

Assembly Commission

Venue: **Presiding Officer's office, 4th floor – Tŷ Hywel**

Date: **Thursday, 15 January 2015**

Time: **09.00 – 10.15**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Minutes: AC(4)2015(1)

**Commission
Members:**

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

Officials present:

Claire Clancy, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly
Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business
Craig Stephenson, Interim Director of Commission Services
Anna Daniel, Head of Strategic Transformation
Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission Secretariat

**Others in
attendance:**

David Melding AM, Deputy Presiding Officer

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and apologies

There were no apologies.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the 4 December meeting were agreed.

2 Constitutional Change – submission to the Secretary of State

At the meeting on 17 November, Commissioners agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Wales in order to inform the anticipated St. David's Day cross-party agreement setting out the future of Welsh devolution settlement. The Commission discussed the scope and content of a draft report on this matter, as well as arrangements for sharing the report with stakeholders.

The Commission agreed that matters relating to the size of the Assembly, and its system of election, should be devolved to the institution itself, rather than being legislated for in Westminster. They felt this should be done as soon as possible. Commissioners also discussed the size of the National Assembly and the implications, particularly financial, of various increases in the size of the Assembly.

The Commission agreed that the number of elected Members in the Assembly must be increased. Commissioners reasoning was driven by the desire to give Members a realistic opportunity to scrutinise the policy, administration, spending and legislative proposals of the Welsh Government as robustly as the people of Wales deserve. They felt that the outcomes and impacts of the work that Members do are significant and that it was important to focus their report on addressing the needs of the institution. Commissioners acknowledged that there are costs associated with democracy, and observed that the figures in the paper they received demonstrate the cost, even with an increase in the number of Assembly Members, as remaining a very small percentage of the Welsh block; they asked for this to be emphasised in the report.

Commissioners discussed that the expectations on Members today, let alone any extension of the Assembly's powers and responsibilities, make the case for more Members compelling. They felt they would need to consider how to support Members to deliver their roles well in the period prior to an increase in Member numbers.

The Commission agreed to publish a report covering the themes of their discussions, and to write to the Secretary of State, and group leaders, sending a copy of the report. Commissioners felt it was important to focus their report on the facts and to make a useful contribution to the current constitutional debate. They agreed to make their report available to Members, the media and the public.

3 Any other business

The Commission formally approved the appointment of the successful candidates in the two recent recruitment competitions for the Director of Commission Services and the Director of Finance.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 29 January, it will be one of the regular Performance themed meetings. The Commission will be considering the Corporate Performance Report April – December 2014, the Annual Report on our Carbon Management strategy and the latest Highlight report.