



**AC(4)2012(4) Paper 7 part 1**

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**Time:** 10:30 – 12:30

**Venue:** Presiding Officer's office

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## **Assembly Commission Portfolios**

### **1.0 Purpose and summary**

1.1 To review the current Commissioner Portfolios and decide whether any changes are needed.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 That Commissioners consider their portfolios in the light of the first year of operation, retaining their cross-cutting nature and ensuring that the workload, and nature of the work, is spread evenly.

### **3.0 Discussion**

3.1 The Commissioners are corporately responsible for the exercise of the functions conferred on the Commission and for the governance of the organisation and, accordingly, act in the interests of the Assembly as a whole. Taking on a portfolio enables Commissioners to build up their knowledge in particular areas and to work with officials to provide strategic direction on a more regular and thorough basis than Commission meetings alone would allow.

3.2 In June last year, the Commission adopted the portfolios set out in the Annex.

3.3 During the year, Commissioners have built working relationships with those who deliver services in their portfolio areas. This has included helpful and constructive challenge of quality and delivery, and provided a line through which wider Member views have been communicated. Commissioners answer Assembly questions on their own portfolio areas, and answers are cleared with the responsible Commissioner.

3.4 It might be helpful to describe some examples of the way individual Portfolio Commissioners have developed their work. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

- Sandy Mewies has taken a strong personal interest in the operation of the Senedd and experience of visitors to the Assembly Estate, and has been very closely involved in the recent improvements to the Assembly Shop. She has shown personal support for equalities initiatives and has been very closely involved in the completion of the Assembly's equalities scheme.
- Angela Burns has led on the year-round task of financial management and governance. She is a member of the Audit Committee. Angela works closely with officials on the Commission's budget strategy and has successfully taken the lead on the agreement of the Commission budget. She is also responsible for services to Members and is involved in work to evaluate those services.
- Peter Black drives delivery on ICT initiatives and has helped to tackle delivery issues with Atos, as well as involving himself closely in our major ICT projects. In his role in supporting the Commission as the employer of Assembly staff, he has contributed to development of the People and Reward Strategies and has taken an interest in difficult issues like the security reorganisation.
- Rhodri Glyn Thomas is the member in Charge of the Commission's Official Languages Bill. He has been heavily involved in the pre-legislative consultation on the Bill and scheme and is currently responsible for the passage of the Bill through the Assembly.
- The Presiding Officer has regular direct contact with Keith Bush as Chief Legal Adviser, but has also worked closely on communications issues, the way we use the Assembly estate to promote the Assembly's work, and has championed the work on professional development for Members and their staff.
- Although the Deputy Presiding Officer, David Melding, is not formally a member of the Commission, as agreed he has supported the Commission by focusing on the Pierhead as a centre for Assembly development and debate, particularly through links with the Wales Governance Centre.

3.5 A year after adoption of these portfolio areas, consideration of whether they are working well and have balance in terms of responsibility would be appropriate:

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- It is apparent that demands vary between portfolios.
- There are some big issues coming up in the near future that will require a lot of attention, particularly on ICT.
- Communication runs through every portfolio to some degree, and work in enhancing our communication should be spread throughout.
- We are about to carry out a customer survey with Members and this may generate new interest and demands.
- The work of the Remuneration Board is continuing and it may be beneficial to make more explicit that one Commissioner has responsibility for liaising with the Board.

3.6 To address these considerations, Commissioners could consider the following modest changes to the portfolios: (overleaf)

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<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Commissioner</b>
Presiding Officer and Commission Chair, taking lead responsibility for Communications, and professional development for Members and their staff.	Rosemary Butler
Budget, governance, including Audit Committee membership. Links with the Remuneration Board. The improvement of services to Members. The Commission as the employer of Assembly staff.	Angela Burns
ICT, broadcasting and e-democracy. Sustainability.	Peter Black
Education services, front of house, the Assembly shop, catering and security. The Assembly estate and facilities. The Commission's statutory equality functions.	Sandy Mewies
The Commission's Welsh language functions and policy. Legal Services and Freedom of Information (FOI).	Rhodri Glyn Thomas

In addition, David Melding, to continue to support the Commission by leading on the Pierhead as a centre for Assembly development and debate, and links with the Wales Governance Centre.

**June 2012**

## Annex: Original portfolios

Portfolio	Commissioner
Presiding Officer and Commission Chair, with responsibility for Legal Services.	Rosemary Butler AM
Budget, governance, including Audit Committee membership, and links with the Remuneration Board. Improvement of services to Members, employment support and professional development for Members and their staff.	Angela Burns AM
ICT, broadcasting and e-democracy, the Assembly estate, facilities and sustainability. The Commission as the employer of Assembly staff.	Peter Black AM
Education services, front of house, catering and security. The Commission's statutory equality functions and Freedom of Information.	Sandy Mewies AM
Citizen engagement and communications, national and international outreach. The Commission's Welsh language functions and policy.	Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM

Although the Deputy Presiding Officer, David Melding, is not formally a member of the Commission, it was agreed that he would support the Commission by focusing on the Pierhead as a centre for Assembly development and debate, and links with the Wales Governance Centre and others relevant to this role.