to be received well within the usual timescales to avoid any delays to Royal Assent for the Bill.

Commissioners agreed that their preference remained that the Electoral Commission be funded directly from the Welsh Consolidated Fund. The Llywydd will consider the matter

further with Commissioners to agree their response at Stage 2 in light of the Finance Committee's views and further information from Welsh Government.

4B - Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill update - Issues not related to the Electoral Commission

Further information had been requested by the Commission in relation to the potential disqualification of Commission staff from standing for election to the Assembly, and the publication of Assembly elections expenditure.

Commissioners considered how the Llywydd should address these matters during Stage 2 scrutiny of the Bill as well as how to respond to other amendments that might be laid.

Commissioners noted the progress in relation to proposals for awareness raising in relation to the introduction of votes at 16 for Assembly elections and welcomed that they would receive further information at their next meeting.

5 Taking Assembly business out of Cardiff

Commissioners noted proposals for taking Assembly business to a location outside Cardiff and agreed that the Llywydd would write to the Chairs of groups and party leaders outlining the case and seeking their views on the level of interest in this form of engagement.

6 Members' Office related costs funded centrally by Commission

Having agreed in 2018 to move towards more transparency and accountability in relation to costs incurred by Members for the running of their offices, other than those provided for by the Determination, Commissioners considered data relating to expenditure over a 12 month period.

Commissioners agreed to talk to their groups about the proposed changes to the way these costs are managed with a view to agreeing the recommendations in order to facilitate this improvement.

7 Brexit update

Commissioners noted information provided about preparations for various scenarios relating to Brexit on both the business and the corporate services side of Commission activity.

8 Twentieth anniversary - GWLAD Festival

Commissioners discussed and noted the latest update on the GWLAD Festival programme.

9 Papers to note:

9.1 Executive Board update (RAD decisions)

Commissioners were provided with the routine update of recent RAD decisions.

9.2 ACARAC minutes July meeting (draft)

Commissioners noted the regular presentation of ACARAC meeting minutes.

10 Any other business

Commissioners were informed of a planning notification that had been received relating to a proposed temporary zip line development in Cardiff Bay.

In the period since the previous meeting Commissioners had agreed the Annual Environmental Report.